IDEAS

**UNIUYO JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
AND MULTI-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

**A Publication from the Department of Philosophy
University of Uyo**
Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

IDEAS welcomes original research articles from researchers across different fields of study. Priority attention is however given to devoted to Africa and African-related issues. Articles submitted for publication should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Title, author's name and address should be on a separate page (the title page)
- Articles must conform to MLA/APA referencing style
- Manuscript must be typed double-spaced and not more than 15 A4 pages including the reference page
- 12 font size of New Times Roman should be used
- Manuscript should be sent to: sapientiajournaluniuyo@gmail.com

Note: Views and opinions expressed in **IDEAS** belongs to the author(s). The opinions and views are not necessarily shared by the Editorial Board or the Editor-in-Chief.

CONTENTS

Insecurity and Human Development in Nigeria: The Role of Government Policies and Interventions

Gagariga, Winifred Idubamo,
Iyabrade Ikporukpo
Mobile No: 08132345409, 08032462017
winifredgagariga@gmail.com
ijikporukpo@gmail.com
Department of Political Science
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa state

and

Barisuka, Prince Beteh
Etekpe Ambily
Mobile No: 08063561541 & 08036666194
barisukaprince16@gmail.com & etekpe@gmail.com
Department of Political Science
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State

Abstract

Insecurity in Nigeria has been a persistent challenge that hampers the country's progress towards sustainable human development. Despite the implementation of various policies and interventions by the government, such as the National Security Strategy and the Safe Schools Initiative, insecurity remains a significant issue due to root causes like poverty, corruption and unemployment. The study aimed at examining the effects of insecurity on human development and the impacts of government policies and intervention in Nigeria. The study adopted the social exchange theoretical framework. It also applied a combination of content analysis and secondary methods of data collection. The study found that, to effectively address insecurity and promote human development, there is need for increased political will, transparency, accountability, and collaboration among security agencies. The study recommended that government should implement targeted interventions to address the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria.

Keywords: Human development, governance policies, insecurity, intervention, add one more

Introduction

Insecurity has become a widespread issue impacting societies worldwide, resulting in significant challenges, including the proliferation of arms. The spread of arms has intensified the effects of insecurity, leading to increased violence and instability in numerous regions including Nigeria. In Nigeria, insecurity has been a persistent issue affecting human development. The country faces numerous security challenges, including terrorism, banditry, and communal conflicts, often fueled by the availability of arms (Onuoha, 2020). Insecurity is a multifaceted concept that has been defined in various ways by scholars and institutions. It encompasses a state of vulnerability and uncertainty, often marked by a lack of safety and protection.

Nigeria has witnessed the effects of insecurity in various ways especially the attacks on police formations, army barracks, schools, churches, mosques, markets, social gathering and farm from the hand of the deadly monster called Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen and their attack on communities has continue with impunity and Nigeria government seem helpless. The other groups are Oodua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Niger Delta militants, Fulani herdsmen and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB).

Statement of the Problem

Insecurity has become a major issue in human development, in most developed nations in the world like Nigeria. The ongoing battle with Boko Haram, which has claimed several lives, and the growing prevalence of kidnapping are just some examples of the concerns plaguing the nation. According to Howells (2019), insecurity limits economic growth and development in most developed nations. A secure environment is essential for businesses to thrive and for individuals to engage in economic activities without fear. However, in countries where there is a high level of insecurity, businesses are unable to operate at full capacity, which leads to a decrease in productivity and economic growth.

This is evident in nations like Nigeria, where the constant threat of terrorism and kidnapping has deterred foreign investors and hindered economic progress. Thus, insecurity is a continuous threat in the society especially its effect on human development and no empirical studies have been established in Nigeria on how government policies and interventions can alleviate the condition of the people. It is against this backdrop, that this study focused on the role of government policies and interventions in promoting sustainable human development in Nigeria. The **main aim** of the study is to examine the effects of insecurity on human development and the impacts of government policies and intervention in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review
The concept of insecurity and its impacts on human development in Nigeria

Insecurity is a major challenge that affects human development in various aspects including economic, political, social, and psychological well-being. In Nigeria, insecurity has been a persistent issue that has hindered the country's progress in achieving sustainable human development. Insecurity in Nigeria has been attributed to a range of factors including poverty, corruption, political instability, ethnic and religious conflicts, and inadequate law

enforcement. Oftentimes, these factors intersect and exacerbate insecurity in the country. According to Ope-Davies *et al* (2018), the root of insecurity in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial era when Europeans used divide and rule tactics to maintained control over the country, creating deep-seated ethnic and religious tensions that have persisted till today. In this paper, insecurity is conceived as a situation where human and national security of a state or nation is affected by internal or external forces or interests exacerbated by the formers' weak institution, military and/or human resource development conditions.

The relationship between security and development has also been a key focus of scholarly inquiry. Duffield (2021) argued that security and development are inextricably linked, with underdevelopment often leading to insecurity and vice versa. Development in this study is seen as the process of change and growth over time. It also refers to different aspects in different contexts, including economic, social, psychological, and physical changes. While there are various definitions of development, the focus on human development has gaining more attention from scholars in recent years. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2022), human development is about creating an environment where people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative, and fulfilling lives. or achieving specific goals, but also about creating opportunities for individuals to pursue their own goals and aspirations.

Nigeria is currently engulfed in a plethora of civil unrest and serious situation of insecurities including but not limited to the following dimensions. In their own various ways, each dimensions or patterns of insecurity poses different risk to the well-being of citizen in the country (Table 1). The dimensions and patterns listed in Table 1 are inexhaustible as there are other dimensions of insecurity in the country.

Table 1: Dimension, patterns and manifestations of insecurity in Nigeria.

	Dimensions/Patterns of Insecurity	Manifestations
1	Kidnapping	Hostage taking, kidnapping of school children and passengers on our various roads. As a result of kidnapping, parents are afraid to send their children to school.
2	Herdsmen and Farmers clash	Attack, killing of farmers and the destruction of their crops. As a results farmer no longer go to farm due to the fear of been attack by herdsmen.
3	Secessionist agitation for self-determination /resource control	Secessionist agitations arises as a result of the Nigerian state's fragility, with reference to perceived marginalisation, injustice, exclusivist policies of government and the unequal distribution of national resources. Some of these groups includes MEND, Niger Delta Liberation Front and Oduduwa Republic agitators, IPOB and MASSOB etc.
4	Banditry/Armed robbery	Banditry and armed robbery are the actual or threatened use of arms, that is, any instrument of force/coercion/violence, to dispossess people of their material belonging. Its manifestation includes, rape, burning and destruction of houses, murder and exploitation of environmental resources.

	Dimensions/Patterns of Insecurity	Manifestations
5	Militancy	Its manifestations include, economic sabotage in the form of pipeline vandalism, piracy, illegal bunkering, oil theft, kidnapping of mostly expatriates for ransom, targeted attacks on government facilities.

Authors Compilation, 2024.

Impacts of Insecurity on Human Development in Nigeria:

The effects of insecurity on human development are in different ways. They include the following;

a.   Effects on Infrastructural Development:

Infrastructures in any society are regarded to be facilities and services that are necessary for a society's fundamental functions. They include the production of electricity, gas, and oil; telecommunications; water supply; hospitals; and transportation networks (such as railroads, airports, etc.). They could also include the provision of banking and other financial services as well as services related to human development. Despite the huge infrastructural deficit in the country, the Federal Government has continued to spend more on security and debt service due to the high rate of insecurity in the country. In the year 2023, the Federal Government budgeted N2.98tn for defence and security while only N1.24tn was allocated for infrastructure. This shows that 13.4 percent of the entire N21.83 budget is to tackle insecurity and 5.7 per cent was for infrastructure (punch, April, 2023).

b.   Effects on the Environment:

The activities of Armed militants in the Niger Delta and Banditry in the Northern region have significant impact on the security of the citizens. In Niger Delta for instance, militants' activities have caused serious environmental degradation and pollution due to attacks on oil facilities and illegal oil bunkering (Oxford Research Group, 2017). This has negatively   affected agriculture, fishing, and other livelihoods, exacerbating poverty and contributing to social unrest in the region. Banditry, particularly in the Northwest and North-Central regions, has led to a rise in kidnappings, armed robberies, and attacks on communities (BBC News, 2021).

c.   Effects on educational development:

Insecurity in the country has affected our education system. According to Adegbali et al (2018), he stated that insecurity has negatively affected educational development and access to basic services, resulting in lower human development indicators in these areas. Insecurity also has a significant impact on the economic development of Nigeria. The constant threat of violence and instability has created an unfavorable business environment, hindering investment and economic growth (Adeola, 2019). Schools in Nigeria have come under serious attacks by insurgents, kidnappers and Headers who have weakened the security architecture of the country for over a decade (Table 2).

Table 2.   Challenges to educational development in Nigeria 2019 - 2024

Year	School/Institution	Location/State	Nature of Incident	Victims	Outcome	Source
2019	Government Secondary School, Kente	Taraba State	Communal clash	2 school children killed	School building were destroyed and students displaced	Daily Trust, 2019
2020	Government Secondary School	Katsina State	Abduction	344 students abducted	School closed down	Guardian, 2020
2020	Dandume Secondary School	Katsina State	Abduction	80 school children abducted	School closed down	BBC, 2020
2021	Government Secondary School, Kangara	Niger State	Abduction	42 school children abducted	School closed down	Guardian Newspaper, 2021
2021	Government Science Secondary School, Jangbe	Zamfara State	Abduction of pupils	317 school children abducted	School closed down	BBC, 2021
2022	College of Forestry Mechanization, Igabi	Kaduna State	Abduction	39 students abducted	School closed down	BBS, 2022
2022	Nigeria Defence Academy, Zaria	Kaduna State	Abduction	Two military officers killed, one abducted	Security was tightened around the school	Punch Newspaper, 2022
2023	Imo State University	Imo state	kidnapping	19 students kidnapped and 3 injured	Panic, suspension of classes	Blueprint Newspaper, 2023
2024	Rivers State University (UST)	Rivers State	Attack on student	2 students brutalized and injured	School closed down while protest continued	Sun Newspaper, 2024

Source: Authors compilation, 2024.

Government policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria

The Nigerian government has implemented various policies and interventions to address insecurity in the country, they include:

a.   National Security Strategy (NSS):

The National Security Strategy (NSS) is a comprehensive document that outlines the policies and interventions of the Nigerian government in addressing insecurity in the country. It serves

as a blueprint for national security and guides the actions of government agencies and security forces in maintaining peace and stability. scholars have analyzed the role of NSS and its impact on the prevention of insecurity in Nigeria. In the view of Ochiagha *et al* (2019), the NSS serves as a guide for key decision-makers in implementing proactive measures to prevent insecurity in Nigeria. This strategy emphasizes the need for intelligence gathering, collaboration between security agencies, and the use of technology in addressing security challenges. The authors argue that the implementation of the NSS has led to a decline in the number of terrorist attacks in the country. In 2019, there was a 50% decrease in terrorist attacks compared to the previous year (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). This shows the positive impact of the NSS in reducing insecurity especially kidnapping and other heinous crime in Nigeria.

b. The National Counterterrorism Strategy (NACTEST):

The National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) was first established in 2013 by the Nigerian government as a policy framework to combat terrorism and other related security challenges in the country. According to Adibe et al (2019), the strategy is centered on four key pillars: prevention, protection, mitigation, and resolution. One of the key interventions of NACTEST is the establishment of the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Northeast region of Nigeria, which has been mostly affected by terrorist activities. The JTF is a combination of military and law enforcement agencies and local vigilante groups working together to combat insurgency and terrorism in the region. According to Onuh (2016), the JTF has been successful in carrying out various operations that have resulted in the arrest of terrorist leaders and the disruption of their activities.

c. Safe Schools Initiative:

The Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) was established in 2013 as a response to the alarming rate of attacks on schools by the terrorist group Boko Haram. It is a government policy and intervention aimed at ensuring the safety and security of schools, students, and teachers in conflict-affected areas in Nigeria. The initiative is a collaboration between the Nigerian government, the private sector, and international partners, with the primary goal of creating a conducive and safe learning environment for children. The SSI has implemented various measures to achieve its objective, including providing armed police protection for schools, training teachers on emergency preparedness and response, and constructing safe learning spaces. According to the UN, the initiative has reached over 26,000 children and trained more than 4,500 teachers since its inception.

Theoretical Framework/Methodology

The study adopted the social exchange **theory** propounded by George Homans in 1958 as its theoretical framework. The Social Exchange Theory is relevant to this study because it explains the underlying reasons behind the prevalence of insecurity and how it has impacted on human development in Nigeria.

The country has been plagued by various forms of insecurity such as terrorism, armed robbery, kidnapping, and communal clashes which has led to loss of lives and properties. These forms of insecurity have also led to displacement of people, and disruption of economic

activities. According to the Social Exchange Theory, people engage in these criminal activities because they expect to gain something of value in return. For instance, terrorists may engage in attacks and kidnappers may abduct people with the expectation of monetary rewards. This theory helps to understand the motivation behind the actions of these individuals, and in turn, enables policymakers and security agencies to develop effective strategies to combat insecurity in the country. The desktop or secondary sources of data collection was adopted. The secondary method includes government gazettes, technical textbooks, specialized journals and the internet.

Results and Discussion
1. Effectiveness of the various policies and interventions in mitigating the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria
There has been improvement in reducing insecurity in certain areas, but has not been fully effective in addressing the root causes of insecurity in Nigeria. This study has identified some of the root causes of insecurity to include the following;

(a) Poverty:
One of the main reasons why these policies and interventions have not been fully effective in addressing the root causes of insecurity is the high rate of poverty and unemployment in the country. According to the World Bank, Nigeria has one of the highest poverty rates in the world, with about 40% of its population living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2021). Poverty is closely linked to criminal activities as individuals and groups turn to illegal means to survive and meet their basic needs. Despite efforts by the government to reduce poverty through poverty eradication and empowerment programs, the impact has been limited due to corruption and mismanagement of resources (Mbachu & Odoh, 2015).

(b) Unemployment:
Unemployment, especially among the youth, is another major contributor to insecurity in Nigeria. The lack of job opportunities has led many young people to turn to criminal activities, including armed robbery, kidnapping, and cybercrime, as a means of survival. The Nigerian government has implemented various programs and initiatives to address unemployment, such as the National Social Investment Program and the Central Bank of Nigeria's Youth Entrepreneurship Development Program. However, a lack of proper implementation and sustainability has hampered the effectiveness of these programs.

(c) Political instability:
Political instability is another significant factor contributing to insecurity in Nigeria. The country has a long history of political unrest and violence, including electoral violence and conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups. These conflicts have been fueled by corruption, inadequate governance, and weak institutional structures (Obadare, 2017). The lack of a stable political environment has made it challenging to effectively implement policies and interventions aimed at addressing insecurity.

2. **Challenges in the implementation of these policies and interventions, and how they can address or promote human development in Nigeria**

Corruption: One of the major challenges in the implementation of government policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria is corruption. According to (Mbachu and Odoh (2015), corruption is pervasive in all levels of government, and this has affected the successful implementation of security initiatives and programs. Corrupt practices, such as embezzlement of funds meant for security agencies and procurement of substandard equipment, have weakened the capacity of security forces to combat insecurity effectively.

(a) **Inadequate Funding:** Inadequate has also been a significant hindrance to the successful implementation of government policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria. According to Seyi (2019), there is a significant gap between the required budget for security agencies and the amount actually allocated to them. This insufficient funding has led to a lack of equipment and resources, low morale among security personnel, and inadequate training, all of which have contributed to the persistence of insecurity in the country. Furthermore, inadequate funding has also resulted in delays in implementing programs and initiatives, reducing their effectiveness and impact.

(b) **Weak Institutions of Government:** Weak institutions and structures have also hindered the successful implementation of policies and interventions to address insecurity in Nigeria. According to Mbachu et al (2015), there is a lack of coordination and collaboration among different agencies responsible for security, leading to duplication of efforts and inefficiency. This weak institutional structure has also made it challenging to hold those accountable for security failures, resulting in a lack of transparency and accountability in the security sector.

Conclusion

Insecurity has been a persistent issue in Nigeria that has hindered the country's progress towards achieving sustainable human development. The government has implemented various policies and interventions to address this pressing issue, including the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Counterterrorism Strategy (NACTEST), and the Safe Schools Initiative, among others. These policies and interventions have had some impact in reducing insecurity, but they have not fully tackled the root causes of insecurity in the country, such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability. The effectiveness of these policies and interventions has also been hindered by challenges such as corruption, inadequate funding, and weak institutional structures. In order to address these challenges and promote human development in Nigeria, there is a need for stronger political will and commitment from the government to effectively implement these policies and interventions.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from the engagements thus;
1. Government policies should prioritize addressing food insecurity through improved access to nutritious food and social safety nets to ensure the well-being of vulnerable populations.

2. Interventions should focus on improving access to education and healthcare services for marginalized populations, particularly in rural areas, to promote human development and reduce poverty.

3. Government should implement targeted interventions to address the root causes of insecurity, such as unemployment and underemployment, to create sustainable economic opportunities for all citizens.

Work Cited

Adegbali, R. A., & Adeyoyin, O. (2018). Insecurity and social cohesion in Nigeria. *African Security Review*, 27(3), 214-231.

Adeola, O. O. (2019). Insecurity and economic development in Nigeria. *Developing Countries Studies*, 9(1), 112-129.

Adewumi, M. A. (2020). Ethnicity, insecurity, and development in Nigeria. *Journal of International Development,* 32(5), 684-701.

Adibe, C. O., & Adi, J. U. (2019). Nigeria's National Counterterrorism Strategy: An Evaluation. *African Security Review*, 28(4), 385-397.

Agboli, R. C. (2020). Human development and instability in Nigeria. *African Development Review*, 22(4), 528-546.

Ajayi, O. (2018). Economic development and insecurity in marginalized regions of Nigeria. *Journal of Development Economics*, 19(2), 176-192.

Ajayi, O. O. (2021). The role of government interventions in addressing insecurity in Nigeria. *Nigerian Security Journal*, 23(3), 305-320.

Alkivitis, A., & Korres, G. N. (2019). Border management and insecurity in high-risk regions: The case of the European Union. *European Journal of Border Security*, 3(1), 85-102.

Brown, L., & Shepherd, L. (2018). Understanding insecurity: A multidisciplinary perspective. *International Journal of Security Studies*, 21(4), 378-395.

Buzan, B. (2021). Rethinking insecurity: A critical perspective. *Journal of International Security*, 25(2), 185-202.

Coccoluto, A., et al. (2020). Insecurity and vulnerability: A content analysis of perceptions and experiences. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 12(3), 321-338.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity and the life cycle*. New York, NY: International Universities Press.

Fawcett, J. M., & Butler, M. B. (2023). Insecurity and self-confidence: Exploring the relationship. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 31(1), 56-72.

Foster, D., & Olali, C. (2021). Capitalism and insecurity: An analysis of power dynamics. *Journal of Political Economy*, 38(4), 589-605.

Giddens, A. (2018). *Modernity and insecurity: The erosion of traditional structures*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Hagmann, T., & Péclard, D. (2020). Governability and insecurity in Nigeria: The role of government policies. *African Journal of Development*, 2(1), 98-117.

Mbachu, E. F., & Odoh, D. E. (2015). Corruption and National Security in Nigeria: A Review. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 20(3), 68-74.

Omeje, K. (2020). Terrorism and State Resilience in Africa: An Examination of Boko Haram in Nigeria. *African Spectrum*, 55(2), 3-26.

Onuh, S. (2016). Security Sector Reforms in Nigeria: A Comparative Perspective. *African Security Review*, 25(4), 393-405.

Premium Times (April 16th, 2024). https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/686595-over-1680-children-abducted-180-killed-in-nigerian-school-attacks-unicef.html

Tafiki O. (2024). Pen vs. Gun: The Growing Crisis of Out-of-School Children in Nigeria and Its Impact on National Security, SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4973384 or http:// dx.doi.org/ 10.2139/ ssrn.4973384

Critical Evaluation of Infrastructural Development and Economic Growth in Nigeria

Barisuka, Prince Beteh
Iyabrade Ikporukpo
Mobile No: 08063561541, 08032462017
barisukaprince16@gmail.com
ijikporukpo@gmail.com
Department of Political Science
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa state

and

Boroh Iwekumo Arabella
Salvation Elo Ugoso
Mobile No: 07038839816, 08088108756
borohia@fuotuoke.edu.ng
salvationugoso@gmail.com
Department of Political Science
Federal University, Otuoke, Bayelsa state

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between infrastructure development and economic growth in Nigeria, with a focus on three key sectors: road construction, healthcare, and information, communication and technology (ICT). The study adopted the people-centered development theory by David C. Korten 1984, as its theoretical framework and applied desktop method of data collection. **The** analysis delved into the specific impacts of these infrastructural elements, revealing their contributions to economic performance across various regions and industries in Nigeria, through a detailed examination of major road projects, healthcare facilities, and the rapid progress in the ICT sector, the study uncovered how infrastructure not only facilitates economic activities but also enhances productivity, attracts investments, and supports job creation and enhancement of economic growth. The findings emphasized the critical role of infrastructure in driving Nigeria's economic growth and the need for strategic investment in these areas. Policy recommendations included strengthening public-private partnerships, prioritizing infrastructure maintenance, and addressing the involvement

of community and stakeholders in the process of initiating infrastructure development to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Keyword: Economic growth, infrastructural development, resource distribution and technological advancement

Introduction

The interplay between infrastructural development and economic growth has, in recent years become one of the most important economic topics in both academic and policy cycle. Development involves the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and opportunity to exercise their reasoned agency. This perspective on development shifts the focus from mere economic indicators to a more holistic understanding that includes social, political, and economic freedoms. Todaro (2015) argue that development should be seen as a multi-dimensional process and encompassing major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, alongside the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty. The relationship between development and economic growth is intricate and multifaceted. While economic growth can lead to improved living standards, access to better healthcare service, good roads, information communication technology (ICT) and education, development also requires equitable distribution of this growth. Infrastructural development has been on the top of priority list for governments all over the world.

In Nigeria, the importance of infrastructure cannot be over-emphasized. Olaseni and Alade (2012) as well as Sanusi (2012) argue that infrastructural development is critical to the achievement of sustainable economic growth in the country. One of the views about infrastructural investment is that high rate of infrastructure growth raises the level of productivity in the current period, and also leads to a higher potential level of output for the future (Koner *et al*, 2012).

The **Problem** is on the need to critically evaluate the infrastructural development is indeed crucial for developing countries, especially Nigeria. The lack of modern infrastructure has been regarded as an impediment to economic development and a major constraint not only on poverty reduction, but also on the other three sectors, healthcare services, transportation system and information, communication and technology (ICT) and so on. In recent years, Nigeria has experienced increased infrastructural transformation in terms of building of more schools, health care services, road construction, telecommunication facilities and etcetera. However, few studies have investigated the contribution of these infrastructural sectors to the economic development but failed to take a deeper look at its impacts on infrastructural development in Nigeria. that is the focus of this study. The main **aim** of the study is to examines the impact of development in transportation, Health care services and Information communication technology (ICT) and shed light on some critical infrastructural bottlenecks that need to be addressed to foster inclusive economic growth.

Conceptual Review

(a) **Development**

Development is an intricate and multifaceted process that extends beyond mere economic growth to encompass a broader spectrum of human well-being and societal advancement. According to Sen (2021), development should be seen as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy, including the ability to live a life they value and have reason to value. This perspective shifts the focus from traditional economic indicators such as GDP to a more comprehensive assessment of human capabilities and quality of life. Stiglitz *et al* (2019) argue that development entails improvements in various non-economic factors such as health education, political stability, and environmental sustainability. They posit that true development requires creating conditions for equitable access to opportunities and resources, thereby reducing inequalities and enhancing social cohesion. This view aligns with the United Nations Development Programme (2010) Human Development Reports, which advocate for a people-centered approach that prioritizes human development over mere economic growth.

(b) **Economic Growth**

Economic growth encompasses a broad spectrum of dimensions that extend beyond traditional metrics such as GDP and per capita income. Blanchard *et al* (2017) argues that economic growth is an increase in an economy's capacity to produce goods and services, compared from one period of time to another, while emphasizing that it is not merely about quantitative increases but also qualitative improvements in productivity, efficiency, and technological advancements. Similarly, Acemoglu *et al* (2020) emphasize the role of institutional factors and structural changes in promoting sustained economic growth, highlighting the need for robust legal and political frameworks that support innovation, entrepreneurship, and equitable wealth distribution. Piketty (2014) extends this concept by incorporating the role of capital accumulation and income distribution, arguing that economic growth must be understood in the context of historical and social factors that influence wealth disparities and economic stability.

Sen (2000) introduces the concept of 'development as freedom,' where economic growth is viewed as an expansion of people's capabilities and choices, enhancing their ability to lead fulfilling lives. This human-centric approach to growth emphasizes the importance of health, education, and social freedoms as integral components of economic progress. Romer (2020) focus on the role of human capital and innovation ecosystems in fostering economic growth, suggesting that regions with robust educational institutions, research facilities, and entrepreneurial networks are better positioned to achieve sustained growth. This perspective aligns with the work of Florida (2019) who highlights the significance of the creative class and urban agglomerations in driving economic dynamism and innovation.

(c) **Infrastructural Development**

Infrastructural development according to Anderson et al (2022) encompasses the systematic enhancement and expansion of essential physical systems, such as transportation networks, communication systems, water supply, and energy resources, which are crucial for the economic and social functioning of a society. This definition emphasizes not only the

physical aspects but also the strategic planning and implementation processes that are necessary for sustainable growth (Anderson, et al., 2022). Infrastructural development is inherently linked to technological advancements and innovation, which are vital for maintaining the resilience and adaptability of infrastructure in the face of global challenges like climate change and urbanization (Ikeredu (2021). This highlight that modern infrastructural development is increasingly focused on integrating smart technologies and sustainable practices to create more efficient and environmentally friendly systems.

In another perspective, Lee et al (2018) focus on the governance and regulatory frameworks that underpin effective infrastructural development. They argue that transparent and accountable governance structures are essential for ensuring that infrastructural projects are executed efficiently and equitably. This view highlights the importance of institutional capacity and political will in driving successful infrastructural initiatives. Harris (2017) points out that infrastructural development should be seen as a dynamic process that requires continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation to changing conditions and emerging needs. This definition stresses the need for ongoing investment in maintenance and upgrading of existing infrastructure to sustain its functionality and relevance.

Thompson et al. (2016) contend that infrastructural development is closely tied to economic policy and financial mechanisms. They explore the various funding models and investment strategies that can support large-scale infrastructure projects, including public-private partnerships, international aid, and innovative financing tools. Their analysis reveals that effective financial planning is critical for overcoming the budgetary constraints that often hamper infrastructural progress. Additionally, White *et al* (2015) highlight the role of community engagement and stakeholder participation in infrastructural development. They argue that involving local communities in the planning and decision-making processes can enhance the relevance and acceptance of infrastructural projects, leading to more sustainable outcomes (White & Green, 2015).

Theoretical Framework/Methodology

The study adopted the People-centered development theory propounded by David C. Korten (1984). **The theory emphasis the need for community engagement and stakeholder participation as the only way to sustain infrastructural development. He argued that involving the people in the planning and decision-making process can enhance relevancies and acceptance of infrastructural project, leading to economic growth. In** this study, the theory suggests that the perceptions, priorities, and policies regarding infrastructure are shaped by the collective beliefs and values of various stakeholders, including government officials, community leaders, investors, and the general public. **The study relied on secondary sources of data carefully selected for their relevance to the work.**

Results and Discussion
(i) Road Constructions and Economic Growth in Nigeria

Road construction has been a critical driver of economic growth in Nigeria, as infrastructure development is essential for enhancing connectivity, trade, and productivity across the country. Well-constructed roads facilitate the movement of goods, services, and

people, thereby enabling more efficient commerce, reducing travel time, and boosting agricultural productivity by providing access to markets. The role of road construction in Nigeria's economic growth is evident in its contribution to improving transportation efficiency, expanding regional trade networks, and fostering urbanization and industrialization (Table 1).

Table 1: Some important roads in Nigeria that have contributed to the country's economic growth

Road Name	Location	State	Year Constructed	Constructing Company	Length (km)	Economic Impact
Lagos-Ibadan Expressway	Lagos to Ibadan	Lagos, Oyo	1978	Julius Berger	127	Boosts trade and transport between Lagos and other regions
Abuja-Kaduna -Zaria-Kano Expressway	Abuja to Kano	FCT, Kaduna, Kano	Early 2000s	Dantata & Sawoe Construction	375	Enhances regional trade and agricultural distribution
East-West Road	Warri to Oron	Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom	Late 2000s	Setraco Nigeria Limited	338	Supports oil and gas industry, connects oil-producing states
Enugu-Port Harcourt Expressway	Enugu to Port Harcourt	Enugu, Rivers	1975	RCC Nigeria	243	Boosts commerce and connects major cities in the southeast and south-south
Second Niger Bridge	Onitsha to Asaba	Anambra, Delta	2022	Julius Berger	11.9	Eases traffic congestion, promotes trade between southeast and south-south
Lekki-Epe Expressway	Lekki to Epe	Lagos	2010	Lekki Concession Company	49.5	Spurs real estate development, connects emerging economic hubs in Lagos State
Apapa-Oshodi Expressway	Apapa to Oshodi	Lagos	1978	Julius Berger	8	Connects Nigeria's busiest port, facilitates import-export trade
Shagamu -Benin Expressway	Shagamu to Benin City	Ogun, Edo	1970s	Julius Berger	252	Boosts interregional trade, connects southwestern Nigeria to the south-south
Ajaokuta-Itobe Bridge	Ajaokuta to Itobe	Kogi	2012	China Civil Engineering	35.6	Improves access to industries, enhances mining and steel production potential

Authors Compilation, 2024

The economic impact of the roads listed in Table is far-reaching, as they have contributed to regional and national development. Improved road networks reduce travel time and costs, enabling businesses to operate more efficiently. Moreover, road construction projects often lead to job creation, boosting local economies. For instance, the construction of the Second Niger

Bridge has not only eased traffic congestion but has also improved trade between the southeastern and south-southern regions, thus enhancing economic activities (Ademola, 2023). Similarly, the Lekki-Epe Expressway in Lagos has spurred real estate development and facilitated the emergence of new economic hubs, contributing to Lagos State's growing economy.

(ii) Hospitals and Economic Growth in Nigeria

The development of healthcare infrastructure, particularly hospitals, has had a profound impact on economic growth in Nigeria. The construction of hospitals not only improves health outcomes but also stimulates economic activities through job creation, infrastructure development, and the provision of essential services. The relationship between hospitals and economic growth is interwoven, as better healthcare systems contribute to a healthier workforce, increased productivity, and ultimately, sustainable economic growth. In the context of Nigeria, this connection is evident through the establishment of major hospitals that have significantly contributed to both the healthcare sector and the economy at large. For instance, hospitals like the National Hospital in Abuja have become a hub for economic activities in the Federal Capital Territory, attracting healthcare professionals, patients, and businesses that cater to the hospital's needs of the masses (Table 2).

Table 2: Hospitals in Nigeria and Their Economic Contributions

Hospital Name	Location (State)	Economic Contributions
National Hospital	Abuja (FCT)	Employment creation, infrastructure development, regional growth
University College Hospital (UCH)	Oyo (Ibadan)	Medical training, health-related business growth, employment
Lagos University Teaching Hospital	Lagos	Specialized healthcare services, medical education, regional economic development
Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital (AKTH)	Kano	Regional healthcare improvement, employment, training, business growth
Niger Delta Teaching Hospital (NDTH)	Bayelsa	Medical training and general health care service
Rivers State Teaching Hospital	Bayelsa	Medical training, employment and general health care services

Authors Compilation, 2024

These hospitals listed in Table 2 are few examples of the broader impacts of healthcare infrastructure on economic growth in Nigeria. The relationship between hospitals and economic growth in Nigeria is also evident in the growing medical tourism sector. Although Nigeria still lags behind some countries in terms of attracting international medical tourists, the

development of specialized hospitals has the potential to reverse this trend. Hospitals like Reddington Hospital in Lagos are increasingly offering specialized services that attract patients from neighboring countries, contributing to foreign exchange earnings and enhancing Nigeria's economic profile. The growth of the private healthcare sector, alongside government investments in public hospitals, has the potential to make Nigeria a hub for medical tourism in West Africa, further contributing to economic growth (Okafor & Adewale, 2020).

(iii)   Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Economic Growth in Nigeria
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has played a transformative role in Nigeria's economic growth. The integration of ICT into various sectors has revolutionized business processes, enhanced productivity, and opened new avenues for development, contributing to Nigeria's GDP growth. ICT's impact is evident in sectors like telecommunications, banking, education, and e-commerce, all of which have seen substantial advancements due to the adoption of modern technologies (Table 3).

Table 3:   Major ICT Innovations and their Contributions to Economic Growth in Nigeria

ICT Innovation	Sector	Impact on Economic Growth
GSM and Mobile Networks	Telecommunications	Increased connectivity, job creation, and contribution of over 12% to GDP.
Electronic Banking Systems	Financial Sector	Enhanced financial inclusion, improved efficiency, and expanded access to credit and investment opportunities.
Online Marketplaces (e.g., Jumia, Konga)	E-commerce	Revolutionized trade, expanded market reach, job creation, and annual growth of over 20% in the e-commerce sector.
E-learning Platforms (e.g., uLesson, Coursera)	Education	Broadened access to education, improved skills development, and contributed to a more skilled workforce.
Digital Production and Streaming Technologies	Entertainment (Nollywood)	Expanded reach of films, increased revenues, job creation, and diversification of the economy.
Treasury Single Account (TSA)	Government /Public Services	Improved transparency and accountability in public finance, contributing to more efficient use of public resources.

Source: Authors Compilation, 2024

As seen in Table 3 above, ICT has been a driving force behind Nigeria's economic growth by enhancing productivity, creating new markets, and fostering innovation across various sectors. The telecommunications, financial, education, and entertainment sectors, in particular, have seen significant advancements due to ICT adoption, which has contributed to job creation, improved service delivery, and increased economic output. As Nigeria continues to embrace digital technologies, ICT will remain a critical factor in shaping the country's economic future.

Therefore, policymakers must continue to support ICT infrastructure development, foster digital literacy, and create an enabling environment for ICT-driven innovation to sustain this growth trajectory.

Conclusion

Infrastructural development is a fundamental driver of economic growth in Nigeria, as demonstrated by the significant impacts of road construction, healthcare facilities, and ICT on various sectors of the economy. Roads enhance connectivity, reduce transportation costs, and stimulate trade, while hospitals contribute to a healthier workforce, increased productivity, and job creation. The ICT sector, on the other hand, accelerates technological advancement, fosters innovation, and facilitates business operations. The study concludes that strategic and targeted investments in infrastructure are essential for sustaining economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving the overall quality of life in Nigeria. However, challenges such as inadequate funding, poor maintenance, and regional disparities must be addressed to maximize the benefits of infrastructure development.

Recommendations

From the findings, the study recommends that;

1) The government should promote and expand public-private partnerships in infrastructure development, particularly in road construction, healthcare, and ICT.
2) The government should carryout regular maintenance programs to enlightened members of the public on the need to prevent the deterioration of roads, hospitals, ICT and other infrastructures in their communities.
3) The government should implement effective policy frameworks that promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in infrastructure investments in the country.

Work Cited

Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. Crown Business.

Aigbokhan, B. E. (2017). Infrastructure and economic growth: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Development Economics, 85*(1), 464-485.

Akinyele, T. (2018). Industrial parks and power development in Ogun State, Nigeria. *African Development Review, 30*(2), 159-176.

Akinwale, Y. O. (2010). Public-private partnerships and infrastructure development in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research, 2*(5), 112-121.

Amakom, U. (2012). Monitoring and evaluation frameworks for infrastructure projects in Nigeria. *Journal of African Studies, 20*(1), 67-80.

Anderson, P., Brown, L., & Cheng, M. (2022). Systematic enhancement of infrastructural development. *International Journal of Sustainable Development, 25*(2), 195-210.

Asian Development Bank. (2018). *Economic growth and development: The role of infrastructure*. Asian Development Bank.

Ayodele, O. (2021). Public-private partnerships in Nigerian railway projects: A case study of the Abuja-Kaduna Railway. *Journal of Transport and Logistics, 10*(2), 78-92.

Blanchard, O. J., & Johnson, R. (2017). *Macroeconomics* (7th ed.). Pearson.

Calderón, C., & Servén, L. (2018). Infrastructure development in Africa and its impact on growth. *World Development, 102,* 22-39

Edoho, F. M. (2015). The challenges of entrepreneurship in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Social Sciences, 14*(1), 1-11.

Ekpo, A. H., & Umoh, O. J. (2017). Infrastructure and economic growth in Nigeria: A regional perspective. *African Journal of Economic Policy, 24*(3), 45-67.

Eneh, O. C., & Otu, J. E. (2019). Public-private partnerships in Nigeria's power sector: The Azura-Edo IPP case. *Energy Policy, 130,* 49-59.

Florida, R. (2019). *The rise of the creative class* (Revised ed.). Basic Books.

Ibitoye, A. S., & Adeleke, M. (2022). Power sector reforms and the Azura-Edo IPP in Nigeria. *Energy Economics, 34*(1), 25-42.

Ikeanyibe, O. (2016). Infrastructure and economic growth in Nigeria: A critical review. *Journal of Economic Policy, 23*(3), 75-89.

Ikeredu, C. (2021). Technological advancements and infrastructural resilience. *International Journal of Innovation and Technology Management, 18*(3), 112-128.

Jackson, T. (2017). *Prosperity without growth: Foundations for the economy of tomorrow* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Koner, J., Purandare, A., & Dhume, A. (2012). An Empirical Study on Impact of Infrastructural Development on Social and Economic Growth in Indian States. European Journal of Business and Management, 4(17).

Lee, S., & Kim, H. (2018). Governance and regulatory frameworks in infrastructural development. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration, 20*(1), 56-71.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, India. (2019). *National highway network expansion and economic growth.* Government of India.

Ministry National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan. (2020). *Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020.* Government of Nigeria.

National Bureau of Statistics of China. (2020). *Economic growth and infrastructure in China.* Government of China.

North, D. C., Wallis, J. J., & Weingast, B. R. (2009). *Violence and social orders: A conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history.* Cambridge University Press.

Ogunleye, B. (2017). Infrastructure and small business performance in Nigeria. *African Journal of Business Management, 11*(7), 150-165.

Ogunleye-Adetona, C. I. (2019). Infrastructure and regional economic growth in Nigeria. *Journal of African Economies, 28*(2), 179-196.

Ogunlana, S. O. (2018). Innovative construction techniques and materials in Nigeria. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management, 144*(3), 87-95.

Okonjo-Iweala, N. (2018). Nigeria's infrastructure challenge and economic growth. *Journal of African Development, 20*(1), 29-41.

Okpara, J. O. (2011). Factors constraining the growth and survival of SMEs in Nigeria. *Management Research Review, 34*(2), 156-171.

Olaseni, M., & Alade, W. (2012). Vision 20:2020 and the Challenges of Infrastructural Development in Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable Development, 5(2), 63. doi:10.5539/jsd.v5n2p63

Peter L. Berger, & Thomas Luckmann. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* Anchor Books.

Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the twenty-first century.* Harvard University Press.

Romer, P. M. (2020). Human capital and innovation ecosystems in economic growth. *Journal of Economic Growth, 25*(4), 309-328.

Sanusi, S. L. (2012). The Role of Development Finance Institutions in Infrastructure Development: What Nigeria can Learn from Bndes and the Indian Infrastructure Finance. In 3rd ICRC PPP Stakeholders Forum, Lagos, Nigeria, July (Vol. 18).

Sen, A. (2021). Holistic approaches to development. *Journal of Human Development, 22*(1), 17-32.

Women's Movements and Developmental Change: The Politics of Grassroots Gender Activism in Africa

Boroh, Iwekumo Arabella
Department of Political Science
[1]Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State
[2]Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State
Mobile No:07038839816
borohia@fuotuoke.edu.ng

and

Barisuka, Prince Beteh
Department of Political Science
Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State
Mobile No:08063561541
barisukaprince16@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined how grassroot women groups and movement shape developmental change within Africa's local socio-political systems. These movements are pivotal to achieving inclusive and sustainable development across Africa and the interconnection between women movements and developmental change have specific focus on the politics of grassroots activism across the globe especially in African societies. They operate as mediators between communities and state institutions, influencing legal reforms, civic participation, gender-responsive budgeting, and socio-economic empowerment. They aim at fostering women inclusivity in achieving developmental changes in African countries in particular and the world over. It adopted gender and development theory (GAD) by Moser Caroline, 1984 and applied the desktop method of data collection. The study found that countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana exhibited higher densities of organized grassroots activism due to their stronger civil society infrastructure and more liberal political environments with rural and urban women prioritizing different aspects of empowerments. The study recommended that governments and development agencies should strengthen institutional partnerships with grassroots women's organizations and integrate their perspectives into policy frameworks to ensure gender-responsive and community-driven development across Africa.

Keywords: Grassroot Movement, Gender activism, Politics and Women Development,

Introduction

Gender and political activism are a major concern globally with a focus on women, particularly at the grassroots to address governance, structural inequalities, drive developmental change and women's movement are key in the developmental process as they form a collective agency that demands for equity, inclusion and justice. (Tripp *et al*, 2008; Badri & Tripp, 2017; Okech, 2021). These movements do not only advocate for legal reform or increased representation, but also engage in the redistribution of social resources, influence cultural norms, contest patriarchal power structures, and reconfigure developmental priorities to reflect the lived realities of women and other marginalized groups (Berger, 2014; Gouws, 2019). Drawing from pre-colonial times and the colonial period, women's collective action emerged as resistance against oppressive policies, taxation, and land dispossession, as seen in movements like the 1929 Aba Women's Riot in Nigeria and other protests across East and Southern Africa. These early mobilizations not only challenged colonial rule but also questioned male-dominated leadership structures that excluded women from decision-making (Tripp et al., 2008; Berger, 2014).

Women's movement have moved beyond welfare focused roles to advocate for gender-responsive governance (UN Women, 2024; Gouws, 2019) because the late twentieth century marked a significant turning point with the emergence of what Tripp et al. (2008) termed new women's movements which was influenced by broader political liberalization processes across the continent, the spread of democratic governance, and the incorporation of international gender equality norms such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). This has birthed groups like the Women's Manifesto Coalition in Ghana who produced sets of demands around political participation, reproductive health, and economic empowerment, (Badri & Tripp, 2017). In South Africa, feminist movements have been at the forefront of advocating for gender sensitive legislation, challenging gender-based violence, and improving public accountability on service delivery and reproductive rights (Aadan, 2024). Similarly, in Nigeria, organizations such as Women in Nigeria (WIN) and the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) have worked to promote women's education, civic participation, and health awareness while bridging religious and regional divides (Okech, 2021).

Despite these achievements, critical gaps remain in both scholarship and policy regarding the deeper political and developmental implications of grassroots gender activism. Much existing research has focused on elite women's organizations, national legislation, or formal representation, often neglecting how local women's collectives navigate everyday power relations with customary authorities, religious leaders, and community gatekeepers (Bouilly, 2016; Kearney, 2016). Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on gender and development by demonstrating that women's movements are vital engines of social transformation and that grassroots activism represents a critical site where development is not only implemented but actively reimagined. (Okech, 2021; UN Women, 2024).

Conceptual Review

Concept of Women's Movement and Developmental Change

The concept of women's movements and developmental change, particularly within the context of grassroots gender activism in Africa, represents an intricate and dynamic framework that captures the interconnection between gender relations, social transformation, and collective mobilization for equity and justice. Women's movements have been described as organized collective efforts led by women and for women, aimed at achieving gender justice, equality, and transformation of social structures that perpetuate discrimination and marginalization (Moghadam, 2020). These movements are not homogenous but reflect the intersection of multiple identities, ideologies, and sociopolitical realities. According to Mama (2018), women's movements in Africa are rooted in historical struggles against colonialism, patriarchy, and economic dependency, and they continue to manifest as dynamic expressions of agency and resistance in postcolonial societies.

Women's movements are seen as both beneficiaries and drivers of developmental change, as their activism challenges institutionalized inequalities and introduces alternative models of social transformation grounded in local realities and lived experiences (Tamale, 2020). Therefore, developmental change denotes the progressive transformation of social, economic, political, and cultural structures aimed at improving human well-being and fostering equitable participation in societal growth (Sen, 1999; Escobar, 2018). Within contemporary development discourse, change is no longer seen as merely economic modernization but as a multidimensional process involving the enhancement of human capabilities, gender equity, and inclusive governance (Kabeer, 2020). The conceptualization of developmental change is one that recognizes the roles of non-state actors, including women's organizations and movements, as central agents in promoting sustainable and participatory development (Cornwall, Harrison & Whitehead, 2019).

The Concept of Grassroot Activism

Grassroots gender activism represents the localized and often community-based dimension of women's movements, focusing on immediate and context-specific struggles for justice, access, and recognition. Grassroot activism typically involves the mobilization of rural women, market women, community leaders, and informal sector workers who, despite their marginal positions in formal politics, assert their rights through collective voice and solidarity (Tsikata, 2019). It is within this grassroots framework that the politics of women's movements and developmental change become most visible, as activism from below often catalyzes broader shifts in governance, policy reform, and cultural perception (Tripp, 2020).

As Akin-Aina (2018) observes, grassroots women's movements in Africa have redefined the meaning of political participation by linking everyday struggles such as access to water, land, education, and health with broader questions of justice, autonomy, and citizenship. Hence, the women's movements and developmental change also involves an understanding of gender as a social construct that shapes power relations and access to resources within societies. Gender, according to Butler (2019), is not merely a biological or natural distinction but a socially produced and politically regulated identity that determines the distribution of opportunities and authority. Ampofo (2019) notes that African women's movements have

evolved from nationalist mobilizations during independence struggles to contemporary formations that address issues such as reproductive rights, environmental justice, political participation, and economic empowerment. Therefore, the politics of grassroots gender activism represents a democratization of the political space, where marginalized women redefine citizenship and participation beyond conventional state structures (Mama, 2018) and this aligns with the broader conceptualization of developmental change as participatory, inclusive, and locally driven (Sen, 1999; Tripp, 2020).

Theoretical Framework
Gender and Development Theory (GAD)

Gender and Development (GAD) Theory was introduced in 1984 through the work of Caroline Moser and further strengthened by the ideas of scholars such as Lourdes Benería. The theory emerged as a response to earlier development models that focused mainly on adding women into development processes without questioning the deeper sources of gender inequality. The theory distinguishes between practical gender needs, such as income, healthcare, and access to water, and strategic gender needs, which include legal rights, political participation, control over resources, and long-term empowerment. GAD argues that meaningful development can only take place when both levels of needs are addressed and when women's agency, collective action, and participation in decision-making are strengthened. It therefore views women not as passive beneficiaries but as active contributors to social and economic transformation. The relevance of Gender and Development Theory is strong and direct because the study examines how women mobilization at the grassroots challenges unequal power structures and promote development. GAD provides a useful framework for understanding how gender relations within African communities' influence women's ability to organize, participate, and influence policy or social change. The theory also aligns with the study because it emphasizes collective action as a pathway to challenging structural inequalities.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design anchored on descriptive and analytical approaches. The choice of this design is premised on the nature of the study, which seeks to explore the complex interrelationships between women's movements, gender activism, and developmental change at the grassroots level in Africa. The study is grounded in secondary data collection and qualitative content analysis, drawing upon existing scholarly literature, reports, policy documents, institutional archives, and empirical studies that discuss women's movements, gender politics, and social change across the African continent. This approach enables a comprehensive interpretation of trends, patterns, and conceptual linkages rather than numerical generalizations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The data sources for the study include peer-reviewed journal articles, published reports from international organizations such as UN Women, the African Union (AU), CODESRIA, and various national women's coalitions, as well as academic books and theses. Data collection was conducted through systematic review and textual analysis of secondary sources from 2018 to 2024. These materials were obtained through digital academic databases such as JSTOR, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The

study employed thematic content analysis, in which the objectives were identified, and interpreted.

Results and Discussion

Across Africa, grassroots women's movements have emerged as pivotal agents of change, redefining the socio-political landscape through local mobilization and community-based activism. These movements are diverse in structure, ideology, and operational scope, but they share a common commitment to gender equality, social justice, and participatory development. They often emerge from lived realities such as poverty, violence, exclusion, and discrimination and translate everyday struggles into political consciousness and collective action (Ampofo, 2019; Mama, 2018).

Table 1: The table below highlights some key grassroots women's movements across African countries:

Country	Grassroots Women's Movement
Nigeria	• Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) • Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) • National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) • Women in Nigeria (WIN) • Market Women's Association
Ghana	• Network for Women's Rights in Ghana (NETRIGHT) • Abantu for Development • 31st December Women's Movement
Kenya	• Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO) • Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya) • Rural Women Peace Link
South Africa	• Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) Women's Network • Black Women's Federation • Rural Women's Movement (RWM) • Sonke Gender Justice
Uganda	• Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) • Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) • Action for Development (ACFODE)
Tanzania	• Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) • Women's Legal Aid Centre (WLAC)
Zimbabwe	• Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) • Musasa Project • Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association
Cameroon	• Association des Femmes Juristes du Cameroun • Women in Alternative Action (WAA)

Country	Grassroots Women's Movement
Senegal	• Association of Senegalese Women Lawyers (AJS) • Réseau Siggil Jigéen (RSJ)

CODESRIA, African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), and UN Women (2019
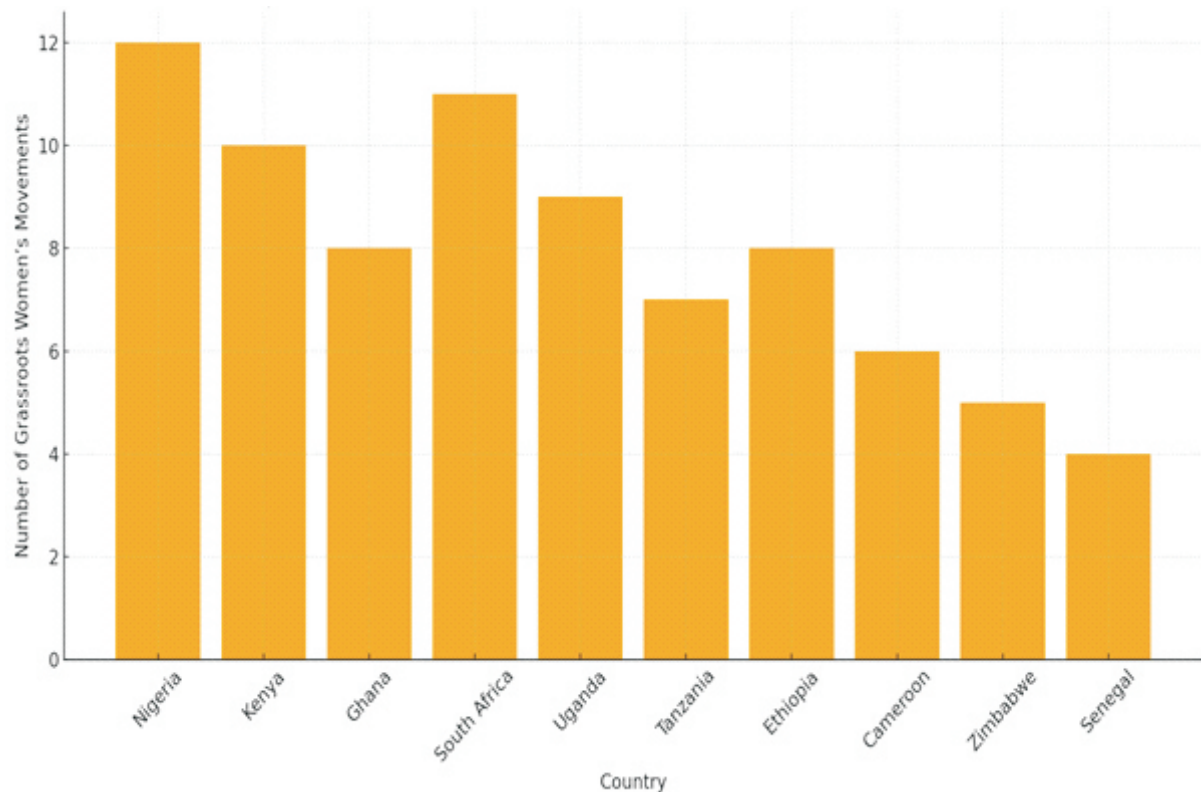
Fig. 1: Grassroots women's movements across selected African countries.

The graph below shows the distribution and intensity of women's grassroots activism across these countries, highlighting disparities in activity levels, institutional engagement, and thematic focus. The graph illustrates that Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya exhibit the highest density of organized grassroots movements, followed by Ghana, Uganda, and Tanzania. These differences can be attributed to variations in political openness, civil society infrastructure, and historical legacies of women are organizing.

How Grassroots Women's Movements engage with both formal
and informal institutions to advance Developmental Change in Africa

Grassroots women's movements in Africa operate across multiple institutional spaces both formal (state institutions, policy frameworks, and legal structures) and informal (community associations, religious networks, and traditional governance systems). Their engagement reflects a hybrid strategy of negotiation, collaboration, and resistance aimed at transforming governance and development outcomes (Tripp, 2020). In Nigeria, the National Council of Women's Societies (NCWS) has historically collaborated with governmental bodies such as the

Ministry of Women Affairs to influence policy on education, maternal health, and political representation (FOMWAN, 2021). Similarly, WRAPA has worked through traditional rulers and religious leaders to challenge discriminatory customary practices, demonstrating how informal structures can be mobilized to advance gender equity. In Kenya, the Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization has served as a conduit between local women's groups and formal political systems, securing resources for rural women through partnerships with governmental and international agencies (Tsikata, 2019).

In South Africa, the Rural Women's Movement (RWM) and Sonke Gender Justice have directly engaged with legislative institutions to ensure gender-sensitive policies in land reform, housing, and justice delivery. Meanwhile, informal women's collectives within the townships have continued to press for accountability and service delivery. In Uganda, FOWODE has institutionalized the practice of gender-responsive budgeting by training local government officials and ensuring women's priorities are reflected in national and district budgets (Ampofo, 2019). These examples illustrate how grassroots movements function as mediators between communities and the state, ensuring that development is inclusive and reflective of gendered realities.

How Internal Heterogeneity Shapes Priorities, Strategies, and Developmental Outcomes

Internal heterogeneity within women's movements comprising class, ethnicity, age, and political orientation plays a significant role in shaping movement priorities and outcomes. Africa women's movements are not monolithic; they are diverse spaces where intersecting social identities influence strategies, leadership, and representation (Mama, 2018; Crenshaw, 2020). For instance, in Nigeria, differences between urban professional women and rural market women often determine advocacy focus. While elite women may prioritize political representation and legal reforms, grassroots women emphasize livelihood empowerment and social services (Akin-Aina, 2018). In Ghana, ethnic diversity within NETRIGHT has necessitated inclusive strategies to ensure participation from both Akan-speaking and northern women. Similarly, in South Africa, the intersection of race and class remains central, with Black rural women often contesting the dominance of urban, educated elites in feminist spaces (Tamale, 2020).

Comparing Grassroots Gender Activism across selected African countries

In West Africa, movements in Nigeria and Ghana tend to focus on political empowerment and economic inclusion, often working within religious and ethnic frameworks to achieve legitimacy (Tsikata, 2019). In East Africa, movements in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania show strong institutional engagement through gender budgeting, reproductive rights advocacy, and civic participation (Tripp, 2020). Southern African movements in South Africa and Zimbabwe emphasize intersectionality, linking gender equality with anti-racism, labor rights, and post-apartheid reconstruction (Tamale, 2020) and the factors that enable or constrain these movements include political freedom, donor support, legal environments, and cultural norms. Countries with robust civil society laws and democratic institutions, such as South Africa and Ghana, have provided enabling environments for activism. Conversely, in contexts with authoritarian tendencies or religious conservatism, such as parts of northern Nigeria or Sudan,

women's activism often encounters repression, forcing movements to adopt informal, covert, or faith-based strategies (Mama, 2018; Ampofo, 2019). Despite these disparities, a unifying pattern emerges and grassroots women's movements across Africa remain vital to redefining development as a participatory and gender-inclusive process. They have transformed not only institutional structures but also consciousness and social values creating new frameworks for understanding justice, empowerment, and citizenship at the community level (Kabeer, 2020; Tripp, 2020).

Conclusion

This study concludes that grassroots women's movements are necessary for developmental change across Africa by functioning as bridges between marginalized communities and formal governance systems and ensuring that development reflects the real needs and experiences of women. The findings also show that internal diversity such as differences in class, ethnicity, and political orientation also made these movements more adaptive and inclusive, enabling them to represent a broad range of women's voices. However, their success depends largely on the socio-political environment, as movements in countries with more open and democratic systems, such as Ghana and South Africa, tend to achieve stronger policy impacts than those in more restrictive settings. Overall, grassroots women's movements have redefined development in Africa as a participatory and inclusive process rooted in gender justice and community empowerment.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the study recommends that; Governments across African countries should establish formal partnerships with grassroots women's movements by integrating their leadership into local governance councils, development planning boards, and policy implementation committees. Also, International organizations, donor agencies, and national institutions should provide targeted funding, training, and technical support to grassroots women's groups. Thirdly, policymakers should adopt gender-responsive and community-driven frameworks that recognize the role of informal institutions and cultural systems in shaping women's development.

Works Cited

Aadan, B. (2024). Role of feminist movements and activism in challenging and transforming oppressive structures and systems in different contexts and cultures in South Africa. *International Journal of Gender Studies,* 9(1), 41–49. https://doi.org/10.47604/ijgs.2355

African Development Bank (AfDB). (2019). *Africa Gender Index Report 2019: Analytical Report*. Abidjan: AfDB.

African Union. (2003). *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol)*. Addis Ababa: AU Commission.

Akin-Aina, S. (2018). *African women's movements: Transforming political landscapes.* Oxford University Press.

Akin-Aina, S. (2018). *African women's movements: Transforming political landscapes.* Oxford University Press.

Ampofo, A. A. (2019). *Feminist activism and development in Africa: The changing dynamics of gender politics.* Routledge.

Badri, B., & Tripp, A. M. (2017). *Women's Activism in Africa: Struggles for Rights and Representation.* London: Zed Books.

Barnes, B. R. (2021). Reimagining African Women Youth Climate Activism: The Case of Vanessa Nakate. *Sustainability,* 13(23), 13214. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313214

Beckwith, K. (2020). *Women's movements and social change: Mobilization, activism, and impact.* Cambridge University Press.

Berger, I. (2014). African Women's Movements in the Twentieth Century: A Hidden History. *African Studies Review,* 57(3), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2014.89

Bouilly, E. (2016). African women's struggles in a gender perspective. *Journal of African Studies,* 12(4), 221–240.

Butler, J. (2019). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity.* Routledge.

Cornwall, A. (2019). *Power and empowerment: Women's movements and development.* Zed Books.

Cornwall, A., Harrison, E., & Whitehead, A. (2007). *Gender myths and feminist fables: The struggle for interpretive power in gender and development.* Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444306675 soas-repository.worktribe.com

Crenshaw, K. (2020). *On intersectionality: Essential writings.* New Press.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Sage Publications.

Escobar, A. (2018). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press.

Gouws, A. (2019). Women's movements and feminist activism. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies,* 37(2), 123–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2019.1619263

Hasso, F. S., & Salime, Z. (2020). *Freedom without permission: Bodies and space in the Arab revolutions.* Duke University Press.

Hooks, B. (2020). *Feminist theory: From margin to center.* Pluto Press.

Kabeer, N. (2018). *Gender, livelihood capabilities and women's economic empowerment: Reviewing evidence over the life course.* Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence (GAGE), London, UK. Retrieved from https://www.gage.odi.org/publication/genderlivelihood-capabilities/gage.odi.org+1

Kabeer, N. (2020). *Revisiting women's empowerment and development: Theory and practice.* IDS Bulletin, 51(2), 1–15.

Kearney, A. (2016). *Grassroots Activists and Movements Against Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting Bridged with Political Alliances: Agency, Power and the Potential to Bring About Change.* Master's thesis, University at Albany.

Lwamba, E., Okech, A., & Goyol, J. (2022). Strengthening women's empowerment and gender equality: Movement lessons from Africa. *Global Public Health,* 17(6), 999– 1014.

Mama, A. (2018). *Beyond the masks: Race, gender, and subjectivity.* Routledge.

Mama, A., & Okazawa-Rey, M. (2020). *Feminist Africa 2: Gender, feminism, and development.* CODESRIA.

Moghadam, V. M. (2020). *Globalization and social movements: Islamism, feminism, and the global justice movement.* Rowman & Littlefield.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 16(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Okech, A. (2021). Movement building responses to crises and feminist organizing in Africa. *Journal of Gender and Development,* 29(1), 55–72.

Phillips, A. (2018). *The politics of presence: The political representation of gender, ethnicity, and race.* Oxford University Press.

Rowlands, J. (2019). *Questioning empowerment: Working with women in Honduras.* Oxfam. Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom.* Oxford University Press.

Tamale, S. (2020). *Decolonization and Afro-feminism.* Daraja Press.

Tripp, A. M. (2019). *Seeking legitimacy: Why Arab autocracies survive.* Cambridge University Press.

Tripp, A. M. (2020). *Women and power in post-conflict Africa.* Cambridge University Press.

Tripp, A. M., Casimiro, I., Kwesiga, J., & Mungwa, A. (2008). *African Women's Movements: Transforming Political Landscapes.* Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511800351

Tsikata, D. (2019). *Living in the shadow of the large dams: Long term responses of downstream and lakeside communities of Ghana's Volta River project.* Brill.

UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). (2010). *A Fifteen-Year Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in Africa.* Addis Ababa: UNECA.

UN Women. (2024). *The Status of Women's Movements in Africa.* Policy Brief, UN Women Africa.

Evaluating the Impact of ICT on Content Delivery in Primary Schools: A Quasi-Experimental Study in Gwarzo Educational Zone, Kano State Nigeria

Mustapha, Lawan Usman
Department of Education,
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State Nigeria
mustalbarii@gmail.com
08068584258, 08029116414

Hamidu Mohammed Jada, Ph.D
Department of Education,
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State Nigeria
hamid.jada@gmail.com
07038417827

Muhammad Kabir Idris, Ph.D
Department of Education,
Federal University Dutse, Jigawa State Nigeria
kabiridris1973@gmail.com
08036895064

Abstract

This study evaluates the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on content delivery in primary education using a quasi-experimental design in Gwarzo Educational Zone, Kano State, Nigeria. The research investigates how ICT tools influence teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. Two groups of primary school pupils were exposed to different instructional conditions: one with ICT-supported teaching and the other with conventional methods. Performance tests were administered to both groups, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests. Findings revealed that pupils exposed to ICT-based instruction performed significantly better than those taught with traditional methods. The study recommends stronger policy implementation, teacher capacity building, and sustained investment in ICT infrastructure for improved teaching and learning.

Keywords: ICT impact, content delivery, primary education, quasi-experimental, Kano State

Introduction

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in primary education has become a strategic imperative for enhancing content delivery and educational quality globally. ICT enables interactive, learner-centered approaches that improve engagement, facilitate understanding, and promote retention of knowledge (UNESCO, 2021). In the Nigerian context, the National Policy on Education underscores the role of ICT in transforming traditional pedagogical approaches (FGN, 2014). Research has shown that when appropriately deployed, ICT enhances the instructional process by supporting visual and auditory learning, providing access to digital resources, and enabling differentiated instruction (Adeyemo, 2010; Yusuf & Onasanya, 2004). However, empirical evidence on the actual impact of ICT on student performance in Nigerian primary schools remains limited, particularly in rural areas such as the Gwarzo Educational Zone.

This study seeks to fill that gap by evaluating the effectiveness of ICT-supported teaching on content delivery outcomes among primary school pupils. It adopts a quasi-experimental design to compare the performance of pupils exposed to ICT-based instruction versus those taught using traditional methods.

Background to the Study

Education remains the most powerful instrument for social transformation, national development, and economic progress. In today's knowledge-driven society, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a central pillar in promoting quality education, expanding access, and enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. ICT encompasses a range of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information. These include computers, the Internet, radio, television, projectors, and mobile devices. In the classroom, ICT facilitates interactive teaching methods, provides access to a wealth of educational resources, and enables learners to engage more actively in constructing their own understanding.

Globally, educational systems are undergoing transformation due to the rapid integration of ICT. According to UNESCO (2021), ICT not only enhances content delivery but also promotes inclusiveness and equitable access to education, especially in developing nations. Many countries have adopted ICT-based education policies to promote digital literacy and prepare learners for participation in the global knowledge economy. In developed nations, the use of ICT in education has become the norm, with technology being fully integrated into curriculum delivery, assessment, and classroom management.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government recognizes ICT as a critical tool for educational reform. The **National Policy on Education (FGN, 2014)** emphasizes the integration of ICT in teaching and learning at all levels of education. The **National Policy on ICT in Education (2019)** further underscores the need to use digital technologies to improve access, equity, and quality of learning. Despite these policy frameworks, the practical integration of ICT in primary schools particularly in rural areas remains limited due to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, poor teacher training, irregular electricity supply, and insufficient government funding.

Primary education is the foundation upon which the entire education system rests. It is at this level that children develop fundamental literacy, numeracy, and life skills that form the

basis for lifelong learning. Hence, improving instructional quality through ICT in primary schools is crucial for national development. In Kano State, and particularly within the Gwarzo Educational Zone, ICT facilities are gradually being introduced into some primary schools through initiatives by the government, NGOs, and private partners. However, empirical evidence on how ICT integration impacts actual teaching outcomes and pupil performance remains scarce.

Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the impact of ICT on content delivery and learning outcomes among primary school pupils in Gwarzo Educational Zone, Kano State. It compares the performance of pupils exposed to ICT-supported instruction with those taught using conventional chalk-and-talk methods.

Statement of the Problem

Although ICT has been widely recognized as a catalyst for improving education, its implementation at the primary level in Nigeria is still at a formative stage. Several government interventions, including the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme and the National ICT Policy, have emphasized the adoption of technology in schools. However, a large number of primary schools, especially in rural communities, still lack functional ICT facilities such as computers, projectors, and internet connectivity. Teachers often have limited ICT competencies, and many schools lack technical support personnel to maintain available facilities.

Furthermore, while several studies have examined ICT use in secondary and tertiary institutions, limited empirical research exists on the actual impact of ICT on **content delivery effectiveness** and **pupils' academic performance** in Nigerian primary schools. In particular, there is a need for evidence-based evaluation within rural zones like Gwarzo, where infrastructural challenges and socio-economic constraints may influence outcomes differently.

This study, therefore, addresses the critical question: **Does ICT integration significantly enhance the quality of content delivery and learning outcomes among primary school pupils compared to traditional teaching methods?**

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of ICT on content delivery in primary schools within the Gwarzo Educational Zone of Kano State. The specific objectives are:
1. To assess the performance of pupils taught using ICT – supported instruction.
2. To compare academic achievement between pupils exposed to ICT – based content delivery and those taught through conventional means.
3. To determine the effectiveness of ICT tools in enhancing primary school instructional outcomes.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:
1. What is the performance level of pupils taught using ICT-supported instruction?
2. Is there a significant difference in achievement between pupils taught with ICT and those taught through conventional methods?

3.   How effective are ICT tools in enhancing content delivery and pupil learning outcomes?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several ways.

- **To policymakers**, it provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of ICT integration in improving teaching and learning outcomes, thereby guiding future educational policy and investment decisions.
- **To teachers**, the findings will highlight the pedagogical benefits of ICT, encouraging adoption of digital tools to enhance classroom engagement and learning efficiency.
- **To curriculum planners and education administrators**, the study will offer insights into how ICT-based teaching strategies can be effectively incorporated into curriculum implementation at the primary level.
- **To researchers**, it will contribute to the growing body of literature on ICT and education, particularly within the context of rural primary schools in Northern Nigeria.
- **To pupils and parents**, it demonstrates how technology can make learning more interactive, relevant, and effective, ultimately improving academic outcomes.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on evaluating the impact of ICT on content delivery among primary school pupils within the **Gwarzo Educational Zone of Kano State**. The research is limited to public primary schools and targets **Primary Five pupils**. The ICT tools examined include laptops, projectors, radio educational programs, and educational videos. The findings may provide useful insights, they may be generalized to all rural primary schools in Kano state Nigeria due to contextual similarities such as level of ICT infrastructure, teacher competence, and local support systems.

Operational Definition of Terms

- **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** The use of technological tools such as computers, projectors, radios, and digital media in teaching and learning processes.
- **Content Delivery:** The process of presenting instructional materials and subject matter to learners.
- **ICT-Supported Instruction:** Teaching methods that incorporate ICT tools to facilitate learning.
- **Conventional Teaching Method:** Traditional chalk-and-talk instructional approach without the use of digital tools.
- **Academic Performance:** The measurable learning outcomes of pupils as reflected in achievement test scores.
- **Quasi-Experimental Design:** A research approach that compares outcomes between groups not randomly assigned but assumed to be equivalent.

Review of Related Literature

Below is a comprehensive review of related literature on the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on content delivery in primary education. The discussion of

the key concepts, theoretical underpinnings and empirical evidence from both local and international contexts. The review is organized under the following subheadings: conceptual framework, theoretical framework, empirical studies, and summary of the reviewed literature.

Conceptual Framework
Concept of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to a broad range of technological tools and resources used to create, store, manage, and communicate information. These include computers, the internet, television, radio, projectors, and multimedia devices. UNESCO (2021) defines ICT as the combination of networks, hardware, and software, as well as the means of communication, collaboration, and information access.

In the educational context, ICT encompasses digital tools that facilitate teaching and learning processes. According to Yusuf and Onasanya (2004), ICT serves as a catalyst for reforming teaching methodologies, promoting learner-centered instruction, and enabling access to global knowledge resources. ICT provides teachers with innovative ways to design lessons, while students benefit from interactive and self-directed learning experiences.

ICT in Primary Education

Primary education serves as the foundation for lifelong learning, making the integration of ICT at this level essential for developing basic technological literacy and cognitive skills. The introduction of ICT in primary schools helps pupils visualize complex concepts through multimedia, enhances motivation, and promotes participation. Studies (Adeyemo, 2010; Jegede, 2009) have shown that pupils taught with digital aids such as animations and educational games exhibit higher levels of understanding and retention than those taught with traditional methods.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government's National Policy on Education (FGN, 2014) highlights ICT as a key strategy for improving access and quality in education. Similarly, the National ICT Policy (2019) emphasizes equipping schools with modern technologies. However, the practical implementation of these policies remains a challenge due to insufficient resources, poor electricity supply, and limited teacher competence.

Concept of Content Delivery

Content delivery refers to the process of presenting, organizing, and communicating instructional material to learners in a way that enhances understanding and retention. Effective content delivery requires the use of appropriate pedagogical strategies, instructional materials, and communication techniques. Traditional content delivery in Nigerian primary schools largely depends on the "chalk and talk" method, where the teacher dominates the classroom with minimal learner participation.

With ICT integration, content delivery becomes more interactive, visual, and learner-centered. Teachers can use multimedia slides, animations, and educational software to make lessons more engaging. According to Aladejana (2007), ICT enhances the quality of content delivery by providing real-time access to updated information, enabling teachers to go beyond textbook-based instruction.

ICT-Supported Teaching and Learning

ICT-supported instruction involves the use of digital tools to supplement or replace traditional teaching materials. Tools such as projectors, videos, and online educational platforms can be used to demonstrate abstract concepts, provide visual simulations, and enable collaborative learning. ICT-supported learning encourages pupils to be active participants rather than passive recipients.

As Duhaney (2000) noted, ICT creates a more dynamic learning environment that accommodates different learning styles visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Moreover, ICT allows for differentiated instruction, where teachers can tailor materials to meet the individual needs of pupils. This enhances inclusivity and learning effectiveness.

Benefits of ICT in Primary Education

The benefits of ICT integration in primary schools include:

- **Improved engagement and motivation**: Pupils find lessons more interesting when digital media are used.
- **Enhanced comprehension**: Visual and audio stimuli help clarify complex ideas.
- **Increased collaboration**: ICT encourages group work through digital tasks.
- **Access to wider learning resources**: Teachers and pupils can use online educational content.
- **Development of digital skills**: Pupils acquire technological competencies early.

These benefits collectively enhance both the teaching and learning processes, leading to improved academic performance and higher-quality content delivery.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is anchored on the **Constructivist Learning Theory** and the **Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Model. Explanation of each theory will be seen below:**

Constructivist Learning Theory

Constructivism, championed by scholars such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, posits that learners actively construct their own understanding based on experiences. Knowledge is not transmitted directly from teacher to learner but constructed through interaction with the environment. ICT tools facilitate such interactions by providing learners with multiple representations of content, simulations, and opportunities for discovery learning.

In ICT-supported classrooms, learners explore, analyze, and interpret digital content, leading to deeper understanding. Teachers act as facilitators who guide learning rather than mere transmitters of information. This aligns perfectly with the use of ICT tools such as videos, interactive boards, and learning management systems that promote self-directed learning.

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Model

Developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006), the TPACK model emphasizes the intersection of three forms of knowledge required for effective technology integration:

1.   **Technological Knowledge (TK)** – understanding how to use digital tools.
2.   **Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)** – mastery of teaching methods and classroom management.
3.   **Content Knowledge (CK)** – deep understanding of the subject matter.

Effective ICT-based teaching occurs when these three areas overlap. For instance, a teacher who understands both the subject matter and how to use digital resources (such as educational software or multimedia) can design lessons that are both pedagogically sound and technologically relevant.

This model is highly relevant to primary education, where teachers must integrate simple but effective technologies to make learning active and engaging.

Empirical Studies on the Impact of ICT on Content Delivery

A number of empirical studies have investigated the relationship between ICT and teaching effectiveness. Some of which can be seen as follows:

Adeyemo, (2010) found that ICT tools significantly improve student understanding and retention in science subjects in Nigerian schools. The study emphasized that the use of visual aids helps pupils grasp abstract concepts better. **Jegede, (2009)** assessed Nigerian teacher educators' ICT competence and found that teachers with ICT training were more effective in lesson delivery and classroom management. **Owolabi and Oke, (2014)** conducted an experimental study comparing ICT-based and traditional instruction among primary school pupils in Lagos State. Results showed that the ICT group achieved higher academic performance, confirming the transformative role of digital technologies in content delivery. **Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu, (2005)** identified major barriers to ICT integration in Nigerian schools, including inadequate infrastructure, poor internet access, and teachers' resistance to change. **Yusuf, (2012)** in a study conducted in Kwara State, established that the use of ICT tools such as PowerPoint and educational videos increased students' interest and improved learning outcomes in English Language and Mathematics. **Ogunlade and Aremu, (2020)** also reported that ICT integration enhances classroom participation and collaboration among primary school pupils, particularly when teachers use project-based approaches supported by digital tools.

Hennessy et al., (2019) reported that ICT-supported pedagogy improves problem-solving skills and conceptual understanding among learners in Kenya and Uganda. **UNESCO (2021)** likewise concluded that countries that invested heavily in ICT-based primary education saw measurable improvements in learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness. These empirical studies affirm that ICT-supported instruction leads to better academic performance, supports constructivist learning, and enhances content delivery. However, most studies also caution that without adequate infrastructure, teacher training, and policy enforcement, the full benefits of ICT cannot be realized.

Summary of the Literature Review

The review of literature reveals that ICT is a vital instrument for improving content delivery and learning outcomes at all educational levels. Globally, ICT integration has revolutionized pedagogical practices by making learning more interactive, inclusive, and

effective. In Nigeria, several policy frameworks support ICT adoption, yet practical implementation at the primary school level remains weak due to resource limitations and low teacher competence. Theoretical perspectives such as Constructivism and TPACK explain how ICT facilitates knowledge construction and effective teaching. Empirical evidence from previous studies consistently shows positive effects of ICT on student performance and teacher effectiveness. Nevertheless, there is still a paucity of quasi-experimental studies that directly assess the **impact of ICT-based content delivery on learning outcomes among primary school pupils in rural areas**, such as the Gwarzo Educational Zone. This gap underscores the importance of the present study.

Methodology

The study adopted a **quasi-experimental design**, specifically the **pre-test and post-test non-equivalent control group design**. This design was chosen because it allows for comparison between two groups (experimental and control) without random assignment of participants, which is often impractical in educational settings. According to Nworgu (2015), the quasi-experimental design is suitable for educational research where intact classes or schools are used as groups. In this study, the **experimental group** received instruction using ICT-supported methods, while the **control group** was taught using conventional (chalk-and-talk) methods. Both groups were administered pre-tests and post-tests to measure the effect of the intervention on pupils' academic performance.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised **all Primary Five pupils** in public primary schools within **Gwarzo Educational Zone** of Kano State, Nigeria. According to data from the Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (Kano SUBEB, 2024), the zone consists of approximately 112 public primary schools, with an estimated population of **about 3,400 Primary Five pupils**. This population was considered appropriate because pupils at this level have developed foundational literacy and numeracy skills necessary to engage with ICT-assisted instruction and standardized testing.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of **80 pupils** was drawn from **two comparable public primary schools** within Gwarzo Educational Zone. The schools were purposively selected based on the following criteria:
1. Availability of basic ICT facilities (e.g., laptops, radio sets, or projectors).
2. Similar school size and academic performance level.
3. Accessibility and willingness of teachers and pupils to participate.

One school was assigned as the **experimental group (40 pupils)**, and the other as the **control group (40 pupils)**. The use of purposive sampling was justified because it ensured that the selected schools possessed the necessary ICT infrastructure to facilitate the intervention. Moreover, the two schools were comparable in teacher qualification, pupil population, and learning environment, which helped to control extraneous variables.

Instrumentation

The primary instrument for data collection was an **Achievement Test** designed by the researcher. The test consisted of **40 multiple-choice items** covering two core subjects: **English Language** and **Mathematics**. These subjects were selected because they are core areas in the Nigerian primary curriculum and are suitable for evaluating learning outcomes resulting from ICT-supported instruction. The test items were developed using the curriculum specifications of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) for Primary Five. The instrument was divided as follows:

- **Section A:** 20 questions on English Language (reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling).
- **Section B:** 20 questions on Mathematics (basic arithmetic, fractions, geometry, and problem-solving). Each correct response was awarded one mark, making a total of 40 marks.

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure **content validity**, the draft instrument was reviewed by **three experts**:

1. One expert in Educational Measurement and Evaluation,
2. One expert in Educational Technology, and
3. One primary school education specialist.

The experts examined the items for clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the curriculum objectives. Based on their feedback, ambiguous questions were reworded and irrelevant items were replaced. The final version of the test was approved for administration.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the achievement test was established using the **Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20)**, which is suitable for dichotomously scored items (right/wrong answers). The test was pilot-tested on **20 pupils** in a school outside the main study area but with similar characteristics. The reliability coefficient obtained was **0.82**, indicating a high level of internal consistency, as values above 0.70 are considered acceptable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012).

Experimental Procedure

The experiment was conducted in **four stages**:

1. Pre-Test Administration:

Both the experimental and control groups were given the same achievement test to assess their baseline knowledge before the intervention.

2. Instructional Treatment:

- The **experimental group** received instruction using ICT-supported methods, including multimedia presentations, educational videos, radio lessons, and computer-based learning activities.
- The **control group** was taught using the conventional chalk-and-talk approach without ICT tools.

The treatment lasted for **four weeks**, with three teaching sessions per week. Lessons covered selected topics in English and Mathematics drawn from the Primary Five curriculum.

3.   Post-Test Administration:
After the intervention, the same test (with reordered questions) was administered to both groups to measure learning gains.

4.   Data Compilation:
The pre-test and post-test scores were compiled for statistical analysis to determine the impact of ICT-supported instruction.

Method of Data Collection
Data were collected directly by the researcher with the assistance of two trained research assistants one for each school. The assistants were briefed on the procedures for administering the pre-test and post-test to ensure uniformity. Pupils were instructed not to discuss or copy during the test to maintain data integrity. All answer sheets were collected immediately after completion.

Method of Data Analysis
The collected data were analyzed using both **descriptive and inferential statistics**.
*   **Descriptive Statistics** (mean, standard deviation, and frequency counts) were used to summarize pre-test and post-test scores.
*   **Inferential Statistics** (Independent Samples *t*-test) were used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups.

The *t*-test was chosen because it is suitable for comparing the means of two independent groups. The hypotheses were tested at **0.05 level of significance**. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (**SPSS version 26**) was used to compute results.

Ethical Considerations
The researcher obtained official approval from the **Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB)** and the head teachers of the participating schools. Informed consent was sought from the pupils' parents through the school administration. Participation was entirely voluntary, and pupils were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. No harm or disadvantage was associated with participation, and all data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

Results

Table 1: Pre-Test Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean Score	SD
Experimental	40	45.30	6.85
Control	40	44.75	6.92

Interpretation: The pre-test mean scores for both groups were comparable, suggesting similar baseline academic levels.

Table 2: Post-Test Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Group	N	Mean Score	SD
Experimental	40	71.20	8.14
Control	40	56.40	7.62

Interpretation: The experimental group showed a significant improvement in post-test scores compared to the control group.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-Test Result for Post-Test Scores

Variable	t-value	df	p-value
Post-Test	6.85	78	0.000

Interpretation: The t-test result indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in performance favoring the ICT – Integrated group.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that ICT-supported instruction significantly enhances content delivery and student performance at the primary level. The experimental group outperformed their counterparts taught using traditional methods, aligning with prior studies that emphasize the effectiveness of technology in education as (Adeyemo, 2010; Jegede, 2009) Stated in their findings. The findings of this study corroborate existing research indicating that ICT-supported instruction significantly improves pupils' academic performance. The substantial increase in post-test scores among pupils in the experimental group demonstrates the effectiveness of ICT in facilitating understanding, retention, and application of knowledge.

The result that ICT-based instruction enhances pupil achievement aligns with **Adeyemo (2010)** and **Yusuf (2012)**, who found that learners taught with technological aids performed better due to visual stimulation and interactive engagement. The improved scores in the experimental group indicate that ICT enables a more student-centered approach to learning, consistent with **Constructivist Learning Theory**.

The result of this study is consistent with global evidence. **Hennessy et al. (2019)** in East Africa and **UNESCO (2021)** globally both found that ICT-supported instruction improves student performance, motivation, and problem-solving skills. Therefore, the findings from

Gwarzo Educational Zone contribute to the growing body of evidence confirming that ICT is a transformative tool in education when properly implemented.

These results validate the constructivist learning theory, which holds that learners construct knowledge better through active engagement and multiple modes of input. ICT tools such as videos, digital charts, and educational games stimulate multiple senses and encourage student participation, leading to improved comprehension and retention. However, the benefits of ICT can only be sustained with consistent infrastructure, teacher competence, and institutional support.

Summary of Findings

1. Pupils taught with ICT-supported instruction demonstrated a significant improvement in academic performance compared to those taught using conventional methods.
2. ICT tools enhanced lesson delivery by making content more engaging, visual, and understandable.
3. There was a statistically significant difference between the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control groups ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that **ICT integration in primary school teaching significantly improves content delivery and pupils' academic achievement**. The quasi-experimental evidence from Gwarzo Educational Zone demonstrates that pupils exposed to ICT-supported lessons achieved higher learning gains than those taught through conventional methods. The study reinforces the **Constructivist Learning Theory**, which emphasizes active learning through interaction, exploration, and engagement. ICT creates opportunities for learners to construct knowledge by interacting with multimedia resources and digital simulations. Furthermore, the findings affirm the **Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK)** framework, highlighting that effective teaching in the digital era requires a combination of technological proficiency, pedagogical competence, and subject knowledge. However, the success of ICT integration depends largely on teacher capacity, adequate infrastructure, and supportive policies. Without these, the potential of ICT to transform teaching and learning in Nigeria's primary schools cannot be fully realized.

Recommendations

1. Governments should scale up ICT infrastructure in public primary schools.
2. Regular ICT-based training should be offered to teachers to enhance their instructional competence.
3. Digital teaching aids should be included in curriculum implementation strategies.
4. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be established to assess the impact of ICT on learning.
5. School administrators should sensitize parents and community leaders about the importance of ICT in education to foster community participation and ownership of digital learning projects.

6. Collaboration with NGOs and the private sector can help fund ICT deployment in rural areas.

Work Cited

Adeyemo, S. A. (2010). The impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on teaching and learning in Nigerian tertiary institutions. *Educational Technology & Society, 13*(1), 62–73.

Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, S. E., & Iyamu, E. O. S. (2005). Using information and communication technology in secondary schools in Nigeria: Problems and prospects. *Educational Technology & Society, 8*(1), 104–112.

Aladejana, F. (2007). The implications of ICT and NKS for science teaching: Whither Nigeria. *Complexity and Learning in Primary Education Journal, 2*(1), 1–9.

Duhaney, D. C. (2000). Technology and the educational process: Transforming classroom activities. *International Journal of Instructional Media, 27*(1), 67–72.

Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). (2014). *National Policy on Education* (6th ed.). Lagos: NERDC Press.

Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). (2019). *National Policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education.* Abuja: Federal Ministry of Education.

Fraenkel, J. R., & Wallen, N. E. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hennessy, S., Onguko, B., Harrison, D., Ang'ondi, E. K., Namalefe, S., Naseem, A., & Wamakote, L. (2019). *Developing use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning in East African schools: Review of literature.* Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Jegede, P. O. (2009). Assessment of Nigerian teacher educators' ICT training and use of ICT facilities for teaching. *Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology, 6*, 771–779. https://doi.org/10.28945/1082

Kano State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB). (2024). *Annual basic education statistics report.* Kano: SUBEB Headquarters.

Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record, 108*(6), 1017–1054.

Nworgu, B. G. (2015). *Educational research: Basic issues and methodology* (3rd ed.). Nsukka: University Trust Publishers.

Ogunlade, O. O., & Aremu, A. (2020). ICT integration and students' collaborative learning in Nigerian primary schools: Challenges and prospects. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research, 7*(2), 198–205. https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.509.2020.72.198.205

Owolabi, J., & Oke, M. (2014). Comparative study of ICT-based and traditional teaching methods on academic achievement of primary school pupils in Lagos State. *Journal of Education and Practice, 5*(23), 150–158.

UNESCO. (2021). *Digital learning in Sub-Saharan Africa: Progress and challenges.* Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Yusuf, M. O. (2012). Information and communication technology and education: Analysing the Nigerian national policy for information technology. *International Education Journal, 6*(3), 316–321.

Yusuf, M. O., & Onasanya, S. A. (2004). Information and communication technology in Nigerian schools: The role of the teacher. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Technology, 11*(1), 37–43.

Appraising the Intersection of Agriculture, Climate Change and Gender Inequality in Nigeria

Ndukwu, George Odochi, Ph.D
Institute of Development Synergy, Abuja
Email address: developmentcommunicationnig@gmail.com
Tel: 08060219952

Inyang, Mayen-Julia Paul, Ph.D
Federal College of Agriculture, Isiagu Ebonyi State
Email Address: mudotai@yahoo.com
Tel: 07032122786

and

Chiekezie, Patricia Nwamaka, Ph.D
Federal College Of Agriculture, Isiagu Ebonyi State
Email Address: chiekeziepatricia1@gmail.com
Tel: 07030610050
Corresponding author: mudotai@yahoo.com

Abstract

Evidence of agriculture being highly gendered in Nigeria. shows vulnerabilities to environmental variability that persists in agricultural productivity in Nigeria. These reflect persistent inequality and negative outcomes for girls and women. Closing gender equality gaps has been seen to contribute to women's empowerment, with access and ability to make strategic life choices, particularly in situations where this ability had been denied to them in terms of agricultural productivity and climate vulnerability. This paper established a nexus between gender dimensions of agriculture, environment and climate change and specifically examine their intersection through gender inequality in Nigeria. Also, it points at the understanding of how gender mediates opportunities to increase agricultural productivity and livelihoods for women and their households and their adaptability to environmental vulnerabilities. The paper adopted the theoretical framework of Intersectionality and Gender Relations Framework. It relied on qualitative desk review as secondary data were synthesized and content analyzed. Findings revealed that effects of climate change on human society and our ability to mitigate and adapt to them are mediated by social factors inclusive of gender.

Disparities in the effect of climate change on women and men exist because of the social position of women in the family and the community and because climate change impacts the factors most essential to women's means of subsistence which are food, water and energy supply. The paper concluded that as gender inequality hinders a woman's chances and access to decision making in agricultural productivity, inequities in access to and control of land assets likewise have severe consequences for women's climate change adaptability in providing food, care, health, and sanitation services to themselves, their husbands, and their children. The paper recommended full and equal participation of women (and men) in decision-making, planning and implementation of gender-responsive climate change action in agricultural productivity.

Keywords: Agriculture, Climate Change, Environment, Gender Dimensions, Gender, Inequlity, Intersectionality, SDG-5.

Introduction

Women who make up a large percentage of the agricultural labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa are disadvantaged in productive asset ownership and have limited control over productive inputs such as land, water, and improved technologies (Kilic, Palacios-Lopez & Goldstein, 2015). Women who participate as farmers, workers, and entrepreneurs are confronted with more difficulties than men (Bello, Baiyegunhi, Danso-Abbeam & Ogundeji, 2021). Cultural norms and social bias likewise deny women equal access to education, training, extension contacts, and information, which in turn, worsen their plights and that of their households. This inequality has been a subject of discourse within the agricultural research community stemming from the perception that more needs to be done to address these gender gaps (Olaitan, 2023). Globally, there is empirical evidence that women have a decisive role in ensuring food security and preserving local agro-biodiversity (Abiala & Ojo, 2019; World Bank, 2022).

Women constitute about half of smallholder/subsistence farmers in Nigeria, but are only 15% landholders and 1% land owners (Olaitan, 2023). Among female smallholder farmers, gender relations shape how agricultural products are produced and how foods are acquired and consumed, which impacts food security and nutrition. Several women agricultural laborers do not own the land nor the tools and equipment they work with. Women receive only 5% of all agricultural extension services and work 20 hours more than men per week. This elevates the feminization of poverty (FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, 2020).

Nigerian women and girls' susceptibility to environmental changes is associated with the sensitivity and fragility of our natural environment, and its high dependence on environment-based livelihoods. Women are directly and negatively affected by poor agricultural productivity due to diverse environmental changes. Gender inequality further worsens effects of climate change (UNDP, 2015; Amusan, Akokuwebe & Odularu, 2021). Accordingly, gender dimensions' analysis in agriculture and the environment requires special attention when conducting activities to mitigate climate change vulnerabilities and risks faced by women and girl farmers to ensure adaptability of subsistence and small holding agriculture in Nigeria. The

Maputo Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa sets out parameters for the right to sustainable development, calling for realistic participation of women in development planning; guaranteed land and property rights; and access to credit, training, skills development and extension services to promote economic rights and combat poverty (Food and Agricultural Organization, *et. al.*, 2020). Consequently, this study aims to explores knowledge gaps and establish the gender dimensions of agriculture, environment and climate change specifically examining their intersection with gender inequality (SDG-5) in Nigeria.

Conceptual Review

Sex and Gender

Gender is understood as the roles, behaviors and opportunities a society considers appropriate for girls and boys, and women and men (sex) the social constructs of what it means to be a man or a woman in a given society. Gender roles may be shaped by ideological, religious, ethnic, economic, and cultural factors which are key determinant of the distribution of responsibilities and resources between men and women. Nigeria society is marked by gender differences, but these vary widely by culture and can change dramatically within or between cultures, over time. Understanding th importance of the differential roles, resources, and responsibilities of women and men of different ages, ethnicity, and social class is apt in ascertaining the nexus of gender with agriculture and environment (Van Eerdewijk & Danielsen, 2015; Danielsen & Newton, 2018).

Gender Dimensions

Gender dimensions (relations) are referred to as the gender perspective which involves power inclusive decision-making. Gender relations encompasses gender roles and the ability of women and men to negotiate these roles, determining how power is expressed in gendered ways, and across social groups as women are too often marginalized in their families and their communities, suffering from a lack of access to agricultural credit, land, extension services, decision-making power and rights to work (Verhart, van Den Wijngaart, Dhamankar, & Danielsen, 2016).

Gender Analysis

Gender analysis focuses on the different roles and responsibilities of women and men and how these affect society, culture, the economy and politics. For example, important differences existbetween women and men in their quality of life, in the amount, kind and recognition of work they do in agricultural production, and in their vulnerability to environmental variability (Ajani, 2019). Explicitly, while gender analysis focuses on the relations between men and women, such analyses disproportionately find that women have less access to, and control of, resources than men.

Gender, Climate Change and Food Security

Climate change threatens to reverse the progress made so far in the fight against hunger and malnutrition. The assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC), climate change augments and intensifies risks to food security for the most vulnerable countries and populations in sub-Saharan Africa. Extraordinary response to climate change and environmental variabilities are requisite forthwith. The women populations at greatest risk are those dependent on agriculture and natural resources and   disproportionately affects given their vulnerability and restricted access to resources. Gender and social differences discriminate women's access to adaptation options, and even on information such as weather and climate data. In some cases, to cope with risks and changes, the only option can be to migrate, nationally or internationally, with a range of implications (World Bank, 2022)

More importantly, gender equality is a fundamental human right. Men and women have different coping and adaptive capacities that translate into gender-differentiated climate change vulnerabilities. Gender-based inequalities are mainly responsible for this difference in adaptive capacities to respond to the effects of climate change. Sociocultural barriers also inhibit women from effectively responding to climatic risk. Accordingly, it is thus crucial that the response to climatic stresses on the agriculture sector be not limited by gender-based constraints.   Empowerment of women and girls is critical for agricultural development and food security (UNDP, 2015; BasDefossez & Pagnon, 2021).

United Nations Social Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality

United Nations Social Development Goal 5 - promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, is commonly accepted as a framework for measuring development progress is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender in economic participation and decision-making (Oradi, 2023). The World Bank (2022), observes that despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women and girls are still much more likely than men to have less access to agricultural land ownership, credit for farm inputs, agricultural innovations training and well paid employment in the agricultural sector. They are far less likely than men as decision makers and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence. Gender parity, which is used to measure gender balance in a given situation, can aid in achieving gender equality but is not the goal in and of itself. Gender equality is the goal, while gender neutrality and gender equity are practices and ways of thinking that help in achieving the goal. Achieving gender equality in Nigeria requires eliminating harmful practices against women and girls, including gender wage gap, and other oppression tactics.

Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability Towards Gender Equality

In the Nigeria, the involvement of women in the agricultural sector is a means of achieving the objectives of sustainable development. The participation of women in the agricultural sector has over the years been largely informal and unrecognized due to the inherent gender inequality that exists in our larger society (Olaitan, 2023). It can therefore be concluded that a gender gap exists in agricultural labor participation with the males playing dominant roles as compared with their female counterparts.

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality-This posits that multiple social categories (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, disability) intersect at the micro level of individual experience to reflect multiple interlocking systems of privilege and oppression (i.e., racism, sexism, and classism) at the macro, social-structural level. Intersectionality provides the discipline of gender studies with a critical unifying interpretive and analytical framework for re-framing how gender scholars conceptualize, investigate, analyze, and address disparities and social inequality in agriculture and environment variability in Nigeria (Bowleg, 2012).

The Gender Relations Framework (GRF)- This is an analytical tool by Kabeer (1994) that builds on conceptualization of empowerment and its three interrelated dimensions – resources, agency, and achievements (Van Eerdewijk, Wong, Vaast, Newton, Tyszler & Pennington, 2017). In the GRF, women's empowerment leading to agricultural sustainability and environmental factors adaptability is a dynamic process that relies on the transformation of gender relations (Danielsen & Newton 2018), and shaped via a continuum of choice and control that is negotiated through access to resources as well as community structures (Eger, Miller, & Scarles, 2018).

The GRF examines four domains which are division of labor and roles, access and control over resources and benefits, intra-household decision-making, and social and gender norms. All four domains of the GRF interact and are interconnected, and are defined as four conceptual tools used as a basis for conducting gender analysis in the study. These tools are presented as four dimensions of gender relations, which interact to affect the empowerment of women and girl smallholder/subsistence farmers (Van Eerdewijk & Danielsen, 2015; Verhart, N., van Den Wijngaart, A., Dhamankar, M., & Danielsen, K., 2016; Danielsen & Newton 2018).

The conceptual framework of the study`s gender analysis approach draws on the following perspectives as postulated by Van Eerdewijk and Danielsen (2015):

I.   Gender as a social relation division of labour and roles- This concept shifts attention away from looking at women and men as isolated categories to looking at the social relationships through which they were mutually constituted as unequal social categories in different productive functions related to agriculture and environment, and community related roles.

ii. Gender norms – This implies a set of social rules and assumptions about what men and women should do, how and with what resources, and the status of individuals and their relative value in society. Gender norms are likely to constraint opportunities in agricultural production and environmental sustainability.

iii. Access to and control over resources- This relates to unequal distribution of resources between women and men. Access refers to the opportunity to use resources and benefits, whereas having control is being able to define and decide their use. Gender analysis entails examining how these are distributed by gender and how this is affected by gender relations.

iv.   Decision-making - This concerns the analysis of who is involved in whichever decisions in agricultural production, and the unpacking the nature of that involvement. For the study, it is critically important to understand decision-making around, labour allocations, and income and benefits from the production with a focus on n women smallholder farming becoming more productive and profitable, as a result of shifts in decision-making from women to men.

Methodology

The study anchors on qualitative desk review of literature on gender, agriculture and environment in Nigeria. Secondary data sources were synthesized from the internet and a range of gender, agricultural and environmental related sources were content analyzed.

Discussion of Findings

Gender Dimensions in Women's Participation in Agriculture in Nigeria

Many factors impact on food security and nutrition when considering gender relations. For instance, the agricultural roles men and women perform and who owns or has user rights over land, and other assets like livestock influence control over their output and access to income. Women have access to less than 20 per cent of available agricultural resources. This leads non-access to decision making opportunities for women and girls -a fundamental negative social norm and gender bias that drives and perpetuate gender inequality (FAO, *et. al.*, 2020).

Gender Dimensions in Women's Vulnerability and Adaptability to Environmental Factors

A nexus exists between climate change and environment-based livelihoods, and are closely linked with gender dimensions. African women, nay Nigeria on the frontlines climatic change, are poorly equipped for adaptations. Disparities in the effect of climate change on women and men exist because of the social position of women in the family and the community- climate change affects the factors most essential to a woman's means of subsistence - food, water and energy (United Nations, 2020). Climatic environmental change alters the allocation of tasks and time in different ways for men and women. For example, water stress in rain-fed agriculture decreases the time available for food production and preparation as well as participation in other income-generating activities, and likely affects household food security and nutritional wellbeing (UN Women, 2022).

The productivity of women in subsistence/smallholder agriculture depends on the services provided by well-functioning ecosystems, including soil fertility, freshwater delivery, pollination and pest control. Smallholder farming practices in turn, affect the condition of ecosystems. These impacts are not always negative, but poverty and immediate needs can drive women smallholders to put pressure on ecosystems through habitat modification, over extraction of water and nutrients, and use of pesticides (Onah, & Horton, 2018).

Gender Inequality in Decision Making and Access to Agricultural Assets

Various micro level studies in Nigeria reveal that men make more decisions about farming and control productive resources (Alexander, Nabalamba & Mubilia, 2011; Ajani 2019).

Inequities in access to and control of assets have severe consequences for women's ability to provide food, care, health, and sanitation services to themselves, their husbands, and their children, especially their female children. Gender inequality hinders a woman's chances of access to decision making and affects her and her household's food security (Van Eerdewijk, *et. al.*, 2017).

Conclusion

There is an increasing amount of literature establishing the link between gender and agricultural sustainability, especially regarding sustainable farming practices. Alternative practices are therefore seen as a way to *challenging the traditional gender-based division of agricultural labor.* The study points at the benefits of gender dimensions' intersection in agriculture and environment. In adapting intersectionality framework towards sustainable climate action in Nigeria, the paper focused on gender dimensions and inequalities in choice, voice, and influence over agricultural resources and adaptability to environmental factors.

Although the paper focuses preponderantly on women, differential roles and responsibilities of women and men of different ages and social class was kept in mind in ascertaining gender intersection with agriculture and environment changes. A key finding is that it is important not merely to focus on women's vulnerabilities, but also to understand their unique capabilities in adaptation to climate change. Climate change presents threats to attainment of the Social Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to SGD-5. More attention must be given to women and girls adaptation to environmental and climate change.

Recommendations

In conformity with the study findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

I. The three tiers of government in Nigeria and all stakeholders must begin to initiate multi-stakeholder processes to develop a gender road map that evoke public acceptance of the need to combat gender inequalities and inequities.

ii. As environmental change has specific differentiated impacts on women, girls, men and boys in Nigeria, using a gender-specific policy transformative approach is thus an appropriate way to investigate the dynamic relationships between agriculture, environmental change and gender equality, as well as between impacts on sustainability.

Work Cited

Abiala, A.F & Ojo, A.A (2019). Role of Women in Agriculture for Sustainable Economic Development: `A Conceptual Review. 1st National Conference of WITED, Ilaro Chapter. The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro August 13-16, 2019. Pages 338-343.

Ajani, O.I.Y (2019). Gender Dimensions of Agriculture, Poverty, Nutrition and Food Security in Nigeria. *Nigeria Strategy Support Program (NSSP) Background Paper No. NSSP 005* International Food Policy Research Institute

Alexander, P., Nabalamba, A. & Mubilia, M. (2011). The Link Between Climate change, gender and development in Africa. *The African Statistical Journal*, Volume 12, 139-148

Amusan, L.1., Akokuwebe, M.E. & Odularu, G. (2021). Women Development In Agriculture As Agency For Fostering Innovative Agricultural Financing In Nigeria. *Afr. J. Food Agric. Nutr. Dev.;* 21(7): 18279-18299 https://doi.org/10.18697/ajfand.102.19345

BasDefossez, F. & Pagnon, J. (2021). What is the link between gender equality and agriculture sustainability? Institute for European Environmental Policy

Bello, L.F., Baiyegunhi, L.J.S., Danso-Abbeam, G. & Ogundeji, A.A. (2021). Gender decomposition in smallholder agricultural performance in rural Nigeria. *Scientific African,* Volume: 13, 1-6.   https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sciaf.2021.e00875.

Bowleg, L. (2012). The Problem With the Phrase *Women and Minorities:* Intersectionality—an Important Theoretical Framework for Public Health. *Am J Public Health.* 102(7): 1267–1273.   doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2012.300750

Danielsen, K., & Newton, J., (2018). Gender Strategy: African Chicken Genetic Gains Program. ILRI Project Report. International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Nairobi. https://cgspace.cgiar.org/handle/10568/91218

Eger, C., Miller, G., & Scarles, C. (2018). Gender and capacity building: a multi-layered study of empowerment. *World Dev. 106, 207–219*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j. worlddev.2018.01.024

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2015). Climate change and food security: risks and responses. FAO

Food and Agriculture Organization of The United Nations [FAO], IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, WHO (2020). The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI). Rome. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). http://www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA9692EN.

Kilic, T., Palacios-Lopez, A. & Goldstein, M. (2015). Caught in a productivity trap: a distributional perspective on gender differences in Malawian Agriculture *World Dev.*, 70: pp. 416 463

Olaitan, Z.M. (2023). Gender Participation and Agricultural Development Projects in Nigeria. African Journal of Gender, Society and Development (formerly Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa) Vol. 12, No. 3: 1 -8. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-aa_jgida1_v12_n3_a2

Onah, M. N. & Horton, S., (2018). Male-female differences in households' resource allocation and decision to seek healthcare in south-eastern Nigeria: results from a mixed methods study. *Soc. Sci. Med*. 204, 84–91. doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.03.033.

Oradi (2023). SDG #5: An Appraisal Of Nigeria's SDG Gender Equality Project info@oradi.org

UN Women (2022), 'Facts & Figures on Gender & Climate Change', Global Gender and Climate Alliance. UN Women. New York.

United Nations (2020). *Human development report (HDR) for Nigeria*. New York: UnitedNations

Van Eerdewijk, A. & Danielsen, K. 2015. *Gender matters in farm power—gender dynamics in small-scale mechanization*. Amsterdam, The Netehrlands: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT). https://www.kit.nl/publication/gender-matters-in-farm-power-2/.

Van Eerdewijk, A., Wong, F., Vaast, C., Newton, J., Tyszler, M. and Pennington, A. (2017).   *White Paper: A conceptual model of women and girls' empowerment*. Amsterdam, The Netehrlands: Royal Tropical Institute (KIT).

Verhart, N., van Den Wijngaart, A., Dhamankar, M., & Danielsen, K. (2016). *Bringing Agriculture and Nutrition Together Using a Gender Lens. KIT Working Papers. Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam (KIT). https://www.kit.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Bringing-agriculture-and-nutrition-together-using-a-gender-lens.pdf.

World Bank (2022). Closing Gaps, Increasing Opportunities: A Diagnostic on Women's Economic Empowerment in Nigeria. Washington, DC: World Bank. http://hdl.handle.net/10986/37225.

Alleviating Examination Malpractices in Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions through Human Values Education

Grace Olufolake Olufunmike Alofun, Ph.D
Tayo Raymond Ezekiel Eegunlusi, Ph.D
Grace Olukemi Adebola, Ph.D
Marcel Ikechukwu Sunday Onyibor, Ph.D
Moses Oludare Aderibigbe, Ph.D
Mayokun Joyce Olowoniyi, Ph.D
Kehinde Falana
Department of General Studies,
School of Physical Sciences,
Federal University of Technology, Akure

Abstract

In recent times, examination malpractices (EMs) have become a conspicuous and prevalent form of misconduct in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. Despite various regulations and interventions by government agencies and school administrators, through policy interventions, curriculum reforms, and the use of information and telecommunications technology (ICT), the yearly number of expelled students as a result of this academic fraud is on the increase. This surge is worrisome because it not only threatens the integrity and quality of education but also undermines individual and national development. The origin of examination malpractice is attributed to moral decadence and the neglect of fundamental values, has been the subject of extensive research. Yet, human value education, which is one of the key strategies capable of providing solutions to the problem of EMs, is given less attention. This paper employed the methods of conceptual and historical analysis, considering the postulations of three prominent philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, and Kant).who have discussed human values. It pursued the objective of filling the above lacuna by showing how emphasis on the importance of virtues, through the teaching of value education, can shape moral conduct. Thus, it argued for the necessity of introducing and teaching human values, particularly at the entry points of early education, to shape students' young and malleable minds so that they can imbibe good moral conduct that can discourage examination misconduct(s). These approaches aim at inculcating in students the right moral attitude to resist unethical conduct/behaviours so as to act right.

Keywords: Alleviating, Examination Malpractice, Values Education, Institutions

Introduction

Education, whether informal or formal, is the means of acquiring knowledge that leads to the development of skills, attitude, habits, values, that prepares individuals for the task of positively impacting society in all its spheres. As part of formal education, tertiary education is a tool which the government and the populace depend on to harvest a competent workforce, with requisite expertise, that will serve in different capacities and contribute positively to its socio-economic and political development (Olagbemiro, 2014). The Federal ministry of Education (2007) expresses the Nigeria Government's desire to make tertiary education relevant to manpower training, self-reliance, national unity and international understanding. This is why, apart from working in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which affirms the necessity of quality education, the Nigeria government aim at meeting the remaining 16 SDGs, is through quality education.

While the above national drive is lofty, the quest for certification by institutions and establishments' is endangering this objective. This poses a monumental and detrimental challenge to national integrity. Regrettably, despite various regulations and interventions by government agencies and school administrators in recent times, especially through policy interventions, curriculum reforms and the use of information and telecommunications technology (ICT), the number of rusticated students a result of EM is on the increase. Examination, which is a formal test of knowledge or ability in particular subjects, especially by means of answering questions or practical exercises (**Bilyakovska, 2022**), is generally adopted. As such, it has become a process of determining whether or not candidates have reached a certain level of performance, competence and learning that would certify them to be promoted to a higher level, or ascertain their qualifications for certain public and private positions at graduation ("Norms of Certification", 2023). On a definite note, EMs are various irregularities or negative acts or the deliberate acts of wrongdoing or cheating by candidates or any group of candidates before, during and after examinations (Bibi, Muhammad &Dahiru, 2020). Types of EM include impersonation, plagiarism, bribery, theft, falsification andcollusion (Njoku & Njoku, 2016).

The surge of EMs in Nigeria is worrisome because it not only threatens the integrity and quality of education but also undermines individual and national development (**Okanezi & Eguzozie, 2018**). The origin of EMs, attributed to moral decadence and the neglect of fundamental values, has been the subject of extensive research. Yet, human value education, which is one of the key strategies capable of providing solutions to the problem of EMs, is given less attention. In order to avert this scourge of EMs in Nigerian universities, this research proposes the introduction of human values education to achieve the task of attitudinal changes and modification of conduct among students. To address this, this paper adopts the methods of conceptual and historical analyses through using the conceptual insights of prominent philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, and Kant who have discussed human values extensively in relation to education. Hence, the main objective of the paper is to stress the importance of virtues through the teaching of values as what is essential for shaping moral conduct.

Literature Review

Examination Malpractices is described by scholars as a deliberate and erroneous act, contrary to official rules and regulations governing an examination (Eneh and Eneh, 2014; Ndifon& Cornelius-Ukpepi, 2014). Alhassan and Anya (2017) added that EM is a deed or prearrangement from which an examinee is programmed to derive illegal and illicit advantage over and above other candidates in respect of a given examination. In Nigeria, Onyibe, Uma & Ibina (2015) reported that EM first occurred in 1914 when the Senior Cambridge Local Examination leaked. The next case was in 1948, when the history paper in Nigeria was cancelled for having a foreign paper related to the examination being conducted. In addition, the West African Examination Council, established in 1952, discovered leakages in the First School Leaving (WASSCE) and General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examinations, respectively, in 1963.

While condemning the disreputable act as detrimental to the well-being of society, scholars such as Alhassan and Anya (2017), Ndifon& Cornelius-Ukpepi (2014), Oko & Adie (2016), and Danmole (2023) have identified and organised the causal factors of EMs into the following categories:

a. Society-related factors, which include undue emphasis on certificates, poor staffing of schools, laxity in prosecuting offenders, and inadequate funding;
b. Institution-related factors – too difficult examination questions, poor invigilation, and lack of conducive examination conditions;
c. Teacher-related factors – threat to fail students, lack of commitment, anxiety caused by non-completion of syllabus, obsolete course materials, and incessant strike actions;
d. d. Learner-related factors – fear of failure, inadequate preparation, and desire to meet societal expectations, low self-esteem, and
e. Group related factors, which include activities of parents/guardians, examination officials, examination boards, computer operators, and law enforcement agents.

Eneh and Eneh (2014), in a not completely dissenting voice, opined that EM is rampant in Nigeria because the education system lacks the appropriate education technology (AET), which aids in producing entrepreneur-ready school-leavers and graduates by enabling the learners to discover the environment and derive skills for economic self-reliance and poverty eradication. McCabe & Trevino (1997) averred that peer pressure or behaviour was by far the strongest influence on academic dishonesty. According to Anderman and Murdock (2007), students who belong to clubs, fraternities and other groups learn the strategies, innovations, motivations, values, beliefs, rationalisations and behaviour of their peers.

Other studies show that students model peer behaviour under certain social conditions, gender factors, for instance, while McCabe & Trevino (1997), and Hughes & McCabe (2006) argued that male students engage in EM more than female students, study by Uyanah (2020) showed that girls are as equally prone to engage in EM as boys in other to show affinity to and help a friend. EM, therefore, is a cankerworm that has devastating consequences on the educational system and society at large. It leads to a decline in the quality of education gained in the citadels of learning, and this has a resultant negative impact on the quality of the workforce, who are the drivers of the socio-economic sphere of the country. Thus, EM affects nation

building because candidates who graduated from the university through such fraudulent means would become square pegs in round holes when gainfully employed in the workforce of the nation (Oko & Adie, 2016). According to Newsman (2008), cited in Alofun (2014), the relationship between teaching and learning is that those taught acquire a prescribed body of knowledge and sets of values, which are taken to reflect a society's selection of what it wants most to transmit to its citizens and requires the future workforce to do.

One can infer from the literature reviewed so far that EM impedes the correlation between teaching and learning in the tertiary institutions, and many products of these institutions fall short of their expectations and are found unfit for employment in many companies. As Babalola (2007), Chiemeke, Longe, Longe & Shaib (2008), Adekola (2013), cited in Alofun (2014) and Abdulkareem&Fasasi (2012) noted, there is a mismatch between teaching in the educational institutions and the needs of labour markets. If graduates of the tertiary institutions fall below expectations, then it means that something is fundamentally wrong. We can situate EM as one of the effects of the gap between teaching and learning in the universities. Consequently, there is a backlash on the Ivory Tower of learning, for as Olagbemiro (2014:7) asserts, the Universities are regarded as the Ivory Tower … and the staff … are the torch bearers while the students are those to whom the torch is passed on. Therefore, Nigeria's formal workforce is "manufactured" in the universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, technical colleges and other tertiary institutions.

Different solutions have been proffered for the elimination of EM in the tertiary institutions of learning. Eneh and Eneh (2014) opined that the education system in Nigeria lacked appeal, attraction, credibility, and relevance, that it stresses the study of books and charts to fill the mind, like a vessel with much dangerous information that are blurred together and become incoherent, and thereby leaves room for EM by students who could not make head or tail of what they have learned. Thus, they recommended that appropriate educational technology (AET) be introduced into the educational system to engender entrepreneurship drive, build entrepreneurial skills, impart self-confidence in learners and empower them to tap into the munificent natural endowment in Nigeria.

Oko and Adie (2016), using the Cross River University of Technology as a case study, advocated and recommended that to curb EM in the tertiary institutions there must be attitudinal or value change from certificate acquisition to knowledge acquisition, reduction in students population per invigilator, building of examination halls to accommodate sizeable number of students, with wire net windows to forestall free flow of extraneous materials to and fro examination halls, and a general change in societal value system and attitude in the examination systems as measures.

While most of the above literature identified the causes and effects of EM, as well as recommended attitudinal change, none dwelt exclusively on the inculcation of human values to curb the negative effects of examination in tertiary institutions. This is the lacuna that this research work aims to address.

Values

The concept of value, on a general note, is wide in scope, but with particular reference to the context of this paper, it is through the lens of morality and education. Morality is a referent for the rules, standards or principles by which humans decide the conduct that is considered right or wrong, just or unjust, good or bad or good or evil. Morality is sometimes underpinned by considerations of values. Values are the fundamental standards or principles that individuals or societies hold as being essential, valuable or dear to them (Mohapatra&Serva, 2023). In other words, they are the ideals, goals, or attitudes that are important to an individual or a society. They serve as the guiding principles or standards of behaviour, providing a moral compass for navigating choices and decisions. Aravind (n.d) defines values as principles that reflect one's judgment of what is important in life, what promotes well-being, or what is prioritised according to a need level. To Lawrence Kohlberg, learning morals is a staged process, and only a few can rise beyond conventional morality to find their own subjective understanding of morality (Kohlberg, 1971; Kohlberg, 1981). However, when the individual can transcend the conventional morality to "find their own subjective understanding of morality," then values are born.

Values and virtues are interconnected because they both shape human character. While values relate to the principles considered desirable that guide conduct, virtues are the moral qualities we possess to make good decisions so as to live the good life. Virtues such as truth, care, fairness, kindness, honesty, justice, duty, and peace are integral parts of the human identity, towards which societies and individual endeavours gravitate. As Sogolo (2004) posited, feeling and practising care, seeking peace of mind and adhering to truthfulness are intrinsic human values found among all men in all societies at all times. No society can last long if the majority of its citizens embrace the opposite of these values, say when people live on vices such as dishonesty, ideas of falsehood, hate, violence, conflicts and such other tendencies constituting tendencies towards self-immolation. To this end, having defined EM as a dishonest act, and the majority of those who engage in the dishonest acts are in the largest population of the country, to protect the nation from self-immolation, therefore, there must be a way to cultivate the mind of the teeming youthful population, to imbibe the values which promote human well-being and order in the society. Values such as truth, care, fairness, kindness, honesty, justice, duty and peace are needed to sustain and strengthen value education.

Value education, according to Gaur, Asthana, & Bagaria (2023), is concerned with teaching and picking up the important things in life, what is right and what is wrong, what to do and what not to do, as human beings who desire to live a fulfilling life. The scholars reasoned that the day-to-day interactions in the family, community and society in general usually help us to develop these values, but that, as of today, these avenues for learning values have been compromised, and we tend to pick up our values from other sources, such as social media. Moreover, Gaur and his co-authors maintained that social institutions have failed, and efforts in reviving and strengthening them will take a while. They argued that the educational institutions can play a crucial role in providing a comprehensive understanding of human values by developing a holistic, humane worldview, which is in the interest of living a fulfilling life.

In the same vein, Francisco González (2012), maintained that the world is now changing at an unprecedented pace, as it is being driven by technological development and globalisation, and that the speed, depth and measure of the changes to which people are subjected continually cast doubts on many things that we once believed. The world process generates uncertainty, imbalances and conflicts both socially and personally. He argued further that, as the problem is being exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis, there is a need for shared values and ethics, because they are fundamental to the proper functioning of the economic, political and social network and, thus, for the well-being and development of the potential of every world citizen.

Philosophers' Ideas on Values, Good Conduct and Education

Philosophers have, at different times, shown how the teaching of human values can shape moral conduct and virtuous acts. We will look at three philosophers whose views on education are important to this work, namely: Plato, Aristotle and Kant. Plato's ideas on education, which can be found in the following books: *The Republic*, *The Laws*, *Meno*, *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*, emphasised the need for proper education of the citizen to create a moral and just society capable of producing a just people that can always perform a moral self-examination and are true and morally virtuous. To Plato, the main aim of education is to train and prepare the citizens for a just and harmonious society capable of producing morally true and virtuous citizens who can perform their roles, develop the society and keep it just and harmonious (Plato, 1997, *Protagoras*, 325d326c).

The training of the citizens should start early in life so that the roles they ought to play will be identified as they grow in life. (Plato, 1997, *Laws I*, 643e). The training or education should culminate in the development of rationality and wisdom in the philosopher-king, a person of high reason and wisdom, who will govern society to help its different parts or groups to play their roles well. The education that will produce the philosopher-king should be a lifelong one (Plato, 1997, Republic, VII, 540a). At the early stage of the education of the citizens, ideas should be screened, while only the things that can lead to moral virtuousness, truthfulness, courageous acts, and moderation should be taught (Plato, 1997, *Republic,* VIII, 543a-549b).By this, the state should have control over the training of children because their minds are flexible and easy to control (Plato, 1997, *Laws* VII, 804d).

Invariably, as revealed in Plato's allegory of the cave, education is supposed to enlighten the mind and help individuals to gain a good understanding of various issues affecting their existence after provoking a rational search for the truth (Plato, 1997, *Republic*, VII, 514-523). The educated person must escape the shadowy pit of ignorance after the attainment of knowledge, having a better and more real grasp of life issues than ordinary people who do not see beyond their noses. It is by this that society will train competent and virtuous people who can prioritise its happiness, by making wise decisions through focusing on the good of all,and by properly harmonising private and public interests.

To Aristotle, education aims at human happiness and self-realisation. "The man who is to be good must be well trained and habituated" (Aristotle, *1999, Nichomachean Ethics*, X, 1180a). Thus, happiness is the main goal of education. Education trains people to be virtuous, and by being virtuous, they live a happy life and attain total self-realisation. Invariably, by the virtues

developed through education, which include courage, justice, temperance and wisdom, individuals can live meaningfully and contribute to societal development. Education's holistic development of human beings should focus on the harmony of their character, mind and body. It should help them to moderate between the two extremes of virtue and vice to attain the mean in behaviour, to develop the self and the society without compromising virtue. Thus, Aristotle considers the mean as what is virtuous.

By definition, the mean is what lies between the two extremes of excess (too much) and deficiency (too little). However, this may not be a strict mathematical midpoint, but it is a fair and relative situation. Though we will just name a few that are relevant to our work, Aristotle identified several virtues as the mean. To him, courage is the mean between cowardice (deficiency) and rashness (excess). The coward avoids risks, the rash is reckless, but the courageous balances fear with confidence and faces what is dangerous with utmost wisdom. Temperance is the mean between being insensible (deficiency) and being self-indulgent (excess) (Aristotle, 1999, Nichomachean Ethics, Bk II, 1107-1110; Aristotle, *Politics*, VIII, 1342b). The temperate is moderate in the way he approaches and enjoys pleasure. The insensible shuns pleasure, while the self-indulgent is uncontrollable in the enjoyment of pleasure. Liberality, wise handling of money, whether giving or taking it, is the mean between the extremes of being stingy (deficiency) and being prodigal or wasteful (excess). Having proper ambition is the mean between the extremes of lack of ambition (deficiency) and being too ambitious (excess). Truthfulness is the mean between the extremes of false or deprecatory modesty (deficiency) and boastfulness or exaggeration (excess). Modesty, respect for moral rules or boundaries, is the mean between the extremes of being shameless (deficiency) and being bashful (excess).

Kant identified two rules by which humans run their lives: the hypothetical imperative and the categorical imperative. The hypothetical imperative is conditional in nature. It deals with the way of attaining certain ends by following certain conditions to achieve one's aim. Whereas the categorical imperative aims at not using people to achieve ends but letting them be ends in themselves. Kant has many formulations of the categorical imperative, four of which are: the "universal law" (Kant, 2015), the "humanity law" (Kant, 2017), the "kingdom of Ends" (Kant, 2020) and the "law of autonomy" (Kant, 2011). Respectively, they are stated thus: (i) "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature"; (ii) "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end and never as a means to an end"; (iii) "All maxims that stem from autonomous legislation ought to harmonize with a possible kingdom of ends as with a kingdom of nature."; (iv) "Act as if the maxims of your action were to become a universal law of nature through your will."

Invariably, a maxim becomes a law when an act is performed consistently. In dealing with the variants of the categorical imperative, common to them is that **individuals should never act unless they will their "maxim" (the reason for acting) to become universally applicable and leading to mutual respect because of wise choices deriving from acting in accordance with duty.** "In these various formulations, Kant expects persons to perform universally acceptable other-regarding actions which constitute general moral standards" (Eegunlusi, 2015). **Thus, the ca**tegorical imperative is the moral standard or principle stressing that one's reasons for performing an act should be that the performer of the act wishes his act to become the maxim

that everyone in the world can imbibe. As discussed by Eegunlusi (2015) in his reflection on Kant's ideas,

> To Kant, we are not just to be happy but be good. In being good, we need to give attention to our conduct. In doing this, Kant acknowledges the importance of acting based on duty. He thinks that duties are created by rules. Human action may run contrary to duty. It can also be in accordance with it and be carried out for different reasons than duty dictates. It may equally be performed because we lack other reasons for its performance, and act because it is our duty to do so. In seeking to understand what our duties are, Kant thinks we must not depend entirely on the passions and intuitions because they can mislead us. Rather, we must rely on a priori reasoning to arrive at a priori knowledge, which is obtainable without recourse to human experiences.

All the above, one way or the other, play out in Kant's views on education, in which he stresses the importance of dealing with the issues involving social responsibilities by allowing individuals to be autonomous. He believes that as humans develop moral principles, the moral principles will eventually shape their characters. As they get morally educated, they will develop autonomy and learn to make good moral judgements. To him, teachers are expected to train their students morally, to patriotically prioritise their duties to the state through devising a well-ordered curriculum that allows for a self-determined existence and acts influenced by critical reasoning and well-informed decisions. At this stage, while blending Kant's hypothetical and categorical imperatives, emphasising that individuals involved in examination issues need to follow certain conditions to achieve their goals to make things happen, we will emphasise the importance of virtue and moral duty in examination issues. Having outlined these philosophers' views, we will apply them to addressing Ems.

Addressing Examination Malpractice through Value Education: Plato and Aristotle in Focus

As seen above, philosophers have shown that teaching moral virtues can shape moral conduct and occasion morally virtuous acts, thereby promoting human values education. As emphasised by Plato, for there to be a just society, a nation's citizens must be educated to morally examine themselves and be morally virtuous. This should be inculcated early in life, as a child/student develops, whether at the initial entry point of his education or the various entry points along the different levels of his education (Kohlberg, 1984). This is necessary in Nigeria to assist children/students to appreciate the value of morality and develop the moral conscience to avoid vices, based on a very good understanding of issues that are morally virtuous and morally desirable. In the long run, this will help Nigerians to avert the moral crises that are the attendant consequences of lacking or improperly imbibing moral education.

Moral crises are imminent in every nation where people lack moral conscience and do not do a proper moral self-examination (Plato, 1997, *Apology*, 38a). One of the main problems of those involved in EMs – students and their accomplices – is that they do not think deeply about the moral implications of their activities or embark on thorough critical self-examination. In this situation, the salient questions they ought to ask themselves so as not to be immoral are

neglected. Children/ students in Nigeria should be trained to ask important questions and embark on proper self-examination to avoid a life of dishonesty, which leads to cheating and EM in school. The questions they should be taught to ask themselves include: Can I ever be regarded as a morally good person, one known for integrity, honesty, just moral standing, self-control, fair dealings, who is a good example to others and a pride to my nation, if I involve myself in EMs? Will cheating in an examination ever guarantee my having a moral collateral to be a patriotic person whom society can deeply respect, trust and cooperate with to ensure development? Involving myself in EMs, will my activities not violate human dignity, human freedom and self-respect, which will negatively reflect on my state in the comity of nations? By casting aspersion on educational integrity, through participation in EMs, will society ever consider me as a righteously courageous individual who can stand by its laws, defend the truth governing its affairs, or defend its national integrity in ways that guarantee peace and stability, or even consider me as a good or worthy ambassador deserving respect? EM can be curbed in any nation if students are taught to consciously and personally reflect on these questions (Eegunlusi, 2024).

Besides the above, the process of moral self-examination should affect every stratum of the Nigerian society, starting from the home (Plato, 1997, *Apology*, 38b-40b). Parents, in every family, should embark on self-examination to be effective in training their wards. Since this is basic to what they do and how they live in later years, socialising a nation's people, which should start early, should begin from the family, the primary agent of socialisation and the basic unit of society, which will inculcate in the child the ability to identify early the various divergent role expectations of the society.

In addition, parental self-examination can also help to train Nigerian children in manners that can lead to their pursuit of good and enviable moral conduct, as against what is obtainable in modern society, where some parents are the ones taking the lead in illicit moral conduct and examination practices. Parenting without a proper and high level of critical reasoning, wisdom and morally virtuous conduct will contribute to poor development of children and easily lead them to get involved in illicit examination practices without concern. Since people cannot model the moral conduct they lack or have not developed cannot be good role models to their children. A self-evaluation, with the mindset towards effecting positive changes in young people, will assist parents to be good role models. Good role models, parenting, usually spend their time impacting their children positively because of the legacy they wish to leave for posterity, their image and dignity, the integrity of their nations and the life they think is worth preserving for future generations. Paying attention to the emphasis on moral duty can help in this (Deign, 2010).

As seen in Aristotle's works, moderation can help the shaping of duties. Part of the personal orientation of self-examination parents' need is that of a proper understanding of moderation. Thus, Nigerian parents should train their children to be virtuous without going to any extreme in anything, if we follow Aristotle's teachings. Extremes can lead to violations of exam conduct (Eegunlusi, 2023). A rash or thoughtless action can lead to a violation of the courage to stand for the truth or promote morally virtuous acts, thereby revealing ignoble acts of EMs. Also, instead of being temperate and acting in accordance with good reason, self-indulgence in EM can ruin a good reputation, becoming an anathema, jeopardising the future. In the same way, shameless

and bashful involvement in EMs is already a denial of good, modest and sane conduct. Students who exhibit shameless and bashful examination conduct cannot be good contributors to the family and society, especially as the ideals for moral revolution concerning national integrity, cohesion and development are concerned, because their lack of a sense of morality and justice will continue to propel them towards immoral acts.

The family and the Nigerian society – through its various organs and institutions, viz: educational institutions, examination bodies; governmental arms (legislature, executive and judiciary; security agencies), non-governmental institutions (religious bodies, civil society groups, non-governmental organizations, etc.) and the media – should hugely influence Nigerian children's moral development through their programmes, by helping them to develop the consciousness of good moral conduct and reason well to moderate extremes (Eegunlusi, 2023). This can help them to be accountable to society, lead a disciplined life, consider the importance of a life of integrity, and the need to meaningfully contribute to societal growth through dedication to enviable moral conduct. Thus, they can be helped to act in line with moral duties, in which Kant prioritises rational reflections in his deontological ethics.

Application of Kant's Four Versions of the Categorical Imperative in Overcoming Examination Malpractices in Nigeria's Tertiary Institutions

Nigerian parents and society should aim at inculcating in their wards our earlier prescribed Kant's categorical imperative, namely, the "universal law", the "humanity law", the "kingdom of Ends" and the "law of autonomy."Regarding EMs, the "universal law" which expects individuals to act such that their acts can become globally acceptable or universally applicable standards of moral conduct conveniently denies universal applicability of the practice of cheating during examinations because it is wrong. It should then be the joint duty of the family, society and the various institutions of society to ensure that individuals in society, students and everyone that can be linked to the conduct of examinations in any way, trained from childhood and at the various levels of their education, imbibe moral ideals and practice the right moral conduct that can make them avoid involvement in Ems.

Besides, in this respect, children should be trained such that their conduct will be socially appealing and respect the laws of the land. In Nigeria, there are various laws against EMs, instituted nationally and by the various educational institutions. Violating these is already a deep sign of contempt for the nation and the institutions that instituted the laws. Yet, because every just society plays by its own rules, which are implemented by its people to ensure the protection of morality and justice, any violation of the rules is already a conscious rebellion against these rules, which will not ensure that the society becomes well-ordered (Rawls, 2001). The society, through its various organs, should train its members to be morally upright, to have the moral conscience to obey its rules and keep it well-ordered or void of anarchy. Where examination rules are obeyed and EMs are avoided, educational order and national development will be ensured in the long run.

The "humanity law" does not expect an individual to be used as a means to an end or as mere cannon fodder in achieving self-interest, which implies that the family and society should train individuals from childhood not to use other humans as means to an end. Nigerian children/students who are involved in EMs are deceptively and disrespectfully using others,

their fellows, examiners, the entire academic and national educational systems, security agents, etc., as means to the end of passing examinations. One way by which these individuals can avoid using others as means to an end is to see them as the "kingdom of ends". The "humanity law" then complements the law of the "kingdom of ends", which considers the essentiality of acting in good faith for others' mutual respect and benefits or treating others well or with dignity by first putting them in our own shoes (Piromalli, 2015). Those who think like this will not wish to use others but will first consider their importance and refrain from acts injurious to their interests. Hence, to avoid cheating in examinations is to avoid using others for one's selfish interest (Eegunlusi, 2015). By this, one aims at promoting a sensible and enduring academic culture that can guarantee mutual respect, dedication to collective duty and a good sense of fairness to others and the nation at large.

The law of autonomy, which emphasises the need for acting such that one's acts can become autonomous conducts or determinant of good moral acts, or the idea of subjecting oneself to ones' personal rational legislation, as against allowing oneself to be personally controlled by emotions, expects individuals/students to act from duty in obedience to their self-given, self-ordained or self-governed moral rules (Eegunlusi, 2024). Considering this, to act against the academic community by participating in examination theft is a violation of personal morality and sensible rationality. This equally violates personal, corporate dignity and human sense of responsibility. Thus, to avoid societal anomalies and pressures brought about by EMs, individuals should be trained to develop virtuous rules that will govern their affairs and help them to be individuals who are not susceptible to Ems.

If given adequate attention, the above versions of Kant's categorical imperative can help Nigerian individuals/students to become good moral agents who are responsible for the consequences of their conduct and guard against violating moral norms, including abstaining from EMs, in accordance with the demands of human values.

However, in considering the superiority of the categorical imperative to the hypothetical imperative, the latter should not be jettisoned but, in a way, should complement the categorical imperative. By this, in Nigeria, parents and guardians, teachers, educational administrators, governments, etc., should encourage individuals they influence to act based on the hypothetical imperative, to be driven by good life goals, usually the reason for cheating in examinations to obtain good grades that will result in excellent certificates. Students should be trained to think beyond certificates and acquire knowledge that will enable them to acquire skills and competence (Olagbemiro, 2014). They will excel more if they allow themselves to be driven by the goals of success beyond the mere acquisition of certificates. They should be trained, through self-assessment and rational consideration for others' interests, to be morally virtuous, by consistently performing good moral acts and never acting unless they consider **their reasons for acting as what can be imbibed by all or model good moral conduct. Such can lead to wise choices; occasion self-respect, other-respect, and mutual respect, in conformity with the demands of moral duty as far as dealings regarding examination sanctity are concerned.**

Conclusion

Arguing from the angle of the importance of virtues which advocate for teaching of human value, especially at early family life of a child and at academic entry points, as means of addressing Ems and sanctity of examinations in Nigeria, this paper **advocate for application of the views of Plato, Aristotle and Immanuel Kant for introduction and inculcation of moral values and virtues at the early entry levels of all schools.**

It also advocates parental and societal contribution to the moral development of youths through proper training based on proper individual self-assessment and intentional moulding of children into highly responsible persons who, through good personal moral evaluation, can lead morally virtuous lives (Aristotle, *1999,Nichomachean Ethics*, X, 1180a-1181b). This will aid in avoiding EMs, contributing to having very wise, rational and morally enlightened Nigerians. As a follow-up to this paper, the Nigerian society should fully boost parental efforts to intentionally educate the citizens and back this up with good laws. By concerted efforts, the philosopher-king in Plato's type of national education will produce citizens with an uncompromised moral standard. Thus, because of the malleable nature of the minds of children/young people, (Plato's and Aristotle's views,) the Nigerian state and its various agencies should influence them and assist students to develop into moral agents that can always in or out of examination halls.(Bibi, Muhammad &Dahiru, 2020). This may involve controlling the curriculum that is used in training students, since education can help them to get enlightened and gain a good understanding of the various issues of existence as well as contribute to raising them into wise, courageous, just, temperate, competent and virtuous people who can work things out based on proper self-realization and ingeniously balance private and public interests for overall advantage.

Recommendations

The paper suggests the following recommendations to curb Ems:

1. Educational institutions should focus on fostering the culture of integrity and ethical behaviour within schools at the point of entry, rather than relying solely on rules and punishment.

2. The schools should incorporate character education into their curriculum that will teach students about virtues like honesty, integrity and diligence.

3. Tertiary institutions should provide students with opportunities to practice ethical decision-making through case studies, discussions and real-life scenarios related to examination integrity.

4. Students should be encouraged to strive for excellence through diligent study and seeking help when needed, but not to the point of Ems.

5. Educational institutions should use teachers, alumni, and other positive role models to demonstrate virtuous behaviour that will inspire students to emulate them.

6. Tertiary institutions should strive to create a supportive community environment where students feel encouraged to uphold ethical standards and understand the natural consequences of unethical actions and the benefits of virtuous behaviour.

7. The laws guiding educational institutions on EMs should emphasise the consequences of immorality more than the punitive measures.

By integrating the above time-tested principles, educational institutions can create a culture where students are motivated to act ethically not just during examinations, but in all aspects of their lives. It is imperative, therefore, that we engage undergraduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions in value education to reorient them about EM, and to prepare them to live a meaningful life, allowing them to have a holistic perspective about life and existence, which will open channels for a happy and prosperous life.

Acknowledgement

Work Cited

Abdulkareem, A. Y. & Fasasi, Y. A. (2012). Reforms in Higher Education and the Challenges of Globalisation. *Educational Thoughts,* 9(1), 4-11.

Alhassan, A.B. & Anya, C.A. (2017). Forms and Consequences of Examination Malpractices in Nigeria's Schools and Universities: What Should the Stakeholders Do? *International Journal of Education, Training and Learning*, 1, (1), 9-21.

Alofun, G. O. O. (2013). The Value System in Nigeria: The Need for Social Reconstruction. *International Journal of Advancement in Development Studies*. 8(1), 90-94.

Alofun, G. O. O. (2014). Improving the Quality of Teaching in Nigeria's Higher Institutions. In A. S. Ayodele & A. S. Aremu (eds.), *Repositioning Nigeria's Tertiary Education for the 21st Century Global Market*. Intanitina Gim Publishers, 149-157.

Anderman, E. M. & Murdock, T. (2006). *The Psychology of Academic Cheating*. New York. Academic Press.

Aravind, A. (n.d). Ethics, Morals and Virtues. Retrieved on 11.09.2024, from, www.rajagiritech.ac.in

Aristotle. *Nichomachean Ethics. 1999.* Bk X, 9, William D. Ross (Trans.). Kitchener: Batoche Books.

Aristotle. 2017. *Politics.C.D.C. Reeve (trans.) Cambridge University Press.*

Badru, O. R.&Eegunlusi, T.R.E. (2015). Colonial Legal Reasoning in the Post-Colonial African State: A Critique and a Defence of the Argument from African Metaphysical Epistemology. *Thought and Practice: A Journal of the Philosophical Association of Kenya (PAK) New Series*, 7 (2), 11-39.

Bibi. M., Muhammad, D.K. & Dahiru, U. (2021) Types and Levels of Involvement in Examination Malpractice as perceived by Undergraduates in Gombe State University. Ajol-file-journals_351_articles_205019_submission_proof_205019-4189-511747-1-10-20210324.pdf

Bilyakovska, O. 2022. Test As An Effective Means Of Assessing The Quality Of Students' Knowledge, Academic Notes Series Pedagogical Science, 1(204):16-20. DOI:10.36550/2415-7988-2022-1-204-16-20.

Onyibe, C.O., Uma, U.U.& Ibina, E. (2015). Examination Malpractice in Nigeria: Causes and Effects on National Development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (26),12-17.

Danmole, B. (2023). The Menace of Examination Malpractice among Young People in Nigeria. *Human and Environmental Development Agenda*. A Non-Government Organisation Publication. Retrieved 20.8.2024, from, www.hedang.org.

Deign, J. 2010. *Introduction to Ethics*.New York: Cambridge University Press.

Eegunlusi, T. R. E (2013). Democracy, Federalism and Nigeria's Multi-Ethnic Culture. *Journal of Philosophy and Development*, 14 (1&2), 127-146.

Eegunlusi, T.R.E. (2023). Ethics and Moral Education. *African Journal of Stability & Development* 15 (1&2), 61-74.

Eegunlusi, T.R.E. (2024). Ethical Problems, Ethical Interrogations and Ethical Responses. *African Journal of Stability & Development,* 16 (1), 181-197.

Eegunlusi, T.R.E. 2024. Morality, Law and Civil Disobedience in Nigeria's Democratic Era. In Tayo R.E. Eegunlusi, Mike O. Omilusi, Michael A. Adeoye & Tope E. Akinyemi (eds). Democracy and Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Principles, Practices, Problems and Prospects. Calabar: Academic Publishing Centre, South-South Zone, 56-81.

Eneh, A. N. and Eneh, C. O. (2014). The Menace of Examination Malpractice in Nigeria: Causes and Solutions. *Sustainable Human Development Review*. 6(1-4), 53-73. Retrieved on 19.8.2024 from www.researchgate.net.

Federal Republic of Nigeria. (2007). *National Policy on Education,* 6th Ed. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Education Press.

Gaur, R. R., Asthana, R. & Bagaria, G. P. (2023).*Foundation Course in Human Values and Professional Ethics. Presenting a Universal Approach to Value Education through Self-Exploration* (3rd Ed.) Kanpur: UHV Publications.

González, F. (2012). Ethics in Business and Finance: the Great Post-Crisis Challenge. In BBVA Values and Ethics for the 21st Century. Retrieved on 20.8.2024 from, www.bbvaopenmind.com

Hughes, J. M. C. & McCabe, D. L. (2006). Academic Misconduct within Higher Education in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 36(2). 1-21.

Kant, I. (2011). Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: A German–English Edition (M. J. Gregor, Rev. J. Timmermann, Trans.). Cambridge University Press.

Kant, I. (2015). The Metaphysics of Morals (M. J. Gregor, Trans.; L. Denis, Ed., 2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Kant, I. (2017). Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (J. Bennett, Trans.). Early Modern Texts.

Kant, I. (2020). Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals (R. Stern, J. Saunders & C. Bennett, Trans.). Oxford University Press.

Kohlberg, L. (1971). From Is to Ought: How to Commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away with It in the Study of Moral Development. New York: Academic Press

Kohlberg, Lawrence (1981). Essays on Moral Development, Vol. I: The Philosophy of Moral Development. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Kohlberg, L. 1984. *Essays on Moral Development. Volume II. The Psychology of Moral Development*. San Francisco. Harper & Row, Publishers.

Kristjánsson, K. (2006). Habituated Reason: Aristotle and the 'paradox of moral education', *Theory and Research in Education*, 4, 101-122.

McCabe, D. L. & Trevino, L. K. (1997). Individual and Contextual Influences on Academic Dishonesty: A Multi-Campus Investigation. *Research Higher Education* 38, 379-396.

Milumbe, B., Phiri, J. & Nyirenda, M. (2022). A Descriptive Survey of Teachers' Perception of Triggers in Examination Malpractices: The Case of Public Examination in Zambia. *Education Research International*, 2022 (286),1-15, https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/5545406

Mohapatra, P. & Serva, C. (2023). Ethics, Morals and Values: Definition, Examples and Differences. Humanities Courses. Retrieved on 11.9.2024 from www.study.com.

Ndifon, R. A.& Cornelius-Ukpepi, B. U. (2014). Examination Malpractice in the Primary School: Problems and Prospects. *International Journal of Humanities, Social Science and Education.* 1(9). 118-121.

Njoku, N.C.&Njoku, D. I. 2016. Curbing Examination Malpractice in Secondary Schools in Nigeria through Moral Education. Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 6 (18), 2016

"Norms of Certification for the Higher Education Sector within the Context of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework." 2023. Council on Higher Education. Pretoria. www.che.ac.za

Okanezi, B. & Eguzozie, N. G. 2018. Menace of Examination Malpractice in Nigerian Educational Institutions: Implications for National Productivity and Economy. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 6(12), 1625-1628. DOI: 10.12691/education-6-12-6. https://pubs.sciepub.com/education/6/12/6/index.html

Oko, S. U. & Adie, R. I. (2016). Examination Malpractice: Causes, Effects and Possible Ways of Curbing the Menace. A Study of Cross Rivers University of Technology. *International Journal of Managerial Studies and Research*. 4(1). 59-65. Retrieved on 5.9.2024 from www.arcjournals.org.

Olagebemiro, T. O. (2014). Re-Engineering Nigeria's Tertiary Education for the 21st Century Workforce. In A. S. Ayodele & A. S. Aremu (Eds.), *Repositioning Nigeria's Tertiary Education for the 21st Century Global Market.* Intanitina Gim Publishers, 1-19.

Piromalli, E. (2015). "Authority and the Struggle for Recognition". International Journal of Philosophical Studies, 23 (2), 205-222.

Plato. 1997. Laws I, VII, 643e, VII, 804d. *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.): Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1318-1490.

Plato. 1997. Protagoras, 325d–326c. *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.): Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 746-790.

Plato. 1997. Republic. VII & VIII, 514a-549b. *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper (ed.): Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1132-1179.

Rawls, J. 2001. *Law of Peoples*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Sogolo, G. (2004). Human Values and Social Order. A Keynote Address Presented at the Conference of the Department of Philosophy, Marking the 30 Years of Philosophy in the University of Ibadan.

Uyanah, D. A. (2020). Preferred Sitting Position, Gender, Age and Examination Malpractice Tendency among University Undergraduates. Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Educational Issues and Practice (MJEIP), 1 (1), 20-32.

Legal Realism, Artificial Intelligence, and the Status of a Legal Reasoner

Mariam Adamu Esq.
Independent Researcher
Mobile: +2347089391983
Email:mariam.n.adamu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0003-0873-2871

Shajobi Oseghale D. Oluwadamilola, Ph.D
Department of Law
Nigerian University Pension Management Company Limited
Mobile: +2348106074124
Email: derebipi@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-2153-1481

and

Ifeoma Stella Ilodibia Esq.
Department:of Political Science,
Linköping University, Sweden, (Graduate Candidate)
Mobile: +46 709116080
Email: ilodibiaifeoma@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-2101-8053

Abstract

As AI tools participate in legal research, decision-support, and judgment prediction, questions arise about their capacity to function as genuine legal reasoners. The study inquired if machines can ever truly "reason" like a lawyer or judge by revisiting legal realism, the idea that legal outcomes are shaped more by human judgment and experience than rigid rules. The study examined the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal reasoning. From a jurisprudential theory, the study argued that AI lacks the socio-psychological intuition central to Legal Realist thought, which emphasizes discretion, context, and the unpredictability of human behaviour. However, it also explored how AI might reshape what we consider "legal reasoning" in the future. The study concluded that while AI can assist in legal processes, its current framework falls short of meeting the philosophical depth expected of legal reasoning within a Realist tradition.

1. Introduction

Legal reasoning has classically been viewed as the hallmark of human juridical activity rooted in centuries of jurisprudential thought and judicial discretion (Dworkin, 1978). As a critical component of the legal system, legal reasoning enables adjudicators, policy advocates, and policymakers to generate informed and justifiable decisions. This has unsurprisingly compelled thoughtful debates among legal philosophy proponents, translating into different views on its application. Legal formalism, one prominent view canvassed the idea that judges merely apply existing legal rules to cases mechanically. This position was opposed by 20th-century American Legal Realists like Jerome Frank and Karl Llewellyn, who argued that judges are influenced by psychological (Frank, 1949) and socio-political factors (Llewellyn, 1960).

This opened deeper inquiries into how legal decisions are made and whether reasoning is as impartial as formalists claim. In today's digital legal environment, Realist arguments offer an analytical perspective to evaluate AI's strengths and limitations as a "legal reasoner" (Saunders, 2019). The advent of AI raises pertinent questions about automating legal tasks, especially in judicial decision-making. Some legal systems use predictive analytics, natural language processing, and machine learning to assess risks, determine bail, or predict recidivism (Angwin et al., 2016). However, unlike human judges, AI lacks moral intuition and socio-cultural context influencing legal reasoning (Bench-Capon & Sartor, 2003), raising the fundamental question whether machines can comprehend law's normative subtleties and weigh equity like human judges. From a Realist perspective, the answer is negative, as judicial decisions are not purely logical but products of lived experience and discretion (Dworkin, 1978), qualities absent in current AI.

Philosophically, law encompasses more than logic as it operates through human endeavours rooted in social reality (Fuller, 1964). In Nigeria, where judges contend with customary, statutory, and Sharia law, human discretion is indispensable in culturally sensitive cases such as, child custody, land inheritance and marriage, thus, an AI tool trained solely on statutes may fail to account for moral and cultural considerations, essential to justice in pluralistic systems (Aduba, 2010). While AI can mimic patterns, it lacks the capacity for empathy or regulative reasoning, underscoring the enduring need for human contextual understanding (Bench-Capon & Sartor, 2003).

Therefore, AI's potential as a "legal reasoner" must be interrogated. While AI may speed up processes and ensure consistency, it cannot represent legal reasoning's philosophical, critical, and moral dimensions (Leiter, 2010). Legal Realism remains a vital tool to evaluate technocratic turns in law with an urgent need existing to preserve the judiciary's human-social responsiveness by designing AI to complement, not replace adjudicators' reasoning (Dworkin, 1978).

2. Statement of the Problem

Incorporating AI in adjudicatory processes poses value-based dilemmas to traditional legal reasoning. While AI aids risk assessment, sentencing recommendations, and prediction, its

inability to function without human intervention remains debated. Legal Realists contest AI's capacity to capture extra-legal influences in decision-making, while formalists argue that rules can be mechanically applied. This creates a disconnection between jurisprudential foundations and AI's practical application, as AI lacks human attributes needed in disputes. Realists perceive this as a philosophical/institutional issue; AI cannot perform reasoning rooted in human values, justice, and discretion. In pluralistic systems, blending customary, statutory, and religious laws, AI's absence of intuitiveness may threaten justice, access to equality, and erode public trust in the judiciary. Caution is needed, especially in postcolonial jurisdictions where legitimacy hinges on adjudicators' moral judgment.

Furthermore, no critical framework evaluates AI's status as a legal reasoner, creating theoretical voids in scholarship and policy. While studies on legal automation are abundant, jurisprudential ttheories that capture human judgment's inalienable role are neglected. This omission challenges responsible AI integration into judicial institutions, necessitating interrogation of how foundational theories inform AI's legitimacy in judicial processes.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to:

i. Critically examine Legal Realism's core claims about legal reasoning and judicial behaviour, juxtaposed with Legal Formalism.
ii. Evaluate AI's philosophical and ethical limitations in legal reasoning.
iii. Analyse alignment between contemporary legal AI tools and key jurisprudential values.
iv. Propose a normative framework (rooted in Legal Realism) for assessing AI's legitimacy and ethical deployment, emphasizing human judgment, narrative interpretation, and jurisprudential reflexivity.

4. Literature Review

The notion that machines are taking over individual job roles is one that is gaining widespread popularity. It is argued that algorithms can predict court decisions and that, where that happens, there will no longer be a need for human judges and magistrates in our courts today (Goodman, B., & Flaxman, S. 2017). Recently, artificial intelligence (AI) has become part of the legal system worldwide by reshaping how legal practitioners work through the help of AI in reviewing contracts, conducting legal research, and sorting case files. In describing AI, McCarthy opined that where a machine is permitted to behave in a way that could be termed intelligent if a human equally behaved in such a way, it should be referred to as artificial intelligence (McCarthy et al., 1955). Scholars have identified certain issues with the use of AI tools like Large Language Models (LLMs), such as the tendency to hallucinate or fabricate data, including court cases.

The school of thought known as legal realism is a movement that emerged in the 20th century in response to the formalists' notion that law is a closed, rational process of a body of rules applied by the judge or lawyer automatically. Legal realists questioned the view that a court's judgment could be arrived at from the unbiased application of the principles of law to the facts of a case. These scholars canvass the position that law is not a fixed set of rules but a progressive and liberal system shaped by economic, social, and psychological factors that

influence judicial decision-making and its effect on society (Angelosanto, 2023). The realists' viewpoint is that judges, being human, are naturally guided by their own experiences, values, and the broader social environment, and that these influences result in decisions that cannot be wholly predicted or explained by formal legal doctrines alone.

For the realists, the judge "decides by feeling and not by judgment; by 'hunching' and not by ratiocination" and later uses deliberative faculties "not only to justify that intuition to himself, but to make it pass muster" (Guthrie et al., 2007). They propose that a judge's judicial discretion influences or plays a vital role in the judicial decision, which can result from the judge's belief, personal experience, or the facts of the case, as every case is determined on its facts. The term "judicial discretion" was defined as: "The exercise of judgment by a judge or court based on what is fair under the circumstances and guided by the rules and principles of law, a court's power to act or not to act when a litigant is not entitled to demand the act as a matter of right" (Garner, 2004).

A judge exercising judicial discretion acts by the rules of reason, fairness, and justice, and not according to whimsical opinion or humor (Olumegbor v. Kareem, 2002). Thus, legal reasoning is greatly human, formed by emotions and societal pressure, which cannot be turned into codes. Critics have noted that while AI is efficient in analysing data, patterns, or statistics, it cannot stimulate feelings, make decisive decisions, and the awareness required for real reasoning. AI tools do not comprehend the motives behind human behaviour (Ashley, 2017).

In jurisdictions with hybrid legal systems comprising common law, customary law, and religious law, the question of whether AI can serve as a legal reasoner is significant due to these factors. The legal realism viewpoint that a judge's decision is inferred from or shaped by his personal experiences, emotions, and the circumstances of the facts of every case, is what is currently obtainable in such legal systems.

Globally, the work of a judge or lawyer can be categorized into legal searches, legal arguments or judicial decisions, as well as legal writing. Legal search involves diligent research on the law, facts, or precedents that support a lawyer's case at hand. However, the product of a legal search can only be effective where such findings are analysed; that is to say, a legal search cannot be complete if it is not analysed, harmonized, incorporated, or applied to the facts in issue (Valentine, 2010).

In legal research, the use of AI could be a necessary, important, and effective tool when different techniques are applied.

Studies have shown that trained Large Language Models (LLMs) were used to create an AI patent dataset by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Giczy et al., 2022). This same method can also be used for grouping judgments, statutes, precedents, or case laws in the legal field.

However, there may be some limitations to the use of LLMs in legal search when using AI generative tools. One such issue is the possibility of breaching confidential information. Lawyers must keep clients' information or data confidential, and uploading or prompting the same in the LLMs could result in a potential breach.

Another limitation of AI is that, since it is not human, it can only function when prompted. It can only retrieve cases, statutes, and legal materials when it is fed with input by the user.

When that is the case, it would be difficult to insert distinctive situations or conditions linked to each client (Tumonis et al., 2013).

Lawyers and judges are critical thinkers and, in arriving at a just conclusion of a case, they use a combination of legal rules, precedents, and principles by applying a legal reasoning technique to the facts to conclude. However, they encounter difficulties when using the legal reasoning technique in deciding whether two cases are the same by adhering to previous decisions and maintaining consistency in the application of law. This is known as stare decisis, a settled principle of judicial policy that must be strictly adhered to in legal jurisprudence theory (Dalhatu v. Turaki, 2003).

Judges, in arriving at a legal decision in respect of cases before them, can also draw an analogy from earlier unrelated legal decisions. By looking at the similarities and differences of the facts of the cases, while still focusing on the similarities, they can use the same to form an opinion and deliver judgment on the instant case before them (Levi, 2013). .

The question of whether generative AI systems can deploy analogical reasoning has been a subject of debate among scholars and researchers. Cass Sunstein in 2001 was of the view that AI is incompetent and unable to engage in the critical task of determining the normal principle that connects or separates cases (Sunstein, 2001). He concluded by saying that AI cannot reason by analogy like humans. Others have opined that AI could reason like humans, and others emphatically disagree (Webb, 2023). Scholars presume that while humans will likely surpass machines in some tasks, machines will also outshine humans at others. A combination of both humans and machines is expected to bring forth great achievement (Peshkin et al., 2001), reflecting   my belief that an effective fusion if technologcal efficiency and human judgment can be a formidable tool for a   a progressive legal environment.

The available literature reveals a significant gap between the jurisprudential view of the legal reasoner within a realistic tradition and the competence of present-day AI. Legal realism points out that reasoning does not require only law but instincts, compassion, and social interaction, which AI lacks. Although AI tools are efficient in legal search and legal processes, they lack the sociocultural capability to reason like humans in the legal sector. They cannot substitute for human legal reasoners. They can only reshape the framework of legal practice.

5.   Theoretical Framework

The intersection of legal realism and artificial intelligence offers a good ground for reimagining the epistemological and philosophical foundations of legal reasoning in light of emergent artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. The central axis of inquiry rests on the jurisprudential doctrine of Legal Realism and the conceptual boundaries that separate human legal reasoning from algorithmic or machine-generated outputs. Legal Realism, emerging prominently in the early 20th century, represents a pivotal shift from the formalist vision of law.

It challenges the assumption that judicial decisions are the mechanical consequence of applying established rules to facts. Instead, Realist thinkers such as Karl Llewellyn and Jerome Frank argue that adjudication is inherently subjective, shaped by the judge's psychological dispositions, social context, and institutional pressures (Angelosanto, 2023). Llewellyn, in particular, emphasised the "law in action" rather than "law in books", positing that legal rules

provide only a vague and flexible framework, while real-world decision-making hinges on context and discretion.

This interpretive tradition maintains that legal reasoning is not a linear process reducible to propositional logic. Rather, it involves analogical thinking, normative reflection, and a responsiveness to socio-political currents, qualities that machines cannot authentically replicate (Sunstein, 2001). Crucially, Legal Realism posits a kind of "judicial humanism", recognising the unpredictability and pluralism that animate law in practice. That view stands in stark contrast with contemporary AI systems, which are predicated on data-driven predictability and statistical patterning.

AI tools, particularly large language models (LLMs), expert systems, and other algorithmic applications in legal technology, have advanced considerably in their ability to parse legal texts, generate summaries, and even forecast judicial outcomes (Tu et al., 2023). At the surface level, such systems may appear to "reason" like lawyers, performing tasks once considered uniquely human. However, scholars like Sunstein and Susskind caution against mistaking mimicry for cognition. While these models can simulate legal reasoning through sophisticated linguistic emulation, they operate absent any true understanding, moral awareness, or experiential intuition, the very elements central to the Realist tradition (Sunstein, 2001; Susskind, 1986).

Sunstein observes that AI lacks capacity for analogical reasoning, a core method by which legal precedents are applied contextually. Similarly, Susskind critiques the jurisprudential limits of expert systems, arguing that while machines can process rules, they remain incapable of the interpretive flexibility inherent in human judgement. Rissland supplements this critique by exploring the foundational steps needed to construct computational models of legal reasoning, recognising both their promise and limitations (Rissland, 1989).

Recent scholars explore the cognitive psychology underlying LLMs' attempts at moral and legal judgement. Almeida et al. argue that while such models can produce outputs that appear legally sound, their reasoning lacks grounded intentionality. Legal reasoning, in the realist sense, is not merely output generation; it is an exercise in situated judgement that engages with human experiences, values, and institutional imperatives (Almeida et al., 2024).

6. Methodology

This study employs a conceptual-analytical methodology rooted in jurisprudential theory, doctrinal legal analysis, and interpretive evaluation of emergent legal technologies. Given the philosophical nature of the research question, whether Artificial Intelligence can qualify as a legal reasoner within the epistemic and institutional bounds of Legal Realism, a qualitative, theory-driven method best facilitates a nuanced inquiry.

6.1 Conceptual Analysis

At the heart of this inquiry lies the definitional and philosophical unpacking of what constitutes "legal reasoning". The study draws upon key jurisprudential texts that define reasoning as a process that involves discretion, analogical thinking, moral calibration, and contextual awareness, all central tenets of legal realism (Susskind, 1986; Angelosanto, 2023). Through systematic conceptual analysis, the study interrogates the foundations of reasoning in

law and examines whether such reasoning can be replicated, mimicked, or substituted by AI models.

6.2 Doctrinal Legal Research

Traditional doctrinal methods are applied to examine the status of legal reasoning as understood in case law and legal theory. Canonical decisions and judicial interpretations are assessed to identify the qualitative features of judicial reasoning that legal realism elevates, namely, indeterminacy, socio-legal context, and the discretionary latitude of judges (Sunstein, 2001). Legal Realism's rejection of mechanical jurisprudence is juxtaposed with AI's data-centric pattern recognition capabilities to expose philosophical tensions.

6.3 Jurisprudential Comparative Evaluation

A comparative lens is employed to analyse the evolution of legal reasoning models. Historical perspectives on rule-based expert systems (Susskind, 1986; Rissland, 1989) are set against contemporary AI paradigms, including large language models (Almeida et al., 2024; Tu et al., 2023). The study examines how AI tools perform tasks typically associated with legal reasoningsuch as case prediction, legal writing, and issue spotting and evaluates these functionalities against the criteria articulated by legal realists.

7. Findings and Discussion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an indispensable and revolutionary tool in the legal world. It assists lawyers and judges in accessing real-time information and enhances the consistency of judicial decision as an essential feature of legal precedent. This study identifies the following key findings:

7.1 Legal Realism and Socio-Legal Contexts

The concept of legal realism, the application of legal principles in real-life contexts while considering socio-economic and political factors, plays a significant role in modern legal practice and adjudication. In Re A.G. Nigeria & Ors (2007), the Supreme Court acknowledged the influence of socio-political realities in constitutional matters and emphasized that judicial decisions should reflect the broader societal context. Similarly, Oyo State Government v. Olubunmo (2010), the Oyo State High Court highlighted the relevance of social context and human rights when adjudicating a dispute over land rights and customary practices, placing practical realities over strict formal legalism.

In the domain of human rights and constitutional law, courts are increasingly adopting a transformative approach, which balances the demands of justice with evolving societal norms. Judges and legal advocates are often required to consider the social context surrounding legal disputes, especially in cases involving gender or minority rights. In Ajayi v. Federal Republic of Nigeria* (2020), the ECOWAS Court prioritized socio-economic realities in determining the existence of human rights violations, underscoring the need to transcend formal legal doctrines in favour of socially responsive justice.

The law does not operate in a vacuum, but is applied, interpreted, and enforced by human actors whose judgments are influenced by the society they live in. Consequently, legal

outcomes reflect prevailing societal values, cultural norms, and lived experiences, reinforcing the idea that law is both a product and a driver of social change.

7.2 Broader Implications for Justice and Technology

The contrast between AI and human judicial decision-making illuminates a profound tension at the heart of the legal system. When a human judge considers a defendant's personal story before rendering judgment, are they introducing bias, or are they fulfilling the deeper moral purpose of justice? Consider a hypothetical scenario in which legal precedent demands a severe penalty, yet the defendant's unique circumstances may justify leniency. An AI judge would likely apply the precedent rigidly, focusing on consistency and formal correctness. A human judge, by contrast, might pause to weigh the law against empathy, context, and moral reasoning. Is one approach inherently superior? This answer would depend on our conception of justice. If we define justice as the predictable and consistent application of rules, the AI model has clear advantages. However, if we view justice to achieve equitable and morally sound outcomes, then the human ability to assess emotional, social, and ethical dimensions is not a flaw, but a strength (Binns, 2018).

This reflects a deeper philosophical debate between legal formalism and judicial discretion. Legal formalism emphasizes that decisions should derive strictly from the application of codified rules and precedents, principles that AI can theoretically implement with high fidelity (Surden, 2019). In contrast, human judges frequently account for contextual and moral considerations, evaluating the social impact of their rulings. While this may lead to inconsistencies, it is often essential for the kind of justice that aligns with evolving societal values (Susskind, 2019).

Thus, this study raises an important question thus: Is the ultimate goal of justice to ensure uniform application of the law or to achieve fairness in individual cases? This question strikes at the core of whether AI can ever comprehend and incorporate the emotional and social fabric of human justice systems. The answer will influence not only how legal technologies are developed but also how they are integrated, regulated, and trusted in real-world legal contexts (Wischmeyer, 2020).

8. Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence holds transformative potential for legal research, with increased efficiency, reduced costs, and faster access to legal information. AI-powered platforms such as the now-defunct ROSS Intelligence, as well as LawGeex and Beagle, have illustrated how AI can support lawyers in tasks like document analysis, case summarization, and contract review (McGinnis & Pearce, 2014). However, integrating AI into legal research and practice introduces significant risks. Adaptive AI tools can obscure responsibility when mistakes occur, especially in misinterpreting legal clauses or generating flawed summaries. These stresses the need for caution, especially given the high stakes in legal interpretation (Casey & Niblett, 2020).

AI can enhance legal service delivery by reducing human error, standardizing outputs, and lowering operational costs. For repetitive and structured tasks, such as e-discovery, legal research, and drafting of basic contracts. AI can substantially boost productivity. (Deloitte, 2016). Nevertheless, it remains ill-suited for complex legal functions like litigation strategy,

courtroom argumentation, or ethical risk assessments. These tasks require moral discernment, contextual sensitivity, and legal creativity, capacities that AI has yet to meaningfully replicate. (Cath, 2018)

Furthermore, AI's scale and speed can magnify errors, making human oversight essential. While full replacement of human lawyers is improbable in the near future, AI will likely complement human work by automating routine tasks and providing analytical support. As legal AI continues to evolve, its capabilities may improve, potentially blending predictive accuracy with adaptive reasoning. Until then, a balanced, ethically informed approach to AI adoption is necessary, ensuring that its deployment aligns with principles of justice, accountability, and human oversight. (Barfield & Pagallo, 2018).

Work Cited

Aduba, J. N. (2010). Human rights under the Nigerian constitution: Issues and problems. Aboki Publishers.

Ajayi v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, ECW/CCJ/JUD/18/20. ECOWAS Court of Justice. (2020).

Almeida, G. F., Nunes, J. L., Engelmann, N., Wiegmann, A., & De Araújo, M. (2024). Exploring the psychology of LLMs' moral and legal reasoning. Artificial Intelligence, 333, Article104145. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.artint.2024.104145

Angelosanto, M. (2023). Legal realism and the predictability of judicial decisions. Interdisciplinary Studies in Society, Law, and Politics, 2(3), 4–14. https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.isslp.2.3.2

Angwin, J., Larson, J., Mattu, S., & Kirchner, L. (2016, May 23). Machine bias. ProPublica. https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing

Ashley, K. D. (2017). Artificial intelligence and legal analytics: New tools for law practice in the digital age. Cambridge University Press.

Barfield, W., & Pagallo, U. (Eds.). (2018). Research handbook on the law of artificial intelligence. Edward Elgar.

Bench-Capon, T., & Sartor, G. (2003). A model of legal reasoning with cases incorporating theory development and argumentation. Artificial Intelligence, 150(1–2), 97–143. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0004-3702(03)00113-5

Binns, R. (2018). Fairness in machine learning: Lessons from political philosophy. Proceedings of the 2018 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency, 149–159. https://doi.org/10.1145/3287560.3287588

Casey, A. J., & Niblett, A. (2020). The future of law and computational technologies. University of Toronto Law Journal, 70(1), 1–33. https://doi.org/10.3138/utlj-2020-0001

Cath, C. (2018). Governing artificial intelligence: Ethical, legal and technical opportunities and challenges. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Science, 376(2133), Article 20180080. https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2018.0080

Dalhatu v. Turaki (2003) 15 NWLR (Pt. 843) 310.

Deloitte. (2016). Developing legal talent: Stepping into the future law firm. https:// www2. deloitte.com /content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/audit/deloitte-uk-developing-legal-talent-2016.pdf.

Dworkin, R. (1978). Taking rights seriously. Harvard University Press.

Frank, J. (1949). Courts on trial: Myth and reality in American justice. Princeton University Press.

Fuller, L. L. (1964). The morality of law. Yale University Press.

Garner, B. A. (Ed.). (2004). Black's law dictionary (8th ed.). Thomson West.

Giczy, A. V., Pairolero, N. A., & Toole, A. A. (2022). Identifying artificial intelligence (AI) invention: A novel AI patent dataset. Journal of Technology Transfer, 47(2), 476–505. https://doi.org /10.1007/s10961-021-09900-2

Goodman, B., & Flaxman, S. (2017). European Union regulations on algorithmic decision-making and a "right to explanation." AI Magazine, 38(3), 50–57. https://doi.org/10.1Guth609/aimag.v38i3.2741

Guthrie, C., Rachlinski, J. J., & Wistrich, A. J. (2007). Blinking on the bench: How judges decide cases. Cornell Law Review, 93(1), 1–43.

Leiter, B. (2010). Legal realism and legal doctrine. University of Pennsylvania Law Review, 163(4), 117–141.

Levi, E. H. (2013). An introduction to legal reasoning (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Llewellyn, K. N. (1960). The common law tradition: Deciding appeals. Little, Brown and Company.

McCarthy, J., Minsky, M. L., Rochester, N., & Shannon, C. E. (1955). A proposal for the Dartmouth summer research project on artificial intelligence. In J. Kaplan (Ed.), Artificial intelligence: What everyone needs to know (2016 ed.). Oxford University Press.(Original work published 1955)

McGinnis, J. O., & Pearce, R. G. (2014). The great disruption: How machine intelligence will transform the role of lawyers in the delivery of legal services. Fordham Law Review, 82(6),

Olumegbor v. Kareem (2002) 5 S.C. (Pt. 1) 101.

Oyo State Government v. Olubunmo, Suit No. I/123/2010. (Oyo State High Court 2010).

Peshkin, M. A., Colgate, J. E., Wannasuphoprasit, W., Moore, C. A., Gillespie, R. B., & Akella, P. (2001). Cobot architecture. IEEE Transactions on Robotics and Automation, 17(4), 377–390. https://doi.org/10.1109/70.954751

Re Attorney-General of the Federation & Ors (SC.228/2006, Supreme Court of Nigeria, 2007).

Rissland, E. L. (1989). Artificial intelligence and law: Stepping stones to a model of legal reasoning. Yale Law Journal, 99, 1957–1979.

Saunders, R. (2019). Legal realism and the challenge of artificial intelligence. Cambridge University Press.

Sunstein, C. R. (2001). Of artificial intelligence and legal reasoning. University of Chicago Law School Roundtable, 8, 29–54.

Surden, H. (2019). Artificial intelligence and law: An overview. Annual Review of Law and Social Science, 15, 399–420. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-101518-042633

Susskind, R. E. (1986). Expert systems in law: A jurisprudential approach to artificial intelligence and legal reasoning. The Modern Law Review, 49(2), 168–194.

Susskind, R. (2019). Online courts and the future of justice. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198838364.001.0001

Tu, S., Cyphert, A., & Perl, S. (2023). Artificial intelligence: Legal research and writing in the age of AI. Minnesota Journal of Law, Science & Technology, 25(1), 105–145.

Tumonis, V., Šavelskis, M., & Žalytė, I. (2013). Judicial decision making from an empirical perspective. Baltic Journal of Law & Politics, 6(2), 110–134.

Webb, T. (2023). Large-scale AI language systems display an emergent ability to reason by analogy. Nature Human Behaviour, 7(10), 1426–1435. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01635-4

Wischmeyer, T. (2020). Artificial intelligence and transparency: A blueprint for improving the regulation of AI. German Law Journal, 21(1), 56–85. https://doi.org/10.1017/glj.2019.98

Leadership Deficit and Corruption in Africa: A Study of the Impact on Sustainable Development in Nigeria

Salvation Elo Ugoso,[1]
salvationugoso@gmail.com

Ambily Etekpe[2]
ambilyetekpe@ndu.edu.ng

and

Philips O. Okolo[3]
philips.okolo@ndu.edu.ng

Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island,
Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The choice of a leader can highly impact on the growth and development of a country. Bad leadership has constantly stirred up whenever Nigeria political history is mentioned. This study is centered on leadership deficit and corruption, and the impacts on sustainable development in Nigeria. It adopted the Anomie theory as the framework and applies documentary method. It is found that leadership deficit is mainly caused by corruption manifested in different forms. This has affected the sustainable development of the country. It is thus recommended that to break the circle of corruption among the leaders, accountability and transparency in democracy be restored in the Fourth Republic.

Key words: Corruption, sustainable development, good governance, leadership, accountability

Introduction

The concept of leadership has been in both academic and political discourse for a long time. Leadership involves interaction between leaders and followers whereby the leaders influence the followers toward the accomplishment of certain objectives and aims. Jubrin (2016) noted that leadership is the ability to influence the attitudes of the followers, or exert influences within the working group with the aim of achieving set task.

Several Africa states (Nigeria, Chad, Liberia, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been faced with numerous developmental issues and conflicts since 1960's. The issue of stability, peace and progress has been a major debate in the continent and the West Africa States in particular. Though Africa stand as a cradle of human civilization, the African continent has constantly experienced poverty, conflicts, unemployment, inequality, dependency and corruption.

The level of corruption in most of the African countries resulted to the declaration of 2018 as anti-corruption year. Despite, the fight to reduce corruption by the leaders during the summit, in 2019 report, Transparency International noted a worsening report of corruption on the continent and urges leaders to addressed it.

The acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the pandemic in South Africa was characterized by corruption, this revealed how political leaders used the epidemic to satisfy their personal interests. In like manner, political leaders in Nigeria hide relief items intended for public distribution while government officials diverted monies to themselves (The Observers, 2020; Ayomoba, 2024). Also, in Somalia and Zimbabwe, government officials who were arrested for COVID-19 related issues were neither prosecuted or fired. All these cases above are barricade to sustainable development and are carried out by those in leadership.

Notably, bad leadership has constantly stirred up whenever Nigeria political history is being mentioned (Mukoro et al., 2018). From one administration to another and from one leadership to the other, the issue of bad leadership has been predominant in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria political leadership is beclouded with crisis and the signs are all visible. Genyi (2017) further noted that the eras of political rule (1999-2015) are saturated by the conduct of political officials that take the form of violence and corruption. Since the return of democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria has faced serious socio-political and economic crisis (Ayomoba, 2024). These crises generated by improper management of mineral resources, human capital and prevalence of insecurity, draw our attention to the issue of bad leadership in the country.

Leadership in Africa and Nigeria in particular, has always been a tussle and surrounded with different forms of crisis as a result of incompetent leadership. In Nigeria, there is no synergy between the rules and processes. Most of the leaders direct their attentions to their selfish interest at the expense of the people.

Although there are other issues which Nigeria face in the 21st century that are national as they are phenomenal like: the cases of malaria, HIV-AIDS, Economic, Social, Health and Climate Challenges, all these points to bad leadership. Solutions to these issues can be achieved through effective control and management by the Government (Leaders). Thus, this study has raised three critical research questions.

The questions are:
1.) What is the relationship between leadership and good governance in Nigeria's political system between 2015 and 2023?
2.) How does leadership behaviour influence service delivery and sustainable development in Nigeria?

3.) What is the effect of corruption on Nigeria's Political leadership?

Objectives of the study
1.) Analyse the relationship between leadership and good governance in Nigeria political system between 2015 and 2023;
1.) Determine the link between leadership behaviour and service delivery on sustainable development in Nigeria; and
2.) Discuss the effect of corruption on sustainable development in the Nigeria Political leadership.

Significance of the Study
The study was significant in several ways, particularly, it provided a deeper understanding of how leadership and good governance influences sustainable development in Nigeria. It also shows insight into the role of leadership behaviour in promoting efficient service delivery and reducing corruption within the political system.

Scope and limitation
The study focused on the relationship between leadership, good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria. It covers some selected administrative and political institutions namely service delivery, leadership behaviour and corruption were assessed in relation to their impact on sustainable development for the periods of 2015 and 2023. The main limitation was that the study relied on secondary sources of data. Despite this limitation they were used to draw meaningful conclusions about leadership, good governance and sustainable development in Nigeria.

2.1 Conceptual Review
(a) Leadership
The concepts of leadership in this study is the ability to influence others in a transparent manner to achieve common goals and sustainable development. Several studies (Gberevbie *et al*., 2017; Aleyomi & Abu Bakar, 2018; Arogbofa, 2022; and Ayomoba, 2024) have pointed out the important role of leadership in improving the welfare and standard of living of citizens in a country. According to Gberevbie *et al*. (2017) leadership "is the process of influencing the actions of an organised group toward goal setting attainment".

During the 20th century, leadership was not basically viewed as a set of fixed attributes or traits peculiar to some persons, but as a function that meets common expectations of leaders and followers (Unya *et al*., 2020, p. 6).

In this study, we have identified six variables for effective leadership to engender sustainable development in Nigeria (Table 1) along with the outcomes.

Table 1: Leadership and its outcome in Nigeria

S/NO	VARIABLES	EXPECTED OUTCOME
1	Provision of social infrastructure	Water, housing, electricity, rural development programmes/projects, etc.
2	Sustainable development	Feeder/rural road; primary health care facilities; quality and quantity of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions; reduction of mortality rates.
3	Food and human security	Affordable food items; good quality of live; dignity of human life; unimpeded economic activities, etc.
4	Peace, safety and general security	Peaceful co-existence; safety of lives and property; free movement of goods and people, etc.
5	Participatory rural appraisal (PRA)	Regular interactive town hall meetings for feedback; community involvement in planning, budgetary and implementation of policies, etc.
6	Feedback mechanism	Political will power to implement components of participatory rural appraisal (PRA).

Source: Barisuka et al. (2024).

(b) Corruption

Etymologically, the word "corruption" originates from the Greek word "corruptus" meaning an aberration or a misnomer. However, in Nigeria, corruption has become so common a word in the public sector that its actual meaning no longer needs scientific explanation. Waziri (2010), defines corruption as "abuse of public power for private gain". Transparency International (2013) further defines it as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain". For Aleyomi (2018), "corruption is any decision, act or conduct that subverts the integrity of people in authority or institutions charged with promoting, defending or sustaining the democratization process, thereby undermining its effectiveness in performing assigned roles to engender good governance in a country like Nigeria".

These forms and types flourish in Nigeria because accountability is generally weak, laws and principles of ethics in government are poorly developed and the legal instruments charged, such as EFCC, ICPC, etc with enforcing them are ill- prepared (Barisuka et al., 2024). In

view of this, corruption has become the principal means of primitive accumulation of wealth. This has widened the gap between the rich and poor people as the leaders could not pursue attainment of the variables in Table 1. The Table 2 presents a record of notable corruption incidents in Nigeria. The Table 2 is not exhaustive.

Table 2: Selected Corruption Case Diary in Nigeria 2015-2020

S/N	Date	Name/Institution	Nature	Remark
1	04/2015	Godswill Akpabio (fmr, Governor of Akwa-Ibom state), President 10th Senate)	- Abuse of office, bribery and corruption	- PEPs and abandoned
2	25/02/2016	Olise Metu Investment	- Fraudulently received N400 Million from office of National Security Adviser (ONSA), Sambo Dasuki	- Justice Abang, Federal High court (FHC), Abuja found him guilty and was sentenced to 7years imprisonment. - EFCC App - Status of case not clear.
3	12/04/2017	Ikoyi Gat Wife of fmr Director General (DG), National Intelligent Agency (NIA), Mrs Ayo Oke Folashade, Choba Venture Ltd Vanguard (2019)	- US $43,449,947, 27, 800 and N23,218,000 kept in iron cabinet and jute basin in an apartment in Flat 7B, Osborn Towers, Ikoyi. - Earlier made payment of US$1.658 Million between 25/08 and 03/09/2015. - Money converted to N360 Million and paid to fine and country for purchase of the property at Ikoyi.	- Whistle blower reported the case - FHC, Ikoyi, Lagos ordered forfeiture of the property of Flat 7B, Osborn Towers, Ikoyi, Lagos. - Fmr Governor Ezebunwo Nyesom Wike later stated that the said money belonged to Rivers State Government (RSG) as the apartment was owned by Rotimi Chibuike Amaechi (fmr Governor, RSG and Minister of Transportation) from the state.
4	06/2018	Senator Abdullahi Adamu	- Fmr Chairman, Northern Senators forum (NSF) couldn't account for the N7 Million of the 7th Assembly. - Financial Mismanagement	- He was removed - Senator Dino Melaye (then spokesman stated that it was investigated and found to be true) - Abandoned as PEP

S/N	Date	Name/Institution	Nature	Remark
5.	25/11/2019	Seimens AG and Halliburton (SAGH)	- Kellog Brown Root (KBR) inc entered into a quilty plea bargain US $579bMillion fine for payment of bribes to secure Nigeria Liquified Gas (NLG) contracts in Nigeria.	- While company was prosecuted expediently, investigation of Nigeria senior Government Officials that received the bribe of US $18 Million was abandoned.
6.	03/2020	Ibrahim Magu, fmr Chairman EFCC	- Unable to account for N550 billion interest generated from banks of recovered monies deposited in 2015-2020	- Investigated and prosecuted.

Sources: Etekpe et al. (2015) and Barisuka et al. (2024)

(c) Sustainable Development (SD)

Sustainable development is the pattern of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs. It lays strong emphasis on the judicious use and equitable management of resources in the bid to reduce poverty (Emas, 2015).

This enable people to achieve their full potentials, fulfillment, self-confidence and dignity. It should help in saving people from the ills of want, deprivation, exploitation, ignorance and existing imbalances and injustices in the society (Etekpe, 2012).

Without delving into the complexity of the concept of SD, it is important to state that its emphasis (i.e. SD) has basically moved from the realm of gross domestic product (GDP), production-centred, etc to people-centred development (Okafor, 1981). the focus is on human capital development (HCD) in form of capacity building, promoting creativity, innovation and entrepreneurial skills, etc, anchored on information communication technology (ICT).

The National Conference (NC) report (NC, 2014, 48-50) list political challenges militating against national development, to include:

1) Absence of people-centred federal constitution, instead of further alteration or amendment of the 1999 constitution;
2) Abnormal fiscal federalism-revenue sharing, resource management/control, and sharing formula;
3) Corruption
4) Lack of accountability and transparency;
5) Under-development of the real sector (manufacturing/industrialization) of the economy;

(d) Relationship between Leadership and Sustainable Development.

Leadership is a major attribute that determines development in any given society. It entails influence on group members toward accomplishment of set goals. It, also, ensures the overall functioning of a given society as a channel of sustainable development (Dahiru & Modibbo, 2019).

Gberevbie *et al.* (2017, p. 1) note that nature has provided man with natural resources, such as land, air and water, which need to be utilised, developed and sustained for purposeful living in the society. In order to actualise sustainable development in any setting, strategies are put in place to achieve the development goals of the government. In a situation where these strategies are not properly implemented, may be reason of weak governmental institutions, corruption, inadequate funds to execute projects, poor maintenance culture.

The role and relationship between leadership and sustainable development is very essential for the success of any society. The leaders play the key role that brings about sustainable development. However, Nigerians are yet to see such leaders with "soft consciousness, who use bountiful resources and convert them into opportunities for sustainability" (Onichakwe, 2018, p. 80).

2.2 Gap in Literature

Although similar studies have addressed leadership and governance in Nigeria, majority of the studies focused on early political period without given much attention to the periods, leadership styles, impacts etc between 2015 and 2023. Going forward, the studies basically focused on policy failure covering Jonathan and Buhari's administration and how they have impacted on sustainable development outcome. Therefore, this study filled that gap by examining how leadership patterns from 2015-2023 affected sustainable development in Nigeria.

2.3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The study adopted the "Anomie Theory" propounded by Emile Durkhiem (1893). The theory posits that Individuals with high levels of anomie are most likely to have challenges in working with especially leading others in social structural setting (Bond, 2015). Notably, the Nigeria society setting tends to over-emphasize the attainment of individual goals at the expense of the legitimate means of attaining these set goals.

The study adopted descriptive research design in other to gain maximum insight into the leadership deficit and its impact and perception on sustainable development in Nigeria. The documentary observation method is adopted and data so generated are analyzed using descriptive analysis. Due to the theoretical nature of the paper, the paper generates its arguments mainly from secondary sources.

3. Results and Discussion

1. The Effect of Leadership in Nigeria

It is pertinent to note that the 2015 and 2023 administration in Nigeria has not brought much improvement in the development and economic situation of the country. During this period the country experienced leadership deficits in several areas (economic mismanagement, poor governance quality, poor security performance, poor infrastructural delivery, low human capital development and lack of trust from the citizens) these have affected the growth of the country.

Since the return of democracy in 1999, the democratization process has not been used to foster good governance and development in the country rather the poor leadership situations

have succeeded in placing Nigeria and its population in abject poverty. In most parts of the country, majority of its inhabitants (humans) cannot boast of good water supply as the available waters are infested with virus and bacteria (Ogunjimi & Ogundeji, 2020).

The deficit of leadership in Nigeria is also evidential in the area of unimplemented policy. In most cases, policies are not allowed to mature and they counter change them easily. The Nigerian leader will set up a vision and leave office without achieving such goals. This becomes a pattern for succeeding leaders. This pattern of leadership does not encourage development.

The findings from this study shows that effective leadership and governance in Nigeria between 2015 and 2023 has a mixed influence on the achievement of sustainable development. Results from secondary data shows that while political leaders embarked on anti-corruption campaign and several programmes, their implementations were constantly weakened by inconsistent policy continuity, lack of transparency and accountability and poor institutional capacity.

The study shows that leadership pattern during this period (2015 - 2023) was politically driven, which affected citizens trust and participation in political activities. Transparency international reports during this period shows high percentage in Nigeria corruption perception ranking indicating that anti-corruption policies had limited practical effects on the system.

Generally, the findings indicated that sustainable development in Nigeria greatly depends on transparent and accountable leadership, constant practice of good principles in governance and institutional reforms rather than policy formulation alone.

2. Implication of Corruption on National Development in Nigeria

The implication of corruption on national development in Nigeria is hugely visible in all facets of the country. The economic sector, the security, the education and wellbeing of the citizens have suffered setbacks, particularly in view of enormous funds made from the petroleum-based economy (Okolo & Etekpe, 2015). According to Genyi (2017), in 2014, about 44% of Nigeria student were not able to read a complete sentence despite the fact that they have completed their primary education. This practically represents the breakdown of public basic education.

Notably over 70% of candidates who wrote the West African School Certificate Examination in 2014 failed in basic subjects like English and Mathematics at the credit level. It was noted that between 2007 and 2016, the total number of students in Nigeria that applied to foreign universities rose by 71% (Genyi, 2017). This displays the ugly state of the country's education level. This situation has continued to linger in the present-day education and has affected the national development of the country, particular the post 2015 development agenda (Okolo, 2016).

Another implication of corruption on national development can be seen in the insecurity level of the country. The leadership of the country has failed to lead by example in public issues and have succeeded in recruiting youths to partake in their shared criminality act. This has taking another turn in the society as armed robbery, militancy and kidnapping. The case of the Niger Delta militancy and the Boko Haram insurgency in the north are clear examples of the situations Nigerians face as a result of corruption.

One of the major challenges of SD in Nigeria is endemic corruption. Nigeria has all the necessary natural and human resources needed for the development and enhancement of the life of its masses. Nonetheless, the advantages of the available resources are not in any way helping the poor masses due to the effect of corruption in the country.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Specifically, this study is centered on leadership deficit and corruption in Africa, the impact and perception on sustainable development in Nigeria. Leaders in Nigeria have displayed high level of corruption in handling the affairs of the country. Although it happens to be a universal phenomenon, its effects and magnitude are severe in Nigeria. It has eaten into the fabric of the Nigerian economy and hampered sustainable development in the country.

This study shows that corruption is manifested in different forms- embezzlement, bribery, election rigging, frauds, etc- are all noticeable among most Nigeria leaders. The conditions necessary for sustainable growth and development in the country have been squandered by corruption of the Nigeria leaders. To break this cycle of corruption among the leaders, the basis of accountability in democracy should be restored. The citizens should be given their due power to make their choices and determine who governs them. In conclusion, the country needs transformational leadership in encouragement, focus, inspiration, motivation and mindset shift to grow and shape the growth and development of the nation. This study recommended the followings:

i.   There should be a law that is independent from the different organs of government, leaders that lead should pass through a free and fair election.
ii.   The Nigeria Legislative and Judiciary arms should be strengthened.
iii. A strong measure of accountability and transparency should be enthroned in the country.

In all, the study has contributed to knowledge in several ways, particularly:

a. It provided an insight into how leadership and governance affected sustainable development in Nigeria between 2015 and 2024;
b. It advocated the need for transparency and accountability in leadership for the attainment of sustainable development in Nigeria; and
c. The study established a strong relationship between leadership style, policy implementations and sustainable development.

Work Cited

Aleyomi, M. B., & Abu Bakar, M. Z. (2018). Political leadership and Nigeria's image crisis. GEOGRAFIA Online™ *Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 14(4), 287–298.

Arogbofa, J.(2022). Understanding the leadership crisis in Africa using the case of Nigeria. Dissertation of the Walden University.

Ayomoba, T. F. (2024). Democracy and the fight against leadership corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implication for continental development. *Wukari International Studies Journal*, 8(5).

Bal,B.R., Abdullahi, I., Jamila, A., & Anas, S. (2022). Sustainable Development goals and poverty reduction in Nigeria: challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Reviews*,12(1), 120-126.

Barisuka, P. B., Gagariga, W. I., & Etekpe, A. (2024). Leadership-corruption nexus in public sector governance in Nigeria. In Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, 402–419.

Bond M. (2015). *Criminology; Anomie (Strain Theory) explained*

Dahiru, K. & Modibbo, N. (2016). Effective leadership and sustainable development in Nigeria: An assessment of the United Nation sustainable development goals (UN-SDG) in north eastern Nigeria. Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development, 2(2), 1-15.

Dankumo, A. M., Ishak, S., Bani, Y., & Hamza, H. Z. (2019). The relationship between public expenditure, corruption and poverty in Nigeria. Journal Ekonomi Dan Studi Pembangunan, 11(1), 76-89.

Dialoke, I., Finian, O. U., & Ada, P.K. (2020). Leadership, corruption and governance: the Nigerian experience. *International Journal of Innovative and Development and Policy Studies*, 8(4).

Emas, R. (2015). The concept of sustainable development; Definition and defining principles, *Research Gate*.

Etekpe, A. (2012). "Challenges and prospects of enhancing productivity for sustainable development in the public sector: The case of Bayelsa State", Nigeria. *Journal of Economies*, 3(2), 109-122.

Genyi, G. A (2017). *Leadership crisis and corruption in contemporary Nigeria. Implications for national development*. Federal University Lafia, Nasarawa.

Gberevbie, D., Joshua, S., Excellence-Oluye, N. & Oyeyemi, A (2017). Accountability for sustainable development and the challenges of leadership in Nigeria, 1999-2015. Sage Open, 7(4), 1-10.

Jubrin, A. (2016). Governance and the challenges of leadership in Nigeria, *International Sustainable Development Review*, 1(1).

Mukoro, A., Kalam, J. & Arugu, L. (2018). Democracy & leadership in Africa; Nigeria and South Africa in focus. *International Institute for Policy Review and Development Strategies, Nigeria*.

National Conference (2014). Report of the National Conference, Federal Government of Nigeria, 48–50.

Ogunjimi, A.D., & Ogundeji A.A. (2020) Leadership and substances of democracy in Nigeria; Problems and prospect. *Nigeria Journal of Social Studies*.

Okafor, F. U. (1981). Indirect rule: The development of central legislature in Nigeria. Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Okolo, P. O. (2016). Corruption and post 2015 development agenda in Nigeria. Global *Journal of Humanities-Social Science: F Political Science,* 16 (2), 7-18.

Okolo, P. O., & Etekpe, A. (2015). Petro-Economy and Corruption in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Lessons for the Future". *Archives of Business Research*, 3(1), 246 – 266. Society for Science and Education, United Kingdom.

The Observers (27/10/2020), Suffering and starving: In Nigeria, citizens raid warehouse full of undistributed aid.

Transparency International (TI) (2020). Corruption Perceptions Index 2019.Available at: https://www. transparency.org/files/content/pages/2019_CPI_Report_EN.pdf

United Nations (2007). *Public governance indicators: A literature review*.

Unya, U. I., Akputa, O. G. & Nnadozie, A. A. (2020). Poverty and leadership failure in Africa: An appraisal. Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development, 3(2), 1-10.

Waziri, F. (2009). How to fight corruption. https://efccnigeria.org/efcc/public.notices

Effects of Personalised and Group-Based Mastery Learning Strategies on Students' Retention in Chemistry in Secondary Schools in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Michael Saviour Udoh[1];
Prof. A. O. Ovute[1]
[1]Department of Science Education,
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State.
Email: udomysave2016@gmail.com

and

Dr Namkere J. Udoudo[2]
[2]Department of Industrial Technology Education,
University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom state, Nigeria
Email: namkerejudoudo@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract

The study determined the effects of personalised and group-based mastery learning strategies on students' retention in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. Three specific purposes, two research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The quasi-experimental, pre-test, post-test research design was used. The population of the study comprised 16,786 senior secondary two students from the 253 public secondary schools in the state. A sample of 146 students (84 boys and 62 girls) was selected from three intact classes using multi-stage procedure and purposive sampling technique. Two instruments were used in the study namely Mastery Learning Instructional Packages (MLIP) and Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT). The MLIP were face validated by three lecturers from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State while the CAT was subjected to content validation. The reliability of the CAT obtained through test-retest method was 0.84. The mastery learning instructional packages constituted the treatment that was given to the experimental groups 1 and 2 while the control group was taught with the conventional lesson plans. The experiment lasted for six weeks covering six lessons. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that **there** was significant difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with personalized and group-based Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. There was no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students in

Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies. Moreover, there was no significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on students' retention in Chemistry. It is recommended, among others, that Chemistry teachers in Akwa Ibom state secondary schools should henceforth adopt the mastery learning strategies (personalized and group-based) in teaching important concepts in Chemistry while the lecture method **should be de-emphasized.**

Key words: Mastery learning Strategies (personalized and group-based), retention, Chemistry, gender

Introduction

Chemistry is undoubtedly one of the most significant science subjects taught in Nigerian schools from the secondary to the tertiary education level. It is that branch of science which is concerned with the study of matter as it relates to energy as well as the study of laws that determine the structure of the universe with reference to the matter and energy in the universe (Amos and Mkpa, 2023). Chikendu (2022) noted that Chemistry is popularly referred to as the "Central Science" because understanding of its notions about the structure and composition of matter is required for continued study in all sciences. In addition, Chemistry serves as a gatekeeper for secondary school students interested in studying pure and applied science, medicine, pharmacy, engineering, agriculture, and other science and technology related vocations (Amos and Mkpa, 2023). In view of its abstract nature, there is need for the use of innovative teaching strategies that would facilitate meaningful learning among the students. One of such strategies is mastery learning strategy.

Mastery learning is an instructional approach where students need to demonstrate a deep level of understanding of a topic or unit before progressing into another topic or unit. Mastery in this context refers to the ability for students to master, have full knowledge of and become proficient (expert) in a particular topic or concept. Salihu and Francis (2018) described Mastery Learning as an instructional method where students are allowed unlimited opportunities to demonstrate mastery of content taught. The strategy allows students to repeatedly study material until they master it. Mastery of each unit is shown when the student acquires competencies evident by the set pass mark of a diagnostic test. The authors added that mastery learning strategy helps the students to acquire prerequisite skills before moving to the next unit. The teacher also is required to do task analysis and state the objectives clearly and explicitly before designating the activities.

According to Ogini, Akinola, Fadiji & Amole (2021), mastery learning strategy was developed by Benjamin S. Bloom and the method consists of different steps. The Australian Educational Research Organization (AERO, 2021) outlined the steps involved in mastery learning as follows:

i.   Breaking down units of work into tasks with clearly specified objectives.
ii. Identifying the set of learning objectives that your students need to address and describe how they will show evidence of mastery.

iii. Designing tasks for your lessons that explicitly teach students each of the skills or understandings required in order to show mastery.

iv. Sequencing the tasks so that they build upon each other.

v. Explaining to students how each task is related and builds upon the last.

vi. Using formative assessment to monitor students' understanding and progress.

vii. Ensuring that students receive frequent and specific feedback.

viii. Using information from the formative assessments to reflect and refine your own teaching.

ix. Providing opportunities for revision and enrichment.

x. Re-teaching tasks to students who have not met the learning objectives.

xi. Providing enrichment opportunities in class for students who demonstrate early mastery.

xii. Once students have mastered an objective, plan opportunities for review and space practice sessions over time.

There are two popular models of mastery learning strategies namely individualized or personalized model (also known as Keller's model) and group- based model (otherwise known as Bloom's model). Both models adopt the same procedure except that while the individualized model seeks to promote mastery learning of a pre-specified set of objectives for each learner in a subject or course, the Group-Based model seeks to promote mastery learning of a unit of instruction for all members of a class or group in a subject or course. This study used both the personalised and group based models of mastery learning for the experimental groups 1 and 2 respectively while lecture method was used for the control group in order to compare the effectiveness of the three methods on the students' retention of learning in Chemistry.

Retention is the ability to recall or remember what has been taught after a given time as a measure of students' progress (Eze, *et al,* 2016). Several scholars such as Filgona, Filgona and Sababa (2017) and Oginni, *et al* (2021) have identified instructional method as one of the major factors affecting students' academic achievement and retention of learning in various subjects. It is worthy of note that students' retention of learning may vary according to the students' gender. Gender refers to the difference between boys and girls in socio-cultural aspects rather than physical difference only. Several studies have been conducted to examine the effects of mastery learning strategies on students' retention in many subjects. For instance, Filgona, *et al* (2017) studied the effects of Mastery Learning Strategy on Senior Secondary School students' achievement and learning retention in Physical Geography in Ganye Educational Zone, Nigeria. The results showed that Mastery Learning Strategy improved students' learning retention and achievement in all levels of the cognitive domain in Physical Geography better than the Conventional Method. Similarly, Akpan and Tom (2023) examined the effect of Mastery Learning on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance and Retention in Basic Science and Technology in Etinan Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The findings showed that students who were taught basic science and technology using mastery learning had better performance and retention scores than those who were taught using the expository method. It was also found that gender had no significant influence on the academic performance and retention of students taught basic science and technology using mastery learning strategy. Moreover, Jack (2019) studied the effect of mastery learning instructional strategy on secondary school students' achievement and retention of chemistry concepts. The

result showed that students exposed to MLIS achieved significantly better than those taught using Lecture and demonstration method. The result also showed that there was no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of male and female students in chemistry. Furthermore, Reuben and Ogheneakoke (2021) studied the effects of mastery learning on academic Performance of upper basic social Studies students in Delta state. The results revealed that the effect of mastery learning strategy is better than lecture method for teaching and learning Social Studies at the Upper Basic level. Findings also show a significant interaction effect of instructional strategies and gender on the academic performance and retention of students in Upper Basic Social Studies. Based on the foregoing, it becomes imperative to explore the efficacy or otherwise of mastery learning strategies on secondary school students' retention of learning in Chemistry in Akwa Ibom state.

Statement of the Problem

It is very disheartening to observe that students' academic achievement and retention of learning in Chemistry in the senior secondary school certificate examinations are below expectation as indicated by chief examiners reports from examination bodies like the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO). This has been an issue of great concern to science educators considering the relevance of Chemistry education to the nations' development. Despite much efforts by chemistry teachers to improve students' learning outcomes, many students still struggle to understand and retain chemistry concepts. Researches by *Jack (2019),* Reuben and Ogheneakoke (2021) and Akpan and Tom (2023) attributed the poor ability of students' to retain Chemistry concepts to the use of poor instructional strategies by most chemistry teachers. It is observed that the teaching method commonly used by chemistry teachers in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State is the lecture method which is a teacher-centred method that does not emphasize mastery of previous lessons before a new one, hence, it may not be effective in facilitating deep learning and understanding among students. The method does not provide opportunity for teachers to explain the concepts to students in a simple and step by step presentation. When students cannot link what they are being taught with practical experiences, it brings about low interest in that subject which is manifested in their poor academic performance and poor retention of learning. In view of these limitations, there is need to explore new strategies such as mastery learning instructional strategies.

Despite the numerous documented empirical evidences on the effectiveness of mastery learning strategies (personalized and group-based) in improving students' academic achievement and retention of learning in many subjects, not much work has been done on its effect on students' retention of learning in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The absence of research studies that address these issues therefore solicits a study to answer the question: What are the effects of mastery learning strategies on students' retention of learning in Chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effects of mastery learning instructional strategies (personalized and group-based) on Secondary Schools students'

retention of learning in Chemistry in Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives of the study are:

i.   To determine the difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method.

ii. To ascertain the difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method

iii. To determine the interaction effects of teaching strategies and gender on the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:-

i.   What is the difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method?

ii. What is the difference between the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method?

Hypotheses.   The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO 1: There is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method.

HO 2: There is no significant difference between the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method.

HO 3: There is no significant interaction effect of teaching strategies and gender on the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry.

Research Methodology

The quasi-experimental research design, specifically, non-equivalent pre-test - post-test control group design was used in the study. The study was conducted in Akwa Ibom State which is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 16,786 senior secondary two (SSII) chemistry students from all the 253 public secondary schools in the state. A sample of 146 SS II students made up of 84 boys and 62 girls was selected from three intact classes in three co-educational secondary schools in the study area using Multi-stage procedure and purposive sampling technique. Balloting was thereafter used to assign each of the selected three intact classes to the two experimental groups and a control group.

Three instruments were used in the study. They were: Mastery Learning Instructional Packages (MLIP), Lecture method Instructional Packages (LMIP) and Chemistry Achievement

Test (CAT). The Chemistry Achievement Test which comprised 50 multiple choice items with four options lettered A- D was used as pre-test, post-test and retention test after being reshuffled after each administration. Face validation of the MLIP was done by three experts from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike while the content validation of the CAT involves the development of a test blueprint or table of specification. The reliability coefficient of the Chemistry Achievement Test (CAT), was 0.84 obtained using test-retest method.

The students in the selected intact classes were randomly assigned by the researchers to the three study groups as follows: Group I (Personalized mastery learning Strategy); Group II (Group based mastery learning and Group III (Control group, Lecture method). The subjects were subjected to pretesting before the experiment using the CAT. The experiment lasted for six weeks and six lessons were covered. Students in the various groups were taught using the relevant instructional packages. Post-testing was done immediately after the experiment. Two weeks after the post-test, they were subjected to the retention test. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions raised while the hypotheses formulated were tested using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Post hoc pair wise comparison was employed, where necessary.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the difference between the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method?

Table 1: Mean Post-test and Retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught using Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method

S/n	Group	Post test				Retention	Mean and
		N	$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	% gain
1	Personalised Mastery Learning	48	62.08	3.64	69.00	3.11	6.92 %
2	Group-based Mastery Learning	49	60.37	1.84	66.88	8.88	6.51 %
3	Lecture Method	49	53.53	3.31	57.10	3.16	3.57 %

The result in Table 1 shows the mean post-test, retention test scores as well as mean gain of students in Chemistry in the three groups based on teaching strategy namely Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group based) and lecture method. It could be observed that students who were taught using personalized mastery learning strategy obtained the highest mean gain of 6.92 representing 6.92% as against 6.51 (6.51%) and 3.57 (3.57%) obtained by those who were taught using group-based mastery learning strategy and lecture method respectively. This result suggests that teaching chemistry using personalized mastery learning strategy enhances students' retention in the subject than using the group-based mastery learning strategy and lecture method.

Research Question 2

What is the difference between the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method?

Table 2: Mean Post-test and retention test scores of students in Chemistry based on gender when taught using Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method

Group	Gender	N	Post test		Retention		Mean and
			$\overline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD	% gain
Personalized	Male	22	62.64	4.29	70.00	2.89	7.36%
	Female	26	61.62	2.99	68.15	3.09	6.53%
Group based	Male	23	64.35	9.08	69.48	4.09	5.13%
	Female	26	56.85	1.22	64.58	1.17	7.73%
Control	Male	39	52.80	3.74	57.60	2.83	4.83%
	Female	10	54.29	2.66	56.58	3.46	2.24%

The result in Table 2 shows that the mean post-test and retention test scores of male students in experimental group one who were taught with personalized mastery learning method are 62.64 and 70.00 respectively with standard deviations of 4.29 and 2.89. It could be observed that male students in experimental group 1 obtained the highest mean gain of 7.36% as against 6.53% obtained by their female colleagues. Also, female students in experimental group 2 obtained a higher mean gain of 7.73% as against 5.13% obtained by their male colleagues. This result suggests that teaching chemistry using personalized mastery learning strategy enhances male students' retention in the subject more than the female students while the group-based mastery learning strategy enhances female students' retention in the subject more than the male students.

Hypothesis 1 (HO 1): There is no significant difference between the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method.

Hypothesis 2 (HO 2): There is no significant difference between the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies (personalized and group-based) and lecture method.

Hypothesis 3 (HO 3): There is no significant interaction effect of teaching strategies and gender on the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry.

Data related to hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 is presented in table 3

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance test for significant difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry based on gender when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and Lecture method

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Corrected Model	4271.03	5	854.20	27.32	0.00	
Intercept	603173.56	1	603173.56	19291.39	0.00	
GROUP	3995.45	2	1997.72	63.89	0.00	S
GENDER	243.54	1	243.54	7.79	0.06	NS
GROUP * GENDER	102.102	2	51.05	1.63	.199	NS
Error	4377.30	140	31.26			
Total	612181.00	146				
Corrected Total	8648.33	145				

*S = Significant; NS = Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

Table 3 shows that the f -value for group or teaching strategy is 63.89 with p-value (probability value) being 0.00 which is significant at 0.05 level of significance. On this basis, null hypothesis 1 is rejected implying that there is significant difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. Turkey's post hoc test was conducted to determine where the significant difference comes from as shown in Table 4.

Table 3 also shows that the f -value for gender is 7.79 with p- value (probability value) being 0.06 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. On this basis, the null hypothesis is upheld implying that there is no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. Table 3 further revealed that the F-value for interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry is 1.63 with p-value being 0.199 which is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. On this basis, the null hypothesis is upheld implying that there is no significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method.

Table 4: Summary of Turkeys' Post-hoc Pairwise comparison of the mean Retention Test scores of the three groups

Dependent Variable: Retention -Test Score

Groups	Mean Difference	Standard Error	Sig	Remarks
1 Vs 2	2.122	1.167	0.167	NS
1 Vs 3	11.898**	1.167	0.000	S
2 Vs 1	-2.122	1.167	0.167	NS
2 Vs 3	9.775**	1.161	0.000	S
3 Vs 1	-11.898**	1.167	0.000	S
3 Vs 2	-9.775**	1.161	0.000	S

Based on observed means (raw scores). The error term is Mean Square (Error) = 47.519.

The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The summary of Turkey's post hoc **pairwise comparison of** the mean difference in the retention test scores of students in the three groups presented in Table 4 shows that the mean difference between group 1 (personalized) and group 2 (group-based) as well as between groups 2 and 1 were not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Significant difference were however found in the mean difference between group 1 (personalized) and group 3 (lecture method), between groups 2 and 3, 3 and 1 as well as between groups 3 and 2. This result implies that the mean retention test scores of students in the two experimental groups were significantly better than those in the control group. The significant difference is therefore attributed to experimental group 1 students who obtained a higher retention test score than those in the other two groups as seen in Table 1

Findings of the Study

It was found that students taught chemistry using personalized mastery learning strategy performed better in the retention test than those who were taught using group-based mastery learning strategy and lecture method. **There** was significant difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. The difference is in favour of experimental group 1 who were taught using personalized mastery learning strategy. **There** was no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. T**here** was no significant interaction effect of teaching strategy and gender on the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method.

Discussion of Findings

In the study, it was found that **there** was significant difference in the mean retention scores of students in Chemistry when taught with Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. The difference was in favour of experimental group 1 who were taught using personalized mastery learning strategy. This result could be attributed to the fact that in personalised mastery learning strategy, the teacher pays close attention to each student personally and this enables the students to understand a unit of instruction very well before proceeding to the next unit. This finding agreed with that of Filgona, et al (2017) who found that Mastery Learning Strategy improve students' learning retention and achievement in Physical Geography better than the Conventional Method. The finding also supports that of *Jack (2019), Akpan and Tom (2023) and Tahir and Faruk (2024) who in their separate studies found that mastery learning approach (MLA) significantly enhance students' achievement and retention than when using the conventional method.*

It was also found in the study that **there** was no significant difference in the mean retention scores of male and female students in Chemistry when exposed to Mastery Learning Strategies and lecture method. This finding agreed with that of *Jack (2019) who found* that there was no significant difference between the mean achievement and retention scores of male and female

students in chemistry when taught using mastery learning strategy. The finding also supports that of *Akpan and Tom (2023) who found that gender had no significant influence on the academic performance and retention of students taught basic science and technology using mastery learning strategy.*

It was further found in the study that **there is no significant interaction effect of** teaching strategy and gender on students' retention in Chemistry. This implies that the combined effect of teaching strategy and gender does not have significant influence on students' retention in Chemistry. This finding contradicts that of *Reuben and Ogheneakoke (2021) who studied the effects of mastery learning on academic Performance of upper basic social Studies students in Delta state. The results revealed that there was a significant interaction effect of instructional strategies and gender on the students' academic performance and retention in Upper Basic Social Studies*

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that teaching Chemistry using personalized and group-based mastery learning strategies enhances students' retention of learning than using the lecture method. Also, the personalized Mastery Learning strategy is favourable to both male and female students with respect to retention of learning. Moreover, **the combined effect of** teaching strategy and students' gender do not have significant influence on students' retention in chemistry when taught using Mastery Learning strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

1. Government of Akwa Ibom State should ensure that Chemistry teachers in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom state henceforth adopt the personalised mastery learning strategy in teaching important concepts in Chemistry

2. Curriculum developers in Chemistry should recommend personalized and group-based Mastery learning strategies as one of the teaching strategies in order to improve students' achievement and retention in the subject.

Work Cited

Akpan, M. E. and Tom, A. P. (2023). Effect of mastery learning on secondary school students academic performance and retention in basic science and technology in Etinan Local government area, Akwa Ibom state. ASJSTME, 9(6), 442-447

Amos, U. S. and Mkpa, M. A. (2023). Effects of mastery learning strategy on secondary school students' achievement in chemistry in secondary schools in Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District. *International Journal of Latest research in Humanities and Social Science, 1(11), 237-243*

Australian Educational Research Organization (AERO, 2021). Mastery learning. Retrieved from www.aero.org

Catherine, K. N.;. (2023). Effect of cooperative mastery learning approach on secondary school students' achievement based on gender in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7(10), 168-178*

Chikendu, R. E. (2022). Factors affecting chemistry students' academic performance in Senior secondary schools in Anambra state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education and Sustainable Development*, 2(2), 67-76

Eze, T. I., Ezenwafor, J. I. and Obidile, I. J. (2016). Effects of problem-based **teaching** method on students' academic performance and retention in Financial Accounting in Technical colleges in Anambra State. *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 4 (6A), 634 639.

Iserameiyaa, F. E. and Ibeneme, O. T. (2018). Effect of mastery learning strategy on junior secondary school students' academic achievement in Basic Technology in Edo state, Nigeria. *International Journal of New Technology and Research,* 4(3), 95-101

Jack, G. U. (2019). Effects of mastery learning instructional strategy on secondary school students' achievement and retention of chemistry concepts. *Journal of Education in Developing Areas,* 27(2), 249-261

Ogini, O. I.; Akinola, A. S.; Fadiji, A. E. & Amole, P. A. (2021). Effects of mastery learning strategy on secondary school students' performance in Mathematics. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy,* 2(5), 59-63

Ojukwu, M. O. (2016). Perception of students on causes of poor performance in Chemistry in external examinations in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State. *International Journal of Education & Literary Studies*, 4(1), 67-73

Reuben, D. & Ogbeneakoke, E. C. (2021). Effects of matery learning on academic performance of upper basic social science students in Delta State, Nigeria. *Journal of Social Studies*, 24(1), 405-423

Salihu, M. M. & Francis, T. T. (2018). Mastery learning strategy: A panacea for effective curriculum implementation in lower basic schools in Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Education Development* 2(2), 1-11

Tahir, S. R. and Faruk, G. T. (2024). Effects of Mastery-Learning-Approach on academic performance and retention in Islamic Studies Concept among Public Primary School Pupils in Katsina State, Nigeria. Journal of Education Research 2(4), 21-32

Toheed, L. & Ali, A. (2019). Effects of mastery learning model on academic achievement of secondary school students in Mathematics. *Global Social Sciences Review,* IV (IV), 232-238

The Philosophy of Leadership for
Principals' Administrative Strategies and Teachers' Job Performance

Dr Emmanuel E Ukata, CMF
Augustinian Institute, Makurdi
Oliagba Cynthia Nneka, D.M.M.M University of Abuja

Abstract

The philosophy of leadership offers a reflective foundation for understanding how school principals' values, beliefs, and administrative strategies influence teachers' job performance. This study examined the intersection between philosophical leadership principles and practical administrative behavior in the management of educational institutions. Drawing insights from transformational, servant, and ethical leadership theories, the study explored how a principal's vision, decision-making style, and interpersonal relations shape teacher motivation, instructional effectiveness, and professional satisfaction. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected through questionnaires and interviews from principals and teachers across selected secondary schools in owerri. Quantitative analysis measured the correlation between leadership strategies such as participatory decision-making, supervision, communication, and motivation and key indicators of teachers' job performance, while qualitative insights provided a deeper understanding of the ethical and philosophical orientations guiding principals' actions. Findings revealed that leadership grounded in human-centered and value-driven philosophy significantly enhances teachers' productivity, commitment, and classroom engagement. Conversely, autocratic and inconsistent administrative practices diminish morale and hinder effective teaching. The study emphasized that the success of any educational system depends not only on technical management skills but also on the moral and philosophical depth of leadership. Consequently, the paper recommended continuous leadership training programs that integrate philosophical reflection with practical administrative competence.

Keywords: Philosophy of Leadership; Administrative Strategies; Transformational Leadership; Educational Management; Ethical Leadership.

Introduction

Leadership has long been regarded as the cornerstone of effective organizational functioning, particularly within educational institutions where the dynamics of learning, growth, and human development converge. In educational settings, leadership is not confined

to the coordination of resources or the enforcement of regulations; rather, it represents the art of guiding teachers and students toward a shared vision of excellence and moral purpose (Bush, 2020). The school principal, in this respect, serves as both an administrator and a moral exemplar whose leadership philosophy influences the ethos, performance, and productivity of the entire institution. As Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins affirm, effective school leadership is second only to classroom instruction in influencing student outcomes, primarily through its impact on teacher motivation and professional engagement (Harris, and Hopkins 2020).

Philosophically, leadership in education embodies the integration of rational organization and moral purpose. Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* practical wisdom illustrates the need for leaders to act not merely with technical competence but with ethical discernment aimed at the common good (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, 1999). This philosophical grounding is crucial because education itself is a moral enterprise aimed at nurturing both intellect and character. Hence, a principal's administrative strategies must reflect a balance between managerial efficiency and ethical leadership, aligning institutional goals with the personal and professional well-being of teachers.

Despite the recognized importance of leadership in school management, many educational institutions continue to experience declining teacher morale, low motivation, and diminished productivity due to poor leadership practices (Akinola & Lawal, 2022). The prevalence of autocratic and non-participatory leadership styles often undermines collaboration, weakens teacher commitment, and erodes trust within the school community. In many cases, principals exercise authority without philosophical reflection on the ethical implications of their administrative decisions, leading to discontent and alienation among teachers. The absence of value-driven leadership diminishes teachers' sense of purpose, reducing their willingness to innovate and contribute meaningfully to the educational mission (Okon & Etim, 2021).

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between principals' leadership philosophies, their administrative strategies, and teachers' job performance. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how the moral and philosophical orientations of principals influence their decision-making processes, communication patterns, supervisory practices, and motivational strategies, and how these, in turn, affect teachers' efficiency, job satisfaction, and classroom effectiveness. By linking leadership philosophy with administrative behavior, the study aims to illuminate the deeper ethical and existential dimensions of educational leadership, showing that effective management must be grounded in a coherent vision of human flourishing and institutional purpose.

This study will be guided by the following research questions:
What are the dominant leadership philosophies guiding principals' administrative strategies in secondary schools?
- How do principals' administrative strategies influence teachers' motivation and job performance?
- To what extent does the ethical and philosophical orientation of school leaders shape the overall school climate and teacher productivity?
- What leadership approaches best promote collaboration, creativity, and commitment among teachers?

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1 The Philosophy of Leadership

Leadership, in its philosophical sense, transcends the mere exercise of authority or administrative control; it is fundamentally a moral vocation rooted in the pursuit of the common good and the flourishing of others. The philosophy of leadership thus interrogates not only *how* leaders act, but *why* they act their guiding beliefs, ethical commitments, and understanding of human purpose. As Burns observes, leadership is most authentic when it transforms both the leader and the led, elevating them to higher levels of motivation and morality. From a **classical philosophical perspective**, Plato envisioned leadership as the stewardship of the *philosopher-king* a ruler guided by wisdom and virtue rather than personal ambition (Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Shorey, 1968). Plato's concept underscores the idea that knowledge divorced from moral vision is inadequate for governance. Similarly, Aristotle advanced the notion of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) as the defining quality of the good leader, emphasizing moderation, virtue, and the rational pursuit of the common good (*Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, 1999). St. Thomas Aquinas later developed this idea further by situating leadership within the framework of *natural law*, arguing that true authority must reflect divine reason and the moral order intended for human flourishing (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, Q.90).

In the **modern era**, Immanuel Kant (1785) emphasized autonomy and moral duty as central to ethical leadership. For Kant, leadership must respect the inherent dignity of persons, treating individuals as ends in themselves rather than as means to institutional goals (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*). Contemporary paradigms such as **transformational** and **servant leadership** extend these philosophical insights into organizational contexts. Transformational leadership, as posited by Bass and Riggio (2006), seeks to inspire moral growth and self-actualization among followers through vision and shared purpose. Servant leadership, articulated by Greenleaf, places moral responsibility, empathy, and service at the heart of leadership practice (Greenleaf 1977). In the **educational sphere**, these philosophical orientations find expression in the ethical dimension of leadership. School principals are not merely administrators but moral agents shaping a community of learning. Ethical leadership in education emphasizes fairness, care, and integrity as the guiding principles of administrative conduct (Starratt, 2017). Hence, the philosophy of leadership in schools is a call to harmonize managerial competence with moral insight, ensuring that administrative decisions contribute to the holistic development of both teachers and learners.

2.2 Administrative Strategies in School Leadership

Administrative strategies are the practical expressions of leadership philosophy the tangible mechanisms through which principals operationalize their ethical and managerial convictions. Effective educational administration integrates both strategic and human dimensions to foster an environment conducive to learning and professional growth. Key administrative strategies include **instructional supervision**, which ensures the alignment of teaching practices with curricular goals and pedagogical standards (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2018); **delegation**, which distributes responsibilities equitably and fosters a

sense of ownership among teachers; and **communication**, which sustains transparency and trust within the school community. **Motivation,** whether through recognition, professional development, or participatory decision-making is central to maintaining teachers' morale and engagement (Herzberg, 1968).

Strategic planning and **resource management** are also essential components of school leadership. As Hoy and Miskel (2013) note, successful principals anticipate future challenges and align institutional resources with educational priorities. These strategies must, however, be informed by the leader's ethical framework to prevent efficiency from overshadowing humanity. Leadership styles vary across contexts. **Transformational leadership** emphasizes vision and empowerment; **transactional leadership** focuses on task performance and reward structures; **democratic leadership** promotes inclusivity and shared governance; **autocratic leadership** centralizes authority; and **laissez-faire leadership** minimizes direct intervention (Northouse, 2022). Among these, transformational and democratic approaches have been found most conducive to teacher motivation and innovation, especially when grounded in trust and mutual respect.

2.3 Teachers' Job Performance

Teachers' job performance is a multidimensional construct encompassing the efficiency, quality, and creativity with which educators fulfill their professional duties. It reflects not only instructional competence but also commitment, punctuality, classroom management, and the ability to inspire learning outcomes (Akinyemi & Bamidele, 2021). Indicators of effective performance include lesson preparation, teaching innovation, assessment practices, and positive student engagement. Several factors influence teachers' performance. These include **motivation**, **work environment**, **professional development opportunities**, and the **leadership style** of school administrators (Okon & Etim, 2021). A supportive leadership climate characterized by recognition, dialogue, and ethical consistency tends to enhance teachers' enthusiasm and sense of belonging. Conversely, environments marked by rigidity, favoritism, or lack of communication reduce morale and productivity.

From a philosophical standpoint, teachers' performance is not merely a function of compliance but of participation in a shared moral vision. When teachers perceive that their contributions are valued and aligned with a purpose greater than personal gain, they experience a deeper sense of vocation and meaning in their work what Gabriel Marcel would describe as *availability* or self-giving presence to others. Hence, teacher performance thrives where leadership affirms human dignity and mutual responsibility.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The study draws upon several leadership and motivation theories to explain the relationship between leadership philosophy, administrative strategies, and teachers' job performance.

Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006) posits that leaders who inspire, intellectually stimulate, and show individualized consideration foster higher levels of commitment and creativity among followers. In educational settings, transformational principals act as catalysts for teacher empowerment and pedagogical innovation.

Situational Leadership Theory (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982) emphasizes the adaptability of leadership behavior according to followers' competence and commitment. This flexibility reflects Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, the practical wisdom to discern the right action for each circumstance. Integrating these frameworks suggests that leadership philosophy acts as the moral and conceptual foundation from which administrative behavior emerges. A principal's worldview shaped by ethical, ontological, and epistemological convictions directly influences their strategic choices and, consequently, teachers' motivation and effectiveness. Leadership, when grounded in moral philosophy and practical wisdom, transforms administration into a form of ethical stewardship aimed at realizing the full potential of both teachers and learners.

3 Principals' Leadership Philosophies and Their Influence

The study revealed that principals' leadership philosophies significantly shape the moral atmosphere, decision-making processes, and relational dynamics within schools. Principals who grounded their leadership in humanistic and ethical values such as respect, justice, and care fostered an environment of mutual trust and professional commitment among teachers. These leaders demonstrated what Aristotle termed *phronesis* (practical wisdom), the capacity to balance moral virtue with pragmatic decision-making for the common good (*Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, 1999). In such schools, leadership was perceived not merely as a managerial function but as a vocation of service, aligning with Greenleaf's (1977) concept of servant leadership that prioritizes the growth and well-being of followers.

Conversely, principals who exhibited authoritarian or transactional tendencies often reduced leadership to rule enforcement and compliance, neglecting the ethical dimension that sustains communal harmony and teacher motivation. Kant's moral imperative that individuals be treated as ends rather than means—provides a philosophical critique of such leadership styles. In the absence of reflective and ethical reasoning, leadership risks degenerating into domination rather than direction (Starratt, 2017). The findings thus affirm that a principal's internalized values—whether grounded in service, justice, or personal ambition manifest visibly in administrative decisions, staff relations, and institutional culture. Principals influenced by transformational ideals tended to articulate a shared vision and inspire teachers toward collective achievement. Their decisions were participatory, reflective, and ethically attuned, suggesting that leadership philosophy functions as the moral compass that guides administrative conduct. This finding echoes Burns' assertion that authentic leadership must elevate both leader and followers to higher levels of moral consciousness.

3.1 Administrative Strategies Employed by Principals

The findings identified five major administrative strategies commonly employed by principals: **instructional supervision, delegation, effective communication, motivation, and participatory decision-making.** Principals who prioritized instructional supervision enhanced pedagogical quality and accountability among teachers, consistent with Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon's view that supervision is central to instructional improvement. However, the manner in which supervision was conducted whether supportive or punitive was a decisive factor in determining teacher response. Delegation emerged as a vital strategy for fostering ownership and shared responsibility. When principals trusted teachers with

meaningful roles, teachers exhibited greater initiative and professional confidence. This reflects McGregor's *Theory Y* assumption that workers are inherently motivated and capable of self-direction when properly empowered. On the contrary, principals who monopolized decision-making fostered passivity and resentment, reflecting *Theory X* tendencies that assume teachers require control.

Effective communication also appeared as a cornerstone of successful school administration. Open, transparent, and dialogical communication enhanced collegiality, while poor communication bred misunderstanding and alienation. Motivation—through recognition, professional development, and fair appraisal was another key determinant of teacher satisfaction. Principals who implemented Herzberg's *Motivation–Hygiene Theory* effectively addressed intrinsic motivators such as achievement and recognition, leading to higher job fulfillment.

3.2 Impact on Teachers' Job Performance

It is clear that there is a relationship between leadership philosophy, administrative strategies, and teachers' job performance. Principals who espoused servant or transformational leadership philosophies nurtured environments where teachers exhibited greater instructional creativity, punctuality, and emotional commitment. Teachers reported heightened enthusiasm and a sense of belonging when they perceived their leaders as just, transparent, and supportive. This finding is consistent with Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins, who assert that effective school leadership indirectly influences student outcomes through its positive effect on teachers' motivation and engagement (Harris, and Hopkins 2020).

Schools where principals exhibited autocratic or inconsistent administrative practices recorded lower levels of teacher satisfaction and higher rates of absenteeism and turnover. Teachers in such environments described leadership as coercive rather than inspirational, leading to what Marcel would call "disincarnation" a detachment from one's work and vocation. From a philosophical lens, this alienation reflects the moral failure of leadership that prioritizes control over communion.

Transformational leadership theory provides a conceptual explanation for these findings: by inspiring shared purpose and intellectual stimulation, transformational principals elevate teachers' sense of professional identity. Similarly, Herzberg's model elucidates how intrinsic motivators—such as recognition and responsibility drive sustainable job performance more than extrinsic factors. Thus, effective leadership in education is both ethically grounded and human-centered, facilitating teacher flourishing as an intrinsic good rather than a mere instrument for institutional success.

4. Implications for Educational Leadership

The findings of this study illuminate profound implications for the philosophy and practice of educational leadership. They demonstrate that effective school management cannot be divorced from the moral and philosophical foundations upon which leadership is built. Leadership in education is not merely a matter of administrative competence or technical expertise; it is fundamentally an ethical vocation grounded in the pursuit of truth, justice, and the flourishing of the human person (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q.90). This section

discusses the implications of the findings for educational administrators, policymakers, and teacher development within the broader framework of moral and transformational leadership.

4.1 Re-envisioning Leadership as a Moral and Philosophical Enterprise

Educational leadership must be re-envisioned as an act of moral stewardship rather than mere managerial control. The study confirms that the principal's moral philosophy whether grounded in service, justice, or utilitarian expediency inevitably shapes the school's ethical climate and the motivation of teachers. Hence, the cultivation of philosophical and ethical consciousness among school leaders is essential. As Starratt argues, ethical leadership involves *care, justice, and critique* care for the persons one leads, justice in decision-making, and critique of institutional structures that hinder human dignity. Principals should therefore engage in reflective practices that allow them to discern the ethical dimensions of administrative decisions (Starratt 2017) . This moral awareness aligns with Aristotle's *phronesis*, or practical wisdom, which enables leaders to balance competing values and pursue the common good (*Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, 1999). By grounding leadership in moral philosophy, principals transform their administrative role into a vocation of service that inspires teachers toward excellence.

4.2 Integrating Philosophical Reflection into Leadership Training

One of the key implications of this study is the need to integrate philosophical and ethical reflection into leadership preparation programs. Many current training modules emphasize technical efficiency budgeting, supervision, and performance appraisal while neglecting the deeper moral and existential dimensions of leadership. However, as Fullan insists, sustainable educational change depends on leaders who act from a sense of *moral purpose* (Fullan 2019).

Educational leadership institutes should therefore include courses on moral philosophy, ethics of care, and philosophical anthropology. Such integration will enable future principals to appreciate leadership not as a power dynamic but as a relational and moral responsibility. By cultivating self-awareness and ethical reasoning, school leaders become capable of aligning administrative practices with the intrinsic dignity of teachers and learners.

4.3 Enhancing Teacher Development through Ethical Leadership

The study reveals that teachers' job performance is deeply intertwined with the moral tone set by school leadership. Ethical and transformational leadership creates an environment where teachers find meaning and dignity in their work. This has implications for teacher development programs, which should encourage collaboration between teachers and administrators in creating shared ethical visions for the school.

According to Greenleaf the servant leader's first duty is to ensure that those served "grow as persons." Thus, principals must intentionally design professional development initiatives that nurture teachers' intellectual, moral, and emotional capacities. Programs emphasizing mentorship, collegial dialogue, and recognition of excellence promote a culture of mutual growth. Teachers who feel valued and ethically supported are more likely to internalize the school's mission and contribute meaningfully to students' formation.

6. Conclusion

The present study has demonstrated that leadership in education is not merely an administrative or managerial undertaking but a profoundly philosophical and moral vocation. The findings underscore that the principal's leadership philosophy whether informed by virtue ethics, deontological duty, or transformational service inevitably shapes teachers' motivation, commitment, and professional excellence. Leadership, when reduced to procedural control or bureaucratic efficiency, forfeits its higher purpose: the cultivation of a moral community in which teachers and learners alike can flourish. Thus, the philosophy of leadership must be understood as the *animating spirit* of educational management a moral compass that guides all administrative action toward the common good.

Philosophically, this study affirms Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) as central to effective educational leadership. The principal's capacity to discern the right course of action in complex, value-laden situations embodies the virtue of prudence, which integrates moral insight with situational intelligence (*Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Irwin, 1999). Similarly, Aquinas' conception of law and moral order situates leadership within the framework of reason and the divine good (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q.90–94). The educational leader, therefore, acts as both rational guide and moral steward, harmonizing institutional objectives with ethical imperatives.

The study also supports the transformative models of leadership articulated by Greenleaf and Burns, emphasizing that true leadership seeks to elevate followers to higher levels of morality and motivation. Transformational and servant leadership theories converge in their recognition of human dignity and relational interdependence values indispensable to the educational context. A principal, who listens, empowers, and models integrity not only enhances teacher performance but also contributes to the moral regeneration of the school as a community of learning and virtue.

However, the research also reveals enduring challenges: inadequate communication, inconsistent motivation, and the persistence of authoritarian tendencies in leadership. These failures are not merely administrative flaws but ethical lapses that undermine the ontological dignity of teachers. As Kant reminds us, every person must be treated as an end in themselves, never merely as a means to institutional goals. Hence, educational leadership must be grounded in respect for human freedom, moral autonomy, and participatory collaboration.

In conclusion, the philosophy of leadership invites a reorientation of educational management from a paradigm of control to one of moral responsibility and relational trust. The effectiveness of principals' administrative strategies depends not only on technical proficiency but on the moral vision that animates their practice. Educational systems that prioritize ethical formation in leadership development will produce principals who, like Aquinas' "wise governors," lead not by coercion but by reason, virtue, and example. Such leadership transforms schools into spaces of moral and intellectual formation where teachers find fulfillment, students encounter purpose, and the community at large benefits from the radiance of authentic educational stewardship.

Work Cited

Aquinas, T. (1947). *Summa Theologiae* (Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Trans.). Benziger Brothers.

Aristotle. (1999). *Nicomachean ethics* (T. Irwin, Trans., 2nd ed.). Hackett Publishing.

Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (2007). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge* (2nd ed.). HarperBusiness.

Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.

Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. Free Press.

Fullan, M. (2019). *Leading in a culture of change* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.

Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. World Publishing.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. (2013). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (9th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.

Kant, I. (1998). *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals* (M. Gregor, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1785)

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership & Management, 40*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077

Marcel, G. (1965). *Being and having* (K. Farrer, Trans.). Harper & Row.

McGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise*. McGraw-Hill.

Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A relational approach to ethics and moral education* (2nd ed.). University of California Press.

Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). Sage Publications.

Rost, J. C. (1993). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. Praeger.

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization* (Rev. ed.). Doubleday.

Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992). *Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. Jossey-Bass.

Starratt, R. J. (2017). *Ethical leadership* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Ubben, G. C., Hughes, L. W., & Norris, C. J. (2017). *The principal: Creative leadership for excellence in schools* (9th ed.). Pearson Education.

Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.

Kierkegaardian Authenticity
and the Question of African Identity Crisis

Christian Nwadinihu
Department of Philosophy
Faculty of Humanities
Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria
cnwadinihu@yahoo.com
christiannwadinihu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3415-5491

Abstract

Post-colonial Africa continues to grapple with a persistent identity crisis rooted in the historical experiences of slavery, colonialism, cultural erasure, systemic oppression, and the imposition of foreign values and institutions. These forces have produced a condition of psychological dividedness in which Africans are caught between their worldviews and Western paradigms, resulting in cultural dislocation, dependency, and loss of authentic self-definition. This work interrogates this African identity crisis through the lens of Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy of authentic existence. Drawing particularly on Kierkegaard's notions of subjectivity, choice, commitment, and responsibility, the work argues that authenticity offers a viable philosophical framework for reclaiming African selfhood. Kierkegaard's critique of rationalism, conformity, and "the crowd" is applied to the African context to expose the dangers of uncritical imitation, external validation, and ideological dependence. It contends that African revitalization requires critical self-reflection, contextualized decision-making, and the courage to assume responsibility for collective choices rather than reliance on imported models. By embracing subjective truth, Africans can resist Eurocentric narratives and internalized oppression, assert their right to self-definition, and reconstruct identity grounded in lived experience and indigenous values while remaining open to universal engagement.

Keywords: Kierkegaard, African Predicament, Identity, Development, Stages of Life

Introduction

The constant search for meaning revolves around the anthropological question: *Who is man*? This question, as Battista Mondin noted, "is the interrogative of all interrogatives, the most pressing and piercing interrogative of all. It is an old interrogative, yet it is always new; it

is concrete, not abstract; personal not generic" (1). Thus, "for man, to know who he is, what his origin is, what his destiny is, what consistency his life and internal dimension has…all this cannot be an indifferent matter. Indifference can arise towards all others… but not towards ourselves. We must necessarily occupy and preoccupy ourselves with the sense of our life and the value of our existence" (Mondin, 1). It is for this preoccupation with human existence that Kierkegaard emerged in the nineteenth century to redirect the focus from the systematic rational explanation of human nature from objectivity to subjectivity. However, "the nineteenth century was not yet ready to give up the notion that a scientific or rational analysis of human nature can tell us everything we need to know about ourselves, including how to conduct our lives" (Lawhead, 399). Consequently, with the coming on board of Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century, the aim changed, not to focus on presenting abstract philosophical arguments that tend to picture the state of man and his world, but Kierkegaard concerned himself with presenting existential possibilities that leave one with choices to be or not to be. Kierkegaard focused on the concrete situation of man against the Hegelian explanation of the world. Kierkegaard believed that the Western Tradition's focus on rationalism contributed significantly to dehumanization. He argued that Greek rationalism, the basis of Western thought, was overly reliant on mathematics and abstract theories, thereby neglecting the realities of living. For him, the main goal of philosophy was to help individuals understand and face existential issues. Philosophy should help people see themselves as unique selves and subjects, which would, in turn, reshape their perspective on the world and the essence of existence.

Nevertheless, the anthropological and existential issues raised by Kierkegaard's philosophy gain significant importance in the context of post-colonial Africa. Just as Kierkegaard diagnosed modern humanity's loss of self through excessive rationalism, conformity, and external determinations, the African search for identity in today's post-colonial setting is rooted in psychological dividedness which is as a result of traumatic experiences of slavery, colonialism, imperialism, cultural erasure, systemic oppression, distorted self-perception, the clash of conflicting ideologies, and imposed value systems. Consequently, the contemporary African is caught between two cultural worlds: that of Africa and that of the West, resulting in an inner conflict over who he truly is and what he genuinely seeks to become. This condition mirrors Kierkegaard's notion of inauthentic existence, in which individuals live according to external standards rather than their own convictions. Hence, there is a persistent tendency to seek external validation and to live according to others' perceptions and expectations. In light of this ongoing identity crisis, Africa "needs to find and establish a foundation for what and who they are, what they believe in, and the values they hold and live for. This is necessary if they are to orient themselves in a world becoming ever more global" (Kiarie, in Makumba, 11). Hence, this work aims to interrogate the African identity crisis through the lens of Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy of authentic existence, drawing particularly on Kierkegaard's notions of subjectivity, choice, commitment, and responsibility.

Søren Kierkegaard on Stages of Life's ways

Kierkegaard argues that the individual progresses through three stages of life. These stages are: the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage and the religious stage. These three stages can be regarded as views of life or existential categories. One may ask how Kierkegaard arrived at these stages and if they are original to him. According to Ogbonna, "the manner in which Kierkegaard applied the theory of the stages is very original and this originality in the existential application of the theory has placed Kierkegaard on the eagle's wings" (60). Writing further on how Kierkegaard arrived at the stages, Ogbonna further noted that:

> This whole idea seems rather to have been forced on him by reflection upon his own experiences and he also sought the leading principles under which he could organize his literary studies, his extensive observation of human character as well as the lessons of his own life. The stages have a deep significance, for they are concerned with the fundamental commitments and organizing ideals available to man (61).

This movement of existence in Kierkegaard's thought does not take place in historical or cultural patterns; it is a movement that is made as a result of an individual's passionate choice. The movement is to overcome despair and integrate into authentic existence. This progression is not a cognitive one but an existential one. As Law head noted, "the movement from one stage of existence to another cannot be based on logical reasons, but is based on existential reasons, rooted in one's personal life story. Choosing to live out of any one of the existence-spheres is a value choice because the choice is based on the answer to questions such as what shall I become? Is this a way of life I can make my own?" (407). The movement from one stage to another is a sign of the inadequacy of one stage of existence. However, "it is important to remember that when Kierkegaard writes on each of these stages or spheres, he is dealing with a unique and distinct lifestyles, each of which is complete in itself and incompatible moreover with any of the other lifestyles" (Ogbonna, 62-63). Given this, Kierkegaard certainly recognizes that the world is filled with as many personalities as there are individuals, but the values guiding their lives are fewer. Kierkegaard believes that as we progress through each stage, we move towards becoming a fully developed self, which can be realized at the religious stage. These stages of existence are as follows:

(a) The Aesthetic Stage

The aesthetic stage is the first sphere of existence in which a person lives through the senses and emotions. The aesthetic stage represents a fundamental aspect of human existence and self-awareness. It is a phase in which individuals prioritize pleasure, beauty, and immediate gratification over other considerations, such as commitment and responsibility. At its core, the Aesthetic Stage embodies a pursuit of sensory experiences and hedonistic pleasures. Individuals in this stage are captivated by the allure of novelty and excitement, constantly seeking new sensations to stimulate their senses and satiate their desires. Whether through indulging in sensory delights like food, exquisite art, or thrilling adventures, they prioritize the immediate gratification derived from these experiences. Central to the aesthetic stage is the

emphasis on beauty. This extends beyond mere physical attractiveness to encompass the aesthetic appreciation of art, music, literature, and nature. Beauty serves as a guiding principle, which influences individuals' choices and preferences as they seek out experiences that evoke a sense of aesthetic pleasure and fulfilment. The pursuit of beauty in all its forms becomes a primary driving force that shapes their interactions with the world around them. For a person of the aesthetic stage, life is an incessant search for gratifying moments. As Lawhead noted:

> The aesthetic category covers a wide range of personality types that includes the raw hedonist who wallows in base, sensual pleasures, as well as the romantic who revels in the enjoyment of art and literature, and even the intellectual who enjoys ideas as though they are fine wines, but without committing his life to any of them. For the aesthetic person, the only two categories that matter are boring and interesting. Life is a frantic attempt to avoid boredom by filling one's plate with ever-new interesting experiences. Whereas Descartes said, *cogito ego sum,* the aesthete says, *I have interesting moments, therefore I am* (408).

According to Kierkegaard, an individual who chooses a life of the aesthetic stage is not bothered by self-control, duty, or responsibility, as all he strives for is his immediate satisfactions, thereby not considering the bad or good of moral principles. A man of aesthetic stage can experience fulfilment and dissatisfaction, ecstasy and despair and happiness and sufferings. The man of the aesthetic stage lives a life of romantic immediacy and always craves the satisfaction of pleasure or pleasurable goods, which can be of good health, honour, beauty, food, talent or wealth. However, the aesthetic life is often threatened by the constant prospect of pain, suffering and boredom and it is this search for escape that the man of aesthetic life is always in search of new pleasure. For the aesthetic person, as Kierkegaard noted, "boredom is the root of all evil" (*Either/Or,* 281) and it has two weapons in its arsenal, as Lawhead noted:

> First, boredom is a threat because of the transitory nature of all experiences. Just when the aesthetic person thinks her life is full of pleasure, the beautiful flower fades, the concrete comes to an end, or the moment of passion passes and she is left once again with the inner emptiness. The second weapon of boredom is repetition. Too much of any pleasure eventually becomes tiresome, stale, and dissatisfying. To overcome this problem, one is driven to a frantic search for new experiences (408).

While the Aesthetic stage may seem enticing with its promise of pleasure and excitement, it is also characterized by a reluctance to confront the challenges of commitment and responsibility. Individuals in this stage often shy away from long-term commitments and obligations, preferring the freedom and spontaneity that come with avoiding such burdens. Rather than embracing the demands of relationships, careers, or societal expectations, they prioritize their own immediate desires and whims. This aversion to commitment stems from a fear of constraint and a desire to maintain autonomy and independence. By eschewing

responsibilities, individuals in the Aesthetic stage preserve their freedom to pursue pleasure without the encumbrance of obligations that may limit their choices or impede their enjoyment. They prioritize the pursuit of personal fulfilment over the demands of social or moral obligations.

The Aesthetic stage of existence is characterized by a certain superficiality and transience in relationships and experiences. Individuals may flit from one fleeting pleasure to another, never fully immersing themselves in meaningful connections or long-lasting endeavours. This transient nature of their pursuits prevents them from experiencing deeper levels of satisfaction or fulfilment, as they remain fixated on the ephemeral allure of the next novel experience. Despite its allure, the aesthetic stage is not without its limitations and pitfalls. Individuals who become entrenched in this lifestyle may find themselves trapped in a cycle of fleeting pleasures and superficial pursuits, ultimately leading to a sense of emptiness or disillusionment. The pursuit of immediate gratification can result in a lack of fulfilment and a perpetual yearning for something more substantial and meaningful. Moreover, the relentless pursuit of pleasure and beauty can blind individuals to the deeper complexities and challenges of life. By prioritizing sensory experiences over intellectual or emotional growth, they may neglect opportunities for self-reflection, personal development, and genuine human connection.

The aesthetic stage represents a form of escapism, wherein individuals seek refuge from the complexities and uncertainties of life through the pursuit of pleasure and beauty. The aesthetic person does not have a self; his choices and decisions are influenced by the pleasure of the moment and the environment. However, there is a "natural, dialectical tendency to seek more, to seek some unified core of values, to seek one's life, a restless urge to find something stable to be committed to. If a person answers this call, he or she will make the leap up to the ethical stage of existence" (Lawhead, 409).

(b) The Ethical Stage

The Ethical stage represents a fundamental phase in human development characterized by a profound recognition of duty, morality, and responsibility. Within this stage, individuals transcend the hedonistic pursuit of pleasure inherent in the Aesthetic stage, in its place embracing ethical principles and societal norms as guiding forces in their lives. At the ethical stage of existence individual make choices and consider the morality of one's choice. "To exist at this stage does not mean the person suddenly makes all the right moral choices…In the ethical stage, the world is divided into the dichotomy of good-bad. Although the decision to live in the ethical sphere is not based on reason, once a person decides to be moral she can derive moral principles naturally, just as Kant claimed we could (Lawhead, 409).

The ethical stage revolves around the acknowledgement of moral imperatives and the obligations they entail. Individuals in this stage recognize the inherent value of ethical principles such as honesty, integrity, justice, and compassion, understanding that adherence to these principles is essential for leading a virtuous and meaningful life. Unlike those in the aesthetic stage who prioritize personal pleasure and gratification, individuals in the ethical stage prioritize the greater good and the welfare of others, placing a higher value on commitment and duty over immediate self-indulgence. At the ethical stage is the cultivation of a strong sense of duty and responsibility towards oneself and others. Individuals in this stage

understand that their actions have consequences not only for themselves but also for others. They strive to fulfil their obligations and commitments, whether in personal relationships, professional endeavours, or societal roles, recognizing that their conduct has ethical implications that extend beyond their own interests. Moreover, individuals in the ethical stage are guided by a moral compass that informs their decision-making and behaviour. They seek to live in accordance with ethical principles and societal norms, striving to uphold integrity and moral integrity in all aspects of their lives. This commitment to moral values serves as a guiding force, shaping their actions and choices as they navigate the complexities of human existence. According to Lawhead, "The ethical person is characterized by passion. However, this does not refer to the whimsical desires of the aesthetic person. To have passion is to care about something with all one's being, to embrace the motivating values that one uses consciously to guide one's life. The qualities of caring deeply about something, self-reflection, and principled choice are not possible for the aesthetic person" (410). Unlike the transient pleasures pursued in the aesthetic stage, the ethical stage offers a deeper sense of fulfilment and purpose derived from living a life grounded in moral principles. Individuals find meaning and satisfaction in fulfilling their duties and obligations, experiencing a sense of fulfilment that transcends mere hedonistic pleasures. The pursuit of ethical excellence becomes a source of personal fulfilment and self-realization, fostering a sense of integrity and moral integrity that enriches their lives. Though the ethical person is far ahead of the aesthetic person, the former has not become a self. The ethical person is serving a universal moral principle but not a self-aware individual. For an individual on the ethical stage, Kierkegaard describes: "Outwardly he is completely a real man.' He is a university man, husband and father, an uncommonly competent civil functionary even, a respectable father, very gentle to his wife and carefulness itself with respect to his children. And, is he a Christian? Well, yes, he is that too after a sort" (*The Sickness unto Death*, 197).

Unlike the person of the aesthetic stage, the individual of the ethical stage has gone far enough that he thinks of choice and responsibility. However, the person has social cloth over him, which has made him not to achieve self-fulfilment. The ethical person in this existential-sphere does not have any connection with God, but rather good moral conduct, of which moral failure or sin is seen as a result of human weakness that can be overcome with proper understanding of moral laws and strength. Since at the ethical stage one is inadequate, does not have that fulfilment and there is no authentic self, it implies that there is need to leap to another existential sphere.

(c) The Religious Stage

The Religious stage represents the pinnacle of human existence, wherein individuals transcend the mundane and embrace the transcendent realm of faith and spirituality. In this stage, individuals seek meaning and purpose beyond the material world, finding solace and fulfilment in their relationship with the divine. This commitment to religious beliefs and the cultivation of a deep understanding of one's relationship with the divine shape the essence of the religious stage. The religious stage embodies a sense of faith and spirituality, wherein individuals seek to establish a meaningful connection with the divine. In *Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard noted: "But the self acquires a new quality or qualification in the fact that it is self

directly in the sight of God...And what an infinite reality this self acquires by being before God" (210). This connection serves as a source of guidance, inspiration, and solace, offering individuals a sense of purpose and direction in the midst of life's uncertainties and challenges. Unlike the aesthetic and ethical stages which prioritize pleasure or moral duty, the religious stage transcends these earthly concerns by directing individuals towards a higher plane of existence governed by spiritual truths and divine principles. According to Ogbonna, "while the other two stages, aesthetic and ethical, express only the immanent and indwelling of components of man, the religious stage explores the relationship between these immanent factors and those which are independent of and transcendent to man. It is in this stage that man becomes spirit" (98).

In *Fear and Trembling,* Kierkegaard highlights the sharp dissimilarity between the ethical stage and the religious stage using the Old Testament story of Abraham. In this story, Abraham is instructed by God to sacrifice his son Isaac. In making decision on what to do, Abraham cannot fall back on ethical or universal norms because normally he is supposed to love his son. In this case he is caught between falling back to ethical demands or to the order of God. It is within this circumstance that we will realize what Kierkegaard calls a "teleological suspension of the ethical" (*Fear and Trembling,* 77). "That is, his relationship to what is universal must be suspended for the sake of a higher goal, namely his individual relationship to God" (Lawhead, 411). For this, Kierkegaard noted that "the more conception of God, the more self; the more self, the more the conception of God" (*The Sickness unto Death*, 211).

The religious stage entails commitment to living a life guided by spiritual principles and moral values. Individuals within this stage understand that their faith necessitates a transformative journey towards moral integrity, compassion, and selflessness. They strive to embody the virtues espoused by their religious traditions, such as love, forgiveness, humility, and service to others, in all aspects of their lives. By aligning their actions with spiritual ideals, they seek to cultivate a life of meaning and purpose that reflects their devotion to the divine. The Religious stage involves a deep sense of awe, wonder, and reverence towards the mysteries of existence and the divine presence in the world. Individuals within this stage experience a sense of transcendence and connection with the divine.

However, it should be noted that African tradition and culture do not experience the above stages as isolated existential phases but integrate aesthetic vitality, ethical responsibility, and religious consciousness into a unified mode of life. Accordingly, African traditional life exhibits clear aesthetic dimensions through its expressions of music, dance, festivals, art, and appreciation of beauty and nature; however, unlike Kierkegaard's aesthetic stage, which is marked by individualistic pleasure-seeking and avoidance of responsibility, African aesthetics are fundamentally communal and meaning-oriented. The ethical stage finds its strongest correspondence in African moral life, which is rooted in communal responsibility, social obligation, justice, respect for elders, and the prioritization of harmony over individual autonomy. In this sense, African culture embodies an ethical worldview in which the individual exists primarily as a moral agent within the community. Yet, as in Kierkegaard's ethical stage, there is the risk that communal norms may overshadow individual self-reflection and personal authenticity. The religious stage, however, aligns with the African spiritual worldview, which recognizes and holds to the primacy of the transcendent through belief in God, ancestors,

spiritual forces, and moral accountability beyond the visible world. African religion, like Kierkegaard's religious stage, affirms commitment, sacrifice, and reverence before the sacred, though it expresses this relationship predominantly in communal rather than strictly individual terms.

Kierkegaard on Authentic Existence

When Søren Kierkegaard made the statement of finding: "a truth that is true for me…the idea for which I can live or die" (*Journals and Papers*, 44), he was laying the foundation of his idea of authentic existence. Søren Kierkegaard delved deeply into the concept of authentic existence, which he saw as fundamental for individuals to find true fulfilment and meaning in life. His idea of authenticity revolves around living in accordance with one's true self, embracing personal responsibility, and confronting the existential challenges of freedom, choice, and anxiety. At the centre of Kierkegaard's philosophy is the recognition of the inherent tension between the individual and society, freedom and responsibility, and the temporal and the eternal.

Kierkegaard saw the modern individual as existing in a state of existential despair, torn between the demands of the external world and the longing for authenticity and self-fulfilment. For Kierkegaard, authentic existence entails breaking free from the conformity and alienation of *collective* modern life and embracing the existential challenges of personal choice, commitment, and self-discovery. A means to understand authentic existence in Kierkegaard's philosophy is the concept of subjective truth. Unlike objective truth, which is universal and absolute, subjective truth is deeply personal and contingent upon individual experience and interpretation. As Oguji noted, "Kierkegaard employs the concept of subjectivity to invoke a ?rst-personal point of view especially with regard to ethical matters bearing singularly on the individual. The contrast (objectivity) is third personal points of view that bear on everyone and no one in particular. Subjectivity refers to an actor's (or su?erer's) standpoint rather than a detached observer's perspective" (95). Thus, Kierkegaard's idea of "Subjectivity is Truth" implies that truth is connected to the individual subject rather than an external object; this should not be misinterpreted as individualism. Subjectivity involves active engagement by the individual, even to the point of risking one's life. In contrast, subjectivism refers to a personal perspective that isn't validated publicly. Subjectivity is a key part of personhood, enabling individuals to act responsibly. According to Kierkegaard, 'Subjectivity is Truth' because it compels individuals to stand by their decisions and commitments to the truth, rather than passively accepting an abstract, value-neutral objectivity based solely on intellect.

For Kierkegaard, authentic existence involves a persistent pursuit of subjective truth, an ongoing process of self-discovery and self-actualization in which individuals attempt to bring into line their beliefs, values, and actions with their innermost desires and aspirations. The idea of subjective truth implies, in Kierkegaard, understanding that which relates to the subject. The subjective is that which relates to the individual's needs or values. It should be noted that Kierkegaard had no issue with objective truth when it has to do with logic and mathematics and moreover, subjectivity does not mean allowing oneself not to see things correctly. Subjectivity for Kierkegaard implies existing as an individual based on choice and responsibility. According to Kierkegaard, existence as a word was designed for the individual being. To exist, therefore,

would mean to be a kind of person who is active, chooses, decides and makes commitments. To exist is to be active, act and be involved in life and not being inactive. Authenticity is becoming what one chooses to be rather than being an object. As Kierkegaard proposes, "the self is a relation to itself." This relation is in a constant project of unfolding, of which we make use of what we see in the world to create meaning and chart our course. Authentic existence for Kierkegaard is characterized by freedom, choice and responsibility.

Against authenticity is inauthenticity. Inauthenticity infers the repudiation of one's freedom, choice, responsibility and functioning as an ordinary being that is being controlled by daily happenings. It is being blind to one's subjectivity, freedom, choices and responsibility. Authenticity and inauthenticity are judged based on living out of choice and responsibility. A central basis to Kierkegaard's conception of authentic existence is the notion of choice and commitment. According to Evans:

> Kierkegaard didn't merely define choice as any kind of decisive action, however. People make decisions all the time, yet most allow circumstances or impulses to make these decisions for them. Man must first become reflective, aware that true existence means authentic personal choice. Yet, the true self isn't merely reflective, for one can spend an eternity weighing the options of choice. The true self must have a passion and a care that pushes it to a choice beyond reflection, a leap of faith (21).

Authentic individuals are those who take responsibility for their choices and commitments, embrace the inherent uncertainty and anxiety that accompany genuine freedom. Rather than passively conforming to external expectations or societal norms, they actively engage with the world, making conscious decisions that reflect their deepest convictions and values. Moreover, authentic existence requires a willingness to confront the existential challenges of human existence, including the inevitability of suffering, the absurdity of existence, and the inevitability of death. As Strumpf states: "to exist implies being a certain kind of individual, an individual who strives, who considers alternatives, who chooses, who decides, and who, above all, commits himself" (455). Rather than succumbing to despair or nihilism, authentic individuals embrace the inherent ambiguity and uncertainty of life, finding meaning and purpose amidst the existential void.

In his discussion of the nature of man, Kierkegaard places much of his emphasis not on what man *is*, as much as what it means to *become* a true self. In other words, being is becoming. Self is something one is by nature, but also something one becomes by choice (Bartholomew & Goheen, 159). As Kierkegaard states in *Postscript*, "Every human being must be assumed in essential possession of what essentially belongs to being a man [. . .] the case of the subjective thinker is to transform himself into an instrument that clearly and definitely expresses in existence whatever is essentially human" (Kierkegaard in Stumpf, 461). Thus, as one comes into being, one does not exist fully because existence requires individual participation to shape one's life. To this Evans noted that "human beings exist (*existere*) in the sense that they form themselves through a process in which their own choices play an important role" (Evans, 32). As Kierkegaard pointed out in *Philosophical Fragments,* human existence is a "coming into

existence within its own coming into existence" (Evans, 32). Kierkegaard recognizes that the pursuit of authenticity entails confronting the existential anxieties and uncertainties that accompany genuine freedom. Authentic individuals must grapple with the paradox of choice, the fear of rejection, and the existential dread of facing the unknown. Yet, it is precisely through this confrontation with existential angst that individuals can transcend the limitations of the self and embrace the fullness of their existence.

The African Identity Crisis

The concept of identity is a central question in philosophical discourse, which touches on various aspects of existence, selfhood, and personal continuity. Different philosophers have discussed identity from multiple perspectives, ranging from metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical dimensions. The metaphysical concept of identity concerns the nature of objects and entities, what it means for something to be the same thing over time. One of the foundational principles in metaphysics is the principle of identity, often expressed as "A is A," meaning an entity is identical to itself. In other words, "anything is that which it is and as such is different from another" (Nwadinihu, 2021, 12). However, the more challenging aspect of identity concerns how entities maintain their identity over time, particularly when they undergo change.

The philosophical discussion of identity is particularly complex when it concerns personal identity, the question of what makes a person the same individual over time. In the course of discussing identity, theories and perspectives have emerged, of which one of them is psychological continuity theory, which is one of the most influential theories of personal identity and is associated with John Locke. Locke argued that personal identity is based on psychological continuity, specifically the continuity of consciousness. According to this view, a person at one time is the same person as someone at a later time if they are psychologically connected through memories and consciousness. Outside the psychological continuity theory is the bundle theory of the self, which is in contrast to Locke's. David Hume argues that the self is not a single continuous entity but rather a bundle of experiences and psychological states. This view suggests that the self is constituted by its experiences rather than being an enduring, unified entity. Another perspective of identity is the Biological theory, which identifies personal identity with the continuity of the biological organism. From this viewpoint, a person is the same individual as long as the same biological organism persists, regardless of changes in psychological states or memories. On the other hand, the narrative identity theory suggests that personal identity is constructed through the narratives we create about our lives. Individuals form their identity by weaving their experiences into a coherent story, and continuity is achieved through this narrative construction.

To talk of African identity is to raise the question if Africa has a unified single identity. As Onyeocha opines, "it is not easy to talk of African identity without raising eyebrows about meaning and context" (*Africa: the country,* 88). The concept of African identity is not confined in the metaphysical debate of what makes a person a being that is different from the other. The idea of African identity is not confined to the debate of René Descartes's argument of the self as a thinking thing, the *ego – I* or John Locke's continuity of consciousness or David Hume's bundle theory of the self. The idea of African identity in its usage is subjectively contextual. The

question of African identity is normative, which is concerned with the question if the African is what it should be or a being that is living the identity of another. African identity rests on the question of self-definition, what is African, personal definition as against collective narratives of the West, colour reductionism and totalization of the human person. African identity has to do with self-definition, social-cultural life, appearance, experience, goals and genetic make-up of the African. The African identity encompasses the struggle of African to reclaim and redefine their sense of identity and cultural heritage in the face of historical trauma and ongoing socio-economic challenges. It is a "critical investigation into the ontological standing of the human person in the continent" (Amaku, 2) as it regards her identity/personality, especially in the world of today that is fast caught in the circumference of continuous change.

The question of the African identity crisis holds that Africans are the ones "to say the name with which they are to be known and identified. They are to say what is, and what is not African. They are to establish or recognize what are the pointers, redefine the frames of reference, r-examine the different interpretations, to reflect on them with a view of correcting what notions of the African are false" (Onyeocha, *Africa: the country*, 97). African self-identity crisis, as a complex phenomenon, manifests in the form of cultural disintegration and the perpetuation of negative stereotypes. Historically, Africa has been a subject of exploitation, domination, and cultural subjugation by colonial powers and internal forces. The experience of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism has deeply damaged the collective psyche of African peoples, which has eroded the sense of self-worth, dignity, worldview and cultural pride. The imposition of Western values, systems, languages, and institutions without contextual adaptation has contributed to a sense of cultural dislocation and alienation among many Africans. The transatlantic slave trade and the colonization of Africa, which resulted in the forced displacement and dislocation of millions of Africans from their roots, affect the psyche of a typical African on the street. This traumatic experience disconnected individuals from their cultural roots, familial ties, and traditions, thereby contributing to a profound sense of identity loss and alienation.

As a result of the experience of slavery, colonialism, colour reductionism, education of dominance and negative stereotypes, the African person is more of a divided entity. He is neither fully here nor there. His mode of existence is divided and as a result "is insecure in all of the aspects of his or her life, and often has to look for external endorsement about how he or she looks, what he or she does and how he or she thinks. In other words, he or she still remains a kind of slave even in his or her own home" (Onyeocha, *Africa*: *The Question of Identity*, 94-95). Hence, the African person "is caught between belonging to the West or being an African, copying the white or developing his own model, being globalized or stock to his culture, speaking his language or learning the white man's language"(Nwadinihu, 2024, 81). William Abraham expresses the dividedness of the self when he noted that that the African is a "truly displaced man. His mastery of the new culture is never complete, but is rather self-conscious, and is generally in conflict with the mores into which he was born, and which he has never truly expunged from his system no matter how much he had tried"(89). For the African, as Onyeocha noted:

This crisis haunts him or her on the associations he or she keeps, the political framework in which he or she operates, the ideological position he or she is to espouse, the psychological element in his or her disposition and operations. It haunts him or her in the beliefs he or she eats, the language he or she speaks, the way he or she worships, and the way he or she rules or is ruled. It haunts him or her even in his or her judgements and preferences" (Onyeocha, *Africa*: *The Question of Identity,* 94-95).

Obviously, contemporary manifestations of the African self-identity crisis are evident in various aspects of African society, including conflict of culture, preference, political model, linguistic disintegration, the erosion of values and negative stereotypes. Thus, "the African of today is faced with the burden to prove his identity" (Nwadinihu, 2024, 80).

Kierkegaard's Authentic Existence and the African Identity Crisis

Africa's persistent reliance on Western validation and models reflects a deeper existential failure to assume responsibility for its own historical situation and choices. A look into the African system of living and operation reveals an apparent division inherent in almost everything an African does. The way he runs his affairs politically, religiously and economically. At most, the West must validate or be copied. It is worrisome that "the antithesis still remains in the fact that in spite of the end of colonial domination and the attainment of political independence, Africa remains culturally, economically, and ideologically bonded to Europe and the industrialized nations" (Onyeocha, *Africa: the country,* 53), with almost no model of its own. This shows that Africa has not made any meaningful and notable move to free itself, nor has it developed any alternative model for its liberation. This seems only to leave Africa at the foundation of development. While the newly introduced mode of living lacks contextualization, the African man neither fits into his own mode nor into the mode of the white man. Hence, he is neither fully there nor fully here. It is this contradiction that necessitated recourse to Kierkegaard. Hence, there is need to examine Africa's post-colonial identity crisis through Kierkegaard's existential emphasis on subjectivity, choice, responsibility, and commitment, in order to demonstrate that Africa's divided condition, being *neither fully here nor fully there,* is a form of inauthentic existence analogous to Kierkegaard's notion of losing the self to *the crowd*. Though Kierkegaard's ideas were formulated within the context of 19th-century Europe, their application to the African context suggests potential pathways to address this identity crisis and adopt an irrepressible sense of self among Africans.

At the heart of Kierkegaard's philosophy of authentic existence is the notion of subjective truth, which emphasizes the importance of individual self-discovery, personal responsibility, and existential courage. In the context of the African identity crisis, the notion of subjective truth offers a framework for Africans to repossess authority over their own narratives and to resist external forms of cultural, political, economic, and religious impositions and oppressions. This implies that Africans must discover their distinct reality and take responsibility for the choices they make. The choice must not be based on the perimeter of the West in order to please them, but one made out of contextualized needs, and not just to follow the crowd. As is evident, many African states today face a situation in which they look

externally for models, imitate others, and discuss global policies that often have little relevance to their own contexts. This reliance on outside influences stifles their ability to make independent choices, fostering a culture of dependency. By constantly seeking approval and acting based on what others do, rather than their own decisions, people lose their sense of individuality within the community. This mindset renders political, economic, and social systems inauthentic, as decisions are driven more by what is seen as acceptable than by thoughtful personal reflection. Consequently, individuals tend to avoid making responsible choices of their own. Kierkegaard's philosophy of subjectivity offers a solution; by pursuing personal subjectivity, Africans can accept responsibility for their life choices. This path allows personhood to develop, as it enables individuals to respond to life's challenges authentically. As Kierkegaard contends, the greatest danger to subjectivity and individuation arises from what he calls the *crowd*. The crowd represents not just a group of people, but a mentality, an attitude of thinking and living, that contradicts the truth of individual existence and true selfhood. Embracing the crowd results in losing the self, since the fear of standing apart from others is so intense that many would prefer death over meaningful differentiation. As Kierkegaard explains, this intense fear makes true individuality difficult to attain. The crowd always craves ease, as Kierkegaard holds.

In the context of Africa, there is a prevalent culture of dependency and paternalism that underpins corruption, dictatorship, and abuses of political and economic power. As Kierkegaard notes, it is easier to be part of the crowd, but choosing this path comes with a cost. Whether driven by fear or a desire for ease, individuals often relinquish responsibility for their choices, yielding to the crowd's influence. However, it is precisely this act of taking responsibility that defines and creates the self. It isolates us and enables genuine relationships with others. For Kierkegaard, embracing responsibility is what characterizes the unique human condition. Thus, Africa must be distinct in its choices and bear the responsibility. This does not mean being different or isolated, but making contextualized, reasoned choices for its identity.

Furthermore, Africans must assert themselves and appreciate their uniqueness. The idea of colour or racial identity, which is derogatory and a means of identity, should serve as a force to boldly face existential issues. Though the African self is divided between being oneself and fitting into the Western picture, it must be noted that each person is unique and there is no absolute universal culture or system that could be used to determine for the whole of humanity what the ideal identity should be. The African should therefore make the choice of being who he/she is and not force oneself to fit into another's circle, which Frantz Fanon terms black skin, white mask. It is a challenge for Africans to discover that truth which is true to them, live by it and die for it. The constant search for approval from the West is a form of constant dependency and expression of erasure of self-opinion. It is true that the realities of slavery, colonialism, imperialism and negative stereotypes have resulted in the erasure, distortion, and marginalization of African cultures, languages, and histories. However, a leap from Kierkegaard's authentic existence offers the basis to assert the right to self-definition, to reclaim and revitalize ideals, models and practices as sources of strength and identity. No language captures reality in its absoluteness, no culture is supreme and no nation has the moral absolute right to determine for others what is best for them, hence, there is need for African revitalization

through the kind of choice and commitment it makes. Hence, Kierkegaard's emphasis on choice and commitment provides a basis to confront the existential challenges of freedom and responsibility in the context of post-colonial Africa. By assuming responsibility for its choices and commitments, Africans need to confront the systems that sustain identity crises while also advocating for social justice, economic empowerment, and political self-determination.

Similarly, one reality that is prevalent is the high level of hatred, division and ethnic consciousness among African states. As a continent with shared experience of economic and political harassment and intimidation, Africa must enshrine justice, love and build relationships among themselves as to develop and challenge the structures of oppressions and chart a new course for self-assertion and development. However, it is a fact that achieving authentic existence in the African context cannot work without challenges because of structural barriers like ethnic consciousness, poverty, inequality, political instability, injustice, and conflicts caused by both external and internal factors. Moreover, the pervasive influence of the West, which is also flaunting what they hold to be the ideal and always wanting to dictate to others what should be done, can undermine efforts to reclaim African identity. However, Africa must engage in critical self-reflection and collective action. It must interrogate antithetical structures that are at the root cause of the African identity crisis and identify strategies for decolonizing the African minds, institutions, and societies.

Conclusion

At the heart of Kierkegaard's philosophy is the notion of subjective truth, choice and responsibility, which emphasizes the importance of individual self-discovery and personal responsibility in the quest for authenticity. However, when situated within the African context, where personhood is fundamentally relational and community-oriented, subjective truth does not imply radical individualism or isolation from the community. Rather, it underscores the responsibility of the individual to become a morally conscious and self-aware participant within the communal whole. In African thought, the self is realized through relationships, obligations, and shared values; authentic existence entails making responsible choices that sustain communal harmony while preserving personal integrity. Consequently, Kierkegaard's philosophical insights on authentic existence provide a structure to address the issue of the African identity crisis. In the context of the African identity crisis, subjective truth encourages Africans to reclaim their own narratives, resist external forms of imposition and oppression, and embrace the diversity and richness of their being. Africans are to engage in critical self-reflection and revitalization. They can challenge the dominant narratives of Eurocentrism and internal forces, thereby asserting their right to self-definition. Hence, it should be noted that Africa does not belong to the primitive, to the world of jungles, to no man's land, nor an observer in the world field, but a rightful participant. So, Africa, with the philosophy of authentic existence embedded with choice, can overcome and cross the ocean of underdevelopment in which it is caught. However, Africa must not continue to cry over spilt milk that cannot be gathered. The era of slavery and colonialism is over. Africa should face the challenge of choice and responsibility that authenticity implies to escape the shackles of identity crisis. However, Africa must not look different in all things to be authentic or to be truly African. The African should not be locked up as a prisoner of the particularity of his culture

without global identification. Hence, while the African defines what he is, he must be in communion with the universal Other without losing his identity.

Works Cited

Abraham, William E. *The Mind of Africa*. London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1962.

Amaku, Ejiogu. *The Predicament of Human Dignity in Africa.* Enugu: Victojo Production, 2014

Evans, C. Stephen. *Kierkegaard: An Introduction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Bartholomew, Craig G. and Goheen, Michael W. *Christian Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013.

Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*.Trans, Charles Lam Markmann, London: Pluto Press, 1986.

Kiarie, Augustine. "Preface" in Maurice Makumba. *Introduction to African Philosophy*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2007

Kierkegaard, Soren . *Concluding Unscientific Postscript.* Trans. David F. Sweson and Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974

.........*Journals and Papers.* Ed, Alexander Dru. London: Fontana Books, 1966.

…… *Either/Or* vol.I, trans. Walter Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton UP, 1971

….....*The Sickness unto Death*. Trans. Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968

……..*Fear and Trembling*. Trans. Walter Lowrie. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968),

..........*Philosophical Fragments.* Trans. H. Hong & E. Hong. Princeton: Princeton UP,1985

Lawhead, William. *The Voyage of Discovery.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002

Mondin, Battista. *Philosophical Anthropology.* Bangalore: Theological Publications, 2007

Moore, Charles E. (ed.) *Provocations: Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard.* Farmington, PA: Plough, 1999

Nwadinihu, Christian, "Ekwuru's Afrizealotism and the Dialectics of African Predicament" *Albertine Journal of Philosophy,* Vol 8, 2024, 78-90, www.albertinejournal.org

.... *Beginning Philosophy and Logic*. Owerr: Rosarian Publications, 2021

………."Rethinking Julius Nyerere's Ujamaa Socialism in Post-Colonial Africa: Towards Contextualization." *OWIJOPPA*, Vol, 9, No. 3, 2025

Ogbonna, Philip. *A Preface to Kierkegaard.* Owerri: Claratian Institute of Philosophy, 2005

Oguji, Stephen A. "My Journey to Self-Rediscovery as an ex-seminarian on the wings of Soren Kierkegaard's Existentialist Philosophy." *Albertine Journal of Philosophy,* Vol 7, June 2023. www.albernejournal.org

Onyeocha, Izu M. *Africa: The Question of Identity.* Washington DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997

………*Africa: the Country, the Concept and the Horizon*. Owerri: Imo State UP, 2019.

Pojman, Louis P. *The Logic of Subjectivity: Kierkegaard's Philosophy of Religion*. Alabama: University of Alabama, 1984

Stumpf, Samuel Enoch. *Philosophy: History and Problems.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Information and Communication Technology and Post-Election Disputes Mitigation: An Assessment of 2023 General Election in Nigeria

Sikiru Lanre Nurudeen, Ph.D
Department of Political Science and Public Administration,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Al-Hikmah University Ilorin

Abdulazeez A. Adekola, Ph.D
Department of Political Science and Public Administration,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Al-Hikmah University Ilorin

and

Adejumo Peter Olusegun
Center for Peace and Security Studies,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Al-Hikmah University Ilorin.
E-mail: piro4jesus@gmail. Com
Phone number: 08035229045

Abstract

Election irregularities in Nigeria have systematically led to post-election dispute, forcing electoral management body to continuously deploy ICT instruments in a bid to addressing these irregularities. This study assessed the roles of ICTs played in mitigating post-election disputes in 2023 general elections in the country. The objectives of the study were to determine the extent ICTs mitigated 2023 post-election dispute in Nigeria. This study employed a mixed method of research design to collect data from purposively selected adult residents and elections stakeholders across (4) States randomly selected in the country. These States includes Kwara, Osun, Edo and Kaduna. Out of the (520) administered copies of questionnaire, (481) were retrieved back, while (25) interview sessions, which includes (15) KII and (10) IDI were conducted. Primary data collected were analyzed using descriptive and content analyses. Result of the findings showed that the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS)/Result Viewing Portal (IReV) eliminated incidences of ballot snatching/stuffing, discouraged manipulation of election result and reduced post-electoral violence. This study concluded that BVAS/IReV

largely reduced 2023 post-election disputes. This study recommended among others that to increase the effectiveness of ICT in Nigeria's future elections, the electoral law should be amended to compulsorily allow election result to be transmitted into INEC server and ensure that the general public has free access to it.

Key Words: Election, Post-election dispute, ICTs, INEC, BVAS

Introduction

Democratic governance in any country of the world entails electioneering process, which gives an opportunity to practically justify the notion that democracy is shaped by the will of the people, serves the interests of the people, and is carried out by representatives chosen by the people. To this end, conducting election becomes imperative. This involves citizens coming out to vote and be voted, through a process adequately supervised by an unbiased electoral umpire.

Inability for the process to be credible, free and fair, attracts dispute and disagreement popularly known as electoral dispute. Right from the first republic in Nigeria, the electoral process is often challenging, chaotic, and disputed at different stages of the election (Omotola, 2010). The electoral body has been contending with diverse experiences of political landscape marked by intense rivalry and power tussles, where some ambitious politicians resort to extreme and aggressive tactics to secure electoral victories (Aboh & Obem, 2022).

As a result of this, Nigeria has introduced technological reforms in their electoral management laws with the aim of enhancing the quality of elections and to minimize the incidents of electoral dispute. The electoral Acts of 2015 and 2022 made salient provisions for the adoption of technology in the electoral process. Specifically, Sections 47 and 50 of the 2022 Electoral Act made provision for the use of technology for voter accreditation and electronic transmission of results while Section 62 (2) gave INEC the mandate to maintain an electronic register of votes (Electoral Act 2022).

It is against this foregoing that INEC was courageous to deploy Information Commission Technology (ICT) instruments before and during 2023 general elections. Voter Enrolment Device (IVED)/ Bimodal Voters Accreditation System BVAS/INEC Result Viewing (IReV) Portal, all-inclusive in a single machine is to function at pre, during and post elections stages (INEC 2021). This is to ensure optimal credibility and transparent of voter registration, accreditation, counting and transmitting of election result to internet platform where general public can view and monitor the processes.

Statement of the Problem

Conducting free, fair and peaceful elections in Nigeria has become a difficult task for the electoral body and the nation at large. Right from the first republic, before, on and after election stages continues to witness unprecedented disputes over certain election irregularities such as bloated voter register, over voting, tampering with elections figures, suppression of voters, vote buying and many other electoral malpractices. Since 2003, the electoral body had begun to deploy several technologies in order to check-mate these election irregularities causing

disputes before and after elections. For instance, between 2003 and 2011, pre-election stage was dominated with Information Commission Technology (ICT) to curb double registration, irregularities in voters' bio-data and possibly, prevented dispute arisen from blotted voter registers for accreditation of voters. In spite of this laudable intervention, elections held before and after year 2011 were marred with series of irregularities, causing series of dispute. Many of these disputes have resulted to cancellation of election results in some States (Pally, 2022), loss of lives and properties (Sambo *et al.*, 2024), while in some instances, placed the country on the progression of collapsing (Lambe & Mubarak, 2023). Searching through existing studies (Ogbeide-IIhama, 2022; Chukwuma, 2022; Adeleke, 2020), many scholars have investigated the impact of ICTs in mitigating electoral dispute on or before elections day in Nigeria, but there is also a need to conduct similar study on post-election stage particularly in respect to the 2023 post-election stage.

Literature Review

Electoral Dispute

Disputes are recurrent and inevitable part of human interaction, often emerging from competing goals or interests. Adimula (2018) underscores this inevitability, viewing dispute as a necessary element for individuals and groups in pursuing their objectives. Similarly, Otite and Albert (1999) interpret disputes as signals of societal transformation, reflecting shifting values and conditions for survival. However, these constructive potentials can quickly degenerate into destructive conflicts that undermine societal stability and development.

Within the electoral context, disputes are shaped by incompatible interests between political actors or between political parties and electoral bodies. Robert (2021) narrows this down to disagreements over perceived irregularities at any stage of the electoral cycle before, during, or after elections. In line with this, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2017) and Yusuf (2019) describe electoral disputes as manifested through protests, demonstrations, petitions, and sometimes violent acts such as destruction or seizure of electoral materials, all of which reflect dissatisfaction with the process. Olurode (2013) extends this understanding by distinguishing between minor irregularities such as ballot snatching or logistical lapses and more serious cases that escalate into widespread protests, violence, or prolonged legal contests challenging the legitimacy of election outcomes. These authors' perspectives suggest that electoral disputes occupy a spectrum from ordinary grievances and technical irregularities to violent confrontations and judicial battles. In the context of post-election disputes, several academic texts on Nigeria elections focus on the complexity of post-election violence. While much of the literature have identified manifestations of disputes, less attention is given to the intersections between electoral violence, fraud, and litigation, particularly how they reinforce one another to deepen political instability.

Information and Communication Technology

The concept of technology has been interpreted from multiple perspectives, each offering valuable but partial insights. Buchman (2023) extends the notion of technology beyond mere physical tools, emphasizing the dual nature of hardware (e.g., biometric machines, ballot

scanners) and software (e.g., voter registration databases, electronic transmission systems). This perspective is significant for recognizing the integrated role of devices and digital platforms in electoral processes, though it is limited by insufficient attention to contextual, ethical, and human factors that shape technology adoption in fragile democracies.

Similarly, Spacey (2022) frames technology in terms of services, products, and infrastructures rooted in science and engineering, with particular reference to information technologies such as networks, software, and computing systems. While this definition adequately captures the technical foundations of ICT infrastructure, it overlooks the political, social, and ethical dynamics that often determine how technologies succeed or fail in real-world elections. Complementing these views, IGI (2010) conceptualizes ICT as an umbrella term for all technologies used in creating, storing, transmitting, and exchanging information. This functional orientation highlights the information-processing capacities of ICT that are central to electoral management, including accreditation, result collation, and fraud prevention.

Technology in electoral processes can be understood not merely as tools or infrastructures but as a socio-political system a combination of hardware and software (Buchman, 2023), scientific and engineering foundations (Spacey, 2022), and information creation and exchange functions (IGI, 2010). However, the convergence of these definitions reveals a conceptual gap: the neglect of political, ethical, and contextual realities that profoundly influence electoral technology in fragile democracies.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to address the research questions. According to the National Population Commission (NPC, 2023), Nigeria's projected population stands at 216,000,000. From this population, a purposive sample of 520 respondents was selected.

The sample comprised 36 security personnel, 196 electorates, 48 civil society organisation (CSO) members, 76 officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and 164 political party members. Respondents were drawn from four of Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, with one state randomly selected from each zone: Kwara (North Central), Oyo (South West), Edo (South South), and Kaduna (North West). Questionnaires were administered to the respondents, of which 481 were successfully retrieved and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

For the qualitative component, 25 informants were purposively selected for Key Informant Interviews (KII) and In-Depth Interviews (IDI) based on their expertise and knowledge of the subject matter. These informants included INEC officials, security personnel, political party stakeholders, election observers, and political analysts. In total, 25 interview sessions were conducted, comprising 15 KIIs and 10 IDIs. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis, while secondary data from published sources were employed to support and enrich the thematic discussions.

Data Presentations, Analysis and Discussion of the Findings
Figure 1: Demographic Distribution of Election Stakeholders
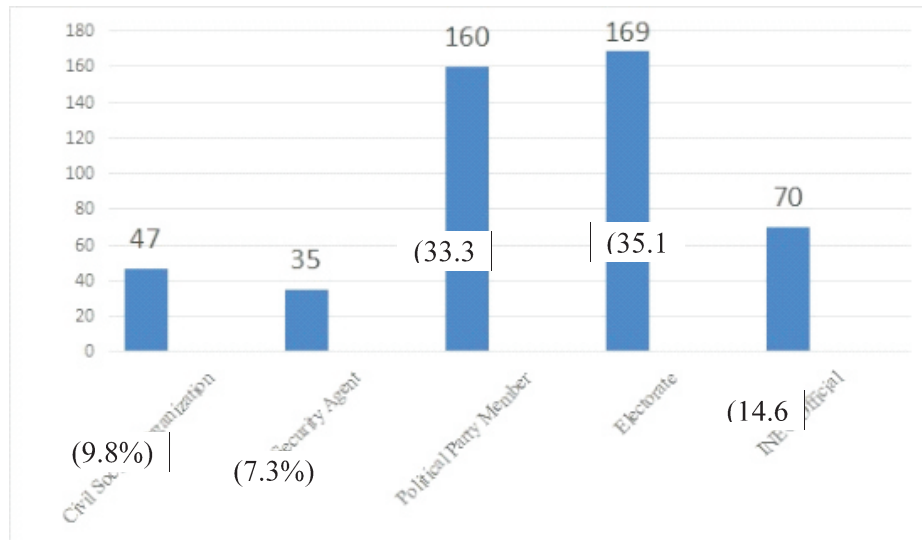
Figure 1: indicates reveals the election's stakeholders who participated in the study. It shows that 47(9.8%) of the respondents were Civil Society Organization, 35(7.3%) were Security Agents, 160(33.3%) were Political Party Member, 169(35.1%) Electorates, and 70(14.6%) were INEC Officials. This distribution showed that the respondents in this study cut across diverse group of stakeholders in election process across the four (4) selected States in Nigeria.

Figure 2: States Demographic Distribution of respondents
Source: Researcher Field Study, 2024
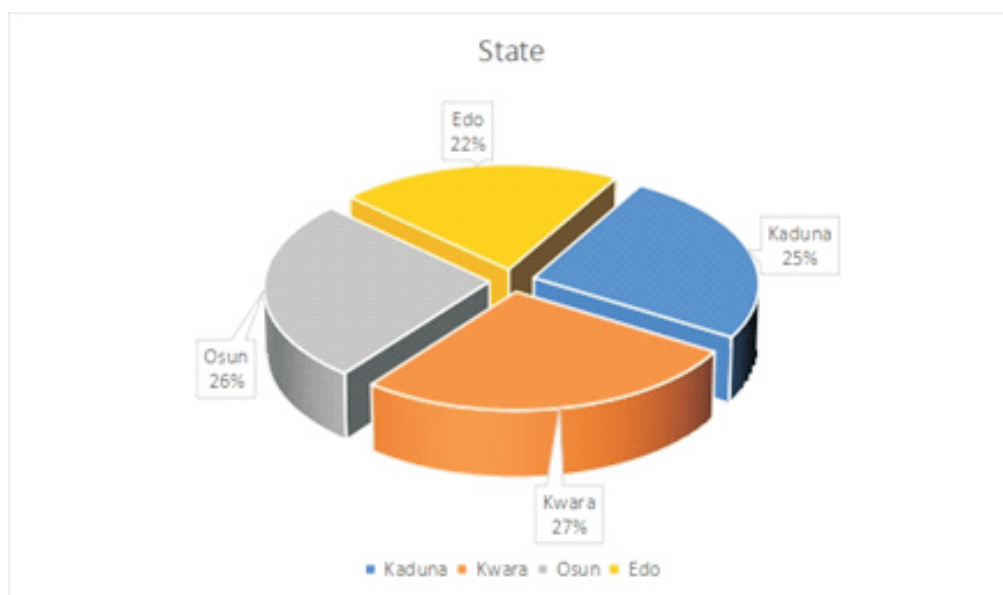
Figure 2: Gives the distribution of the respondents across the four States where this study was conducted. It showed that Kaduna State had a total of 122(25.4%) respondents, Kwara 129(26.8%), Osun 127(26.4%), and Edo 103(21.4%). The data showed that all the States were relative represented in term of number of the participants, though Kwara had the highest while Edo had the least. This implies that the study had a fair representation in the selected States.

The Extent ICTs Usage has Mitigated 2023 Post-Election Disputes in Nigeria
Table 1: Respondents Perception on the extent ICTs usage has mitigate 2023 post-election disputes in Nigeria

Items	SA	A	DK	D	SD	M	St. D.	Rank
Reduce ballot snatching/stuffing	191 (39.7%)	173 (36.0%)	29 (6.0%)	50 (10.4%)	38 (7.9%)	3.89	1.255	1st
Discourage Manipulation of Election Result	218 (45.3%)	132 (27.4%)	34 (7.1%)	52 (10.8%)	45 (9.4%)	3.89	1.338	1st
Reduction in electoral violence	209 (43.5%)	126 (26.2%)	34 (7.1%)	65 (13.5%)	47 (9.8%)	3.80	1.374	3rd

Source: Researcher's Field Study, (2025)

Table 1 provided details of the extent Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ICT mechanisms such as Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) mitigated electoral disputes post-election dispute during 2023 general election in Nigeria. The introduction of BVAS/IREV 2023 election led to significant advancement in electoral dispute resolution as the innovation resulted to reduction in ballot snatching/stuffing (3.89, $\pm$1.255), discouragement of manipulation of election result (3.89, $\pm$1.255) and Reduction in electoral violence (3.80, $\pm$1.374). Qualitative result collected through the oral interview sessions conducted shows that there were fresh innovations in the administration of election in Nigeria since the end of 2019 general elections up to 2023 post-election stages in the country. An informant; an electorate in Oshogbo, explained further,

> The BVAS that was used during election prevented manipulation of result and ballot stuffing or snatching. In the 2018 election conducted, the election was cancelled in many polling units due to over voting and ballot snatching and that resulted into rerun of the election we witnessed, but this was not the same story in 2022 (IDI: Female: Electorate: 55yrs: 2024).

According to an eye witness who doubled as an electorate in Orolu LGA,
> Ever since I have been voting in early 80s, 2022 process was quite different and faster. Unlike previous elections held in the State, the 2022 election witnessed low queue of voters waiting to be accredited. The machine

brought (BVAS) made the entire process easier and faster (IDI: Male: Electorate: 65yrs: 2024).

Pieces of oral evidence from other states of the federation were not different from what was obtainable in Osun State over the effectiveness BVAS deployed to replaced Smart Card Reader during off-circle and general election before 2023. An election observer that served with YIAGA Africa Initiative (YIAGA) in Kaduna said succinctly,

> BVAS brought an end to ink identification after voting. Also, facial accreditation of voters largely curbs incidences of double voting and over voting across the States. Lastly, don't let us forget that the same machine used for voter registration was equally deployed for accreditation of the voters, in essence, manipulation of numbers be it result of vote cast or otherwise, was completely eliminated by BVAS (IDI: Male: CSOs: 32yrs: 2024).

The findings of this study extend the conversation around electoral technologies in Nigeria by showing not only their role in enhancing credibility and transparency, but also their capacity to mitigate post-election disputes. According to Orhero and Okolie (2024) and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2023), the introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and related technologies has been instrumental in curbing election rigging and fostering greater public trust in electoral processes.

However, this study goes beyond the existing discourse by situating ICT deployment as a dispute-prevention mechanism, not merely a transparency-enhancing tool. The replacement of the Smart Card Reader (SCR) that was widely criticized for its short-comings during the 2019 general elections with BVAS in 2023 marked a deliberate institutional shift by INEC. In addition, this study reveals an emerging deterrence effect. This is line with Ibrahim and Ibeanu (2007) who argued that technology, when credibly deployed, shifts the incentive structure of electoral malpractice by raising the risks of detection and reputational damage. The realization among political actors and potential perpetrators that digital tools such as BVAS could expose irregularities, and even trigger outright cancellation of compromised results, discouraged attempts to tamper with electoral outcomes.

Furthermore, this study shows that BVAS not only safeguarded the integrity of votes but also improved the efficiency of polling unit operations. Based on the findings, human manipulations during and after casting of votes were heavily mitigated by the adoption of ICT. This resonates with Oba and Ojekunle (2025) who noted that technological efficiency at the polling unit level strengthens democratic participation. This current study showed how electorates reported quicker accreditation and smoother voting processes, which enhanced their sense of inclusion and confidence that their votes would count.

In distinguishing this study from existing scholarship, it is clear that while previous work (Orhero & Okolie, 2024) primarily highlight the preventive and confidence-building functions of electoral technologies, the present study demonstrates a broader systemic impact: the role of BVAS and ICTs in mitigating post-election disputes by eliminating fraud at its source, deterring

malpractice through risk of cancellation, and improving citizen satisfaction at the polling unit level.

Furthermore, deployment of the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) and the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in the Osun and Edo states off-cycle elections represents a watershed in Nigeria's electoral process, particularly in the effort to deepen transparency and restore public confidence in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The Yiaga Africa Election Result Analysis Dashboard (ERAD) (2023) Report highlights that access to IReV during these elections was seamless, with minimal difficulties for the public in viewing uploaded results.

This outcome is significant because it points directly to the core rationale behind developing IReV: enhancing transparency, accountability, and trust in the electoral process by allowing real-time access to polling unit results. The findings aligned with the scholarly positions of Oloyede and Abbas (2024) and Adeyemi (2023), who acknowledge the technological innovations of BVAS and IReV as commendable break-through. These tools addressed long-standing post-election dispute around voter accreditation fraud, result manipulation, and the opacity of collation processes that have historically marred Nigeria's elections. Specifically, the BVAS curtailed incidents of over-voting and impersonation by ensuring biometric verification, while the IReV platform served as a digital audit trail, providing stakeholders political parties, civil society, observers, and citizens direct access to election results as they were uploaded.

This successful deployment had both immediate and long-term implications. In the short term, it enhanced the credibility of the Osun and Edo off-circle elections, which were widely adjudged as relatively free and fair compared too many earlier contests. In the long term, it laid a foundation of institutional confidence for INEC to insist on the nationwide adoption of these technologies in the 2023 general elections, despite political opposition and skepticism from some quarters. The case of these off-cycle elections underscores the interplay between technology and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the introduction and deployment of ICT mechanisms particularly the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) and the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV) represent a major advancement in Nigeria's electoral administration and conflict management framework. The adoptions of BVAS and IReV have proven to be effective not only in delivering credible outcomes but also in reducing the contentious aftermath of elections. This underscores the centrality of ICTs in the future of Nigeria's democracy, where electoral credibility and post-election peace are deeply interlinked.

Recommendations

It is against the forgoing that this study recommended the following:

I.   INEC should collaborate with telecommunications providers and electricity agencies to ensure reliable internet connectivity and stable power supply during elections.

ii. Continuous upgrading of BVAS devices and the IReV platform is necessary to improve speed, accuracy and resilience against malfunction.

iii.   The National Assembly should review and up-date electoral laws to provide explicit constitutional backing for the deployment of ICTs in election administration.

Work Cited

Aboh, J. A., & Obem, K. E. (2022). Election related conflicts in Nigeria: The role of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). *Tamaddun*, 21(1), 61–76.

Adeleke, I. A. (2020). Challenges of ICT and Election Management in Rural Areas in Nigeria. *Journal of Social Science*, 6(5), 3-10.

Adeyemi, S. O. (2023). Electoral technology and democratic consolidation in Nigeria: A review of BVAS and IReV in off-cycle elections. *Nigerian Journal of Political Science and Administration, 18*(1), 60–75.

Buchanan, R. (2023). History of technology, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 30 May. 2023, https://www.britannica.com/technology/history-of-technology. Accessed 12 September 2023.

Electoral Act, (2022). Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette. Printed and Published by The Federal Government Printer, Lagos, Nigeria FGP 85/52022/650.

Epelle, P. A., Iheanyichukwu, A. V., & Anderson, D. (2024). Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Electoral Development in Nigeria: An Evaluation of the Opportunities and Challenges. *American Journal of Social and Humanitarian Research, 5*(8), 184-194.

ERAD, (2022). Election Result Analysis Dashboard (ERAD) yiaga.org/cause/election-result-analysis-dashboard-erad/

Ibeanu, O. (2007). Conceptualising peace. In I. Albert (Ed.), *Perspectives on peace and conflict in Africa* (pp. 1–32). Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Independent National Electoral Commission. (2023). *Report on the 2023 general elections: Use of BVAS and IReV portal*. Abuja: INEC.https://www.inecnigeria.org

INEC, (2021). Electronic Transmission of Election Results, Position Paper 1/2021. Retrieved From:chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://inecnigeria.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/electronic-transmission-of-result.pdf

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) (2017). Introducing Biometric Technology in Elections. https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/introducing-biometric-technology-in-elections-reissue.pdf

Lambe, O., & Mubarak, S. (2023). Political Conflict and Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Implications on National Security. *African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies*, 16(2), 442-452.

NPC, (2023). Census 2023 · Enumeration Area Demarcation (Ead) · Census Enumeration · Civil Registration & Vital Statistics · Survey Data · Population Management https://national population.gov.ng/

Oba, F. O., & Ojekunle, F. (2025). *Electoral reforms, technological innovation, and the conduct of Nigeria's 2023 general elections. International Journal of Advanced Research in Global Politics, Governance and Management, 5*(1), 54–72.

Ogbeide-IIhama, I. (2022). *The Effect of ICT on the 2015 and 2019 Presidential Elections in the FCT: Case of Bwari Area Council* (Doctoral dissertation, NILDS-Department of Studies).

Oloyede C., & Abbas J. (2024). How INEC can consolidate off-season election gains, by experts, Daily Trust News, Sat, 14 Dec 2024

Olurode, L. (2013).   Election Security in Nigeria, Matter Arising. Published 2013by *Fried Ebert –Stiftung (FES) Abuja ISB97-24-7*

Omotola, J. S. (2010). Elections and democratic transition in Nigeria under the Fourth Republic. *African Affairs, 109*(437), 535–553. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adq040

Orhero, E. & Okolie, U. (2024). BVAS, IReV and Democratic Elections in Nigeria, *Pinisi Journal of Social Science.* Vol (02), No 3: 84 – 95

Pally, A. E. (2022). Electoral violence in Nigerian polity: Causes and consequences. *International Journal of Research in Social Science and Humanities (IJRSS) ISSN: 2582-6220, DOI: 10.47505/IJRSS, 3*(9), 1-7.

Sambo, U., Sule, B., & Tal, M. K. (2024). Investigating the Causes and Impact of Electoral Violence in Nigeria. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Violence in Africa* (pp. 367-385). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Spacey, J. (2022, October 14). *Business technology*. Simplicable. https://simplicable.com/technology/business-technology

YIAGA Africa, (2023). Election Manipulation Risk Index (EMRI). https://yiaga.org/publications/emri-i/

Yusuf, I. (2019). Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Disentangling the Causes, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences;* ISSN 2224-5766 (Paper) ISSN 2225-0484 (Online) DOI: 10.7176/RHSS Vol.9, No.10, 2019. Retrieved From: https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234676653.pdf

Family Dynamics and Delinquent Careers among Secondary School Students in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Edem, Usenobong Donald
Department of Guidance and Counseling
University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria
usenobongedem@uniuyo.edu.ng

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between family dynamics variables and delinquent careers among secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area. **This study employed a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between family dynamics and delinquent career among secondary school students**. The population of the study consisted of 15843 Students in all the public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State as at 2023/2024 academic session. The study sample comprised 130 Students determined using simple random sampling technique. A Researcher-made instruments titled: Family Communication Pattern, Conflict Resolution Styles, Family Flexibility and Delinquent Career Questionnaire (FCPCRSFFDCQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validity by two lecturers. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was .78, determined using Cronbach alpha reliability statistics. The data obtained from the instrument was analysed using Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) statistic. The result showed that there is a significant relationship between communication patterns in the family, conflict resolution styles in the family, parenting styles and delinquent careers among secondary school students. Recommendations were made among others that Parents should be encouraged to provide a stable and supportive family environment, characterized by warmth, love, and consistent discipline, to help prevent delinquent behavior among secondary school students.

Key Words: Family, Family Dynamics, Delinquent Career, Secondary School Students

Introduction

The family is a child's first point of socialization, playing a crucial role in shaping their behaviour patterns and potentials. Family dynamics, including parenting styles, communication patterns, conflict resolution styles, and family flexibility, can significantly influence a child's likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviour. Research suggests that factors such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality can exacerbate the problem,

highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to address delinquent careers (Argnew, 2006; Farrighton, 2003). Delinquent careers refer to long-term involvement in criminal activities as a way of life or a primary source of income. Individuals pursuing delinquent careers often engage in a variety of illegal activities such as drug trafficking, theft, fraud, or other forms of criminal behaviour. These individuals may develop specialized skills and networks within the criminal underworld to sustain their illicit livelihoods. (Argnew 2006)

Family communication patterns, such as consensual, pluralistic, protective, and laissez-faire, can impact a child's behaviour. Consensual families prioritize open conversation and high conformity, while pluralistic families encourage open discussion and low conformity. Protective families emphasize obedience, and laissez-faire families have low conversation and low conformity (Koerner et al., 2002). Extreme family communication patterns can contribute to delinquent behaviour, with too strict or too flexible families increasing the risk.

Conflict resolution styles, including avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating, can also shape a child's behavior. Families that adopt a collaborative approach, prioritizing mutual understanding and cooperation, are more likely to raise children with positive behavior. Family flexibility, characterized by rigid, structured, flexible, and chaotic patterns, is another important factor. Families that balance structure and flexibility, with open communication and clear rules, are more likely to raise children who exhibit positive behavior and are less prone to delinquency (Herrity, 2023; Ricketts, 2020).

Understanding the complexities of family dynamics and delinquent careers is essential for developing effective strategies to prevent and reduce criminal behavior. Interventions should focus on promoting positive family relationships, providing support for families, and addressing the root causes of delinquency. By working together, it is possible to create a supportive environment that promotes positive behavior and reduces delinquency among teenagers. Family dynamics play a role in shaping a child's behaviour and can influence the likelihood of delinquent behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing prevalence of delinquent behaviour among teenagers in Nigeria, particularly in Akwa Ibom State, is a pressing concern that warrants attention. Recent occurrences of teenagers engaging in internet fraud, examination malpractices, substance abuse, and other forms of delinquency highlight the need to understand the underlying factors driving these behaviours. Despite the growing concern, there is a dearth of research on the impact of family dynamics on delinquent careers among adolescents in Nigeria.

This study seeks to fill the gap in literature by examining the relationship between family dynamics, specifically communication patterns, conflict resolution styles, and family flexibility, and delinquent behavior among teenagers in Akwa Ibom State. The study aims to understand how family dynamics contribute to the development of delinquent careers in adolescents and identify potential risk and protective factors.

The research questions guiding this study are: How do family dynamics influence delinquent behaviour among teenagers? What are the specific communication patterns, conflict resolution styles, and family flexibility that contribute to delinquent careers? Why do some adolescents relinquish delinquent behaviour while others continue into adulthood? By

addressing these questions, this study hopes to provide insights into the complex interplay between family dynamics and delinquency, and inform interventions aimed at preventing and reducing delinquent behavior among teenagers in Nigeria.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the development of effective prevention and intervention strategies aimed at reducing delinquent behaviour among teenagers. By understanding the role of family dynamics in shaping delinquent careers, policymakers, educators, and mental health professionals can design targeted interventions that address the specific needs of adolescents and their families, ultimately promoting positive youth development and community well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate family dynamics variables and delinquent careers among secondary school students in Uyo Local Government Area. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:
1. relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.
2. relationship between conflict resolution style in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.
3. relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.
1. What is the relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students?
2. What is the relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students?
3. What is the relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study
1. There is no significant relationship between communication patterns and delinquent careers among secondary school students
2. There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary students
3. There is no significant relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. Correlational research design is a design that measures the magnitude and direction of relationship between variables (Udoh and Joseph, 2005). Correlational research design is used to discover or clarify relationships by using

correlation coefficients. One reason for using this design is that, it will help the researcher to describe, analyse, and investigate the situations that occur at the time of the research and connect with same problem situation that is felt by a larger population.

Participants

The study adopted simple random sampling technique to select each of the public secondary schools and students used in the study. At each sampled school, a cap and draw method was used to select an average of 130 senior secondary school students from SSS 1-3. These students were selected from 3 public schools from the study area

Instrumentation

Four instruments were used for this study to measure Family Communication Pattern, Conflict Resolution Styles, Family Flexibility and Delinquent Career.

The study adopted Family Communication Pattern Questionnaire (FCP) by Gupta and Geekita (2019), Conflict resolution styles were measured by using Kurdek's Conflict Resolution Style Inventory (CRSI; Kurdek, 1994). This questionnaire, originally designed for couples, but modified to suit parents and adolescents. Each conflict resolution style was measured by 5 items and the items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never to always. To measure flexibility in the family, the study used the Family Conformity and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES-III) which was created by Olson et al. (1985) consisted of 40 items and 2 subscales of cohesion (20 questions) and adaptation (20 questions). It is used to measure family harmony and harmony. The assessment scale of family harmony and cohesion has a relative internal consistency. Delinquent career was measured by a 16-item questionnaire, adapted from Baerveldt, Van Rossem and Vermande (2003), designed to measure minor offences. Adolescents were asked to indicate on a 4-point score ranging from never to four times or more how often they had shown certain forms of delinquent behaviours during the last 12 Months. Sample items were 'stolen a bike', 'deliberately broken something at the street', 'started a fire', and 'used drugs'.

Result

Research Question One

What is the relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students

Variables	n	r	Remark
Communication patterns	130	.572	Moderate Positive
Delinquent careers	130		Relationship

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents.

From the result in Table 1, it is revealed that r-value is .572. This implied that there is a moderate positive relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students. This means that as communication patterns in the family increases, delinquent careers among secondary school students also increases moderately. Therefore, communication patterns in the family enhance delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Research Question Two
What is the relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students?

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students

Variables	n	r	Remark
Conflict resolution styles	130	.325	Weak Positive Relationship
Delinquent careers	130		

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents.

From the result in Table 2, it is revealed that r-value is .325. This implied that there is a moderate positive relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students. This means that as conflict resolution styles in the family increases, delinquent careers among secondary school students also increases moderately. Therefore, conflict resolution styles in the family enhance delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Research Question Three
What is the relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students?

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students

Variables	n	r	Remark
Family flexibility	130	.916	Very Strong Positive Relationship
Delinquent careers	130		

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents.

From the result in Table 3, it is revealed that r-value is .916. This implied that there is a very strong positive relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students. This means that as family flexibility increases, delinquent careers

among secondary school students also increases very strongly. Therefore, family flexibility enhance delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Testing of Null Hypotheses
Null Hypothesis One (H01)
There is no significant relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Table 4. Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation for communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students

Variables	n	p-cal	p-crit	Remark
Communication patterns	130			
Delinquent careers		.000	.05	Significant. Ho1 Rejected
	130			

df=128

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents.

From the result in Table 4, it is revealed that the p-cal of .000 is less than the .05 alpha level of significance with 128 degrees of freedom. This showed that the formulated null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Null Hypothesis Two (H02)
There is no significant relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Table 5: Result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation for conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students

Variables	n	p-cal	p-crit	Remark
Conflict resolution styles	130			
Delinquent careers		.000	.05	Significant. Ho2 Rejected
	130			

df=128

Source: Computed by the Researcher using data from the respondents.

From the result in Table 4.6, it is revealed that the p-cal of .000 is less than the .05 alpha level of significance with 128 degrees of freedom. This showed that the formulated null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students**.**

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are summarized as follows:
i.   There is a significant relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.
ii. There is a significant relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students.
iii. There is a significant relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students.

Discussion of Findings
Communication Patterns in the Family and Delinquent Careers
The findings based on Hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students. The result also shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between communication patterns in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students. This finding indicates that delinquent careers among secondary school students depends on communication patterns in the family. The result could be attributed to the fact that families that maintain open, supportive, and consistent communication tend to foster positive social and emotional development in their children, which can help reduce the likelihood of delinquency. On the other hand, poor communication within the family, characterized by conflict, neglect, or inconsistent messaging, can contribute to behavioural issues and delinquent careers among secondary school students. In families where communication is clear and supportive, children are more likely to develop strong self-esteem, emotional regulation, and respect for rules and authority. These students typically experience a greater sense of belonging and security, which helps them navigate the challenges of adolescence. They are more likely to internalize positive values and avoid engaging in risky behaviours that could lead to delinquency.

Additionally, families with dysfunctional communication patterns such as frequent arguments, lack of emotional support, or inconsistent discipline can create an environment of frustration, insecurity, and rebellion. In such cases, students may seek acceptance and validation outside the family, sometimes turning to peers involved in delinquent activities. Without proper guidance and emotional support, these students may develop antisocial behaviours, such as truancy, substance abuse, or involvement in criminal activities. Lastly, families that fail to communicate effectively about expectations, responsibilities, and consequences can inadvertently contribute to the development of delinquent tendencies. Inconsistent discipline, unclear boundaries, or a lack of involvement in a child's education and social life can create a disconnect between the student and family values, increasing the risk of

delinquency. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Alzaben, et al., (2023) who reported that there is a significant relationship between family communication patterns and criminal behaviour and elucidate their relationship in Jordan.

Conflict Resolution Styles in the Family and Delinquent Careers

The findings based on Hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students. The result also shows that there is a moderate positive relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers among secondary school students. This finding indicates that delinquent careers among secondary school students depends on conflict resolution styles in the family. The result could be attributed to the fact that families that use constructive and healthy conflict resolution methods tend to foster emotional stability, problem-solving skills, and respect for others in their children. Conversely, families that resort to destructive conflict resolution styles, such as aggression, avoidance, or domination, may inadvertently contribute to the development of delinquent tendencies in their children. Furthermore, in families where conflicts are resolved through open communication, compromise, and mutual respect, students learn important social skills, such as empathy, negotiation, and self-control. These skills are critical in helping them navigate conflicts in their personal lives, whether with peers, teachers, or authority figures. Students who grow up in environments where disagreements are handled calmly and respectfully are less likely to resort to violence or other forms of delinquency as a way of managing their frustrations. On the other hand, families that rely on negative conflict resolution styles such as verbal or physical aggression, stonewalling, or avoidance often model dysfunctional behaviours for their children. In such environments, students may learn to deal with conflicts through similar harmful means, such as fighting, bullying, or defying authority.

Moreover, when family conflicts are left unresolved or managed through aggressive tactics, students may experience heightened stress, anger, or a sense of alienation, all of which can push them toward delinquent behaviors. For instance, if family conflicts frequently escalate into violence or emotional abuse, students may become desensitized to aggression and replicate these behaviours in their social interactions. Similarly, families that avoid addressing issues or fail to provide emotional support can leave students feeling neglected or misunderstood, increasing the risk of seeking validation through peer groups involved in delinquency. Lastly, inconsistent or punitive conflict resolution can create confusion about boundaries and consequences, leading students to rebel or act out. Without clear, fair, and consistent methods for managing conflicts, students may struggle to develop respect for rules and authority, which can result in engagement in delinquent careers. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Okorodudu (2010) who reported that there is a significant relationship between conflict resolution styles in the family and delinquent careers of students.

Family Flexibility and Delinquent Careers

The findings based on Hypothesis three revealed that there is a significant relationship between family flexibility and delinquent careers among secondary school students. The result also shows that there is a very strong positive relationship between family flexibility and

delinquent careers among secondary school students. This finding indicates that delinquent careers among secondary school students depends on family flexibility. The result could be attributed to the fact that a flexible family can accommodate the evolving needs and responsibilities of its members, fostering a sense of security, emotional well-being, and personal growth. In contrast, a rigid family structure may contribute to frustrations and rebellion, potentially leading to delinquent behaviours. When families exhibit flexibility, they create an environment where open communication and mutual understanding are prioritized. This flexibility allows parents to adjust their expectations and discipline strategies according to their child's developmental stage. Adolescents, in particular, face increasing social, academic, and emotional pressures. In a flexible family, changes in school performance, behaviour, or personal challenges are met with support, guidance, and constructive dialogue. This encourages students to communicate openly about their struggles and seek help, reducing the likelihood of engaging in risky or delinquent activities.

On the other hand, a lack of family flexibility can contribute to the development of delinquent careers among secondary school students. Families that adhere strictly to traditional roles, rigid rules, or unyielding discipline may struggle to meet the changing needs of their adolescent children. In such environments, students may feel trapped, misunderstood, or unable to express themselves, leading to feelings of frustration, rebellion, and defiance. When adolescents perceive their family as inflexible or overly controlling, they are more likely to seek autonomy or validation through delinquent behaviours, such as truancy, substance abuse, or associating with negative peer groups. Lastly, inflexible families may be less equipped to handle crises or transitions, such as parental divorce, financial difficulties, or changes in living arrangements. These disruptions can increase stress within the family, and without the flexibility to adjust and provide emotional support, students may feel neglected or overwhelmed. In such cases, delinquent behaviour can emerge as a coping mechanism or a form of rebellion against the perceived lack of understanding or care from the family. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Okorodudu (2010) who reported that there is a significant relationship between family flexibility and delinquency in Delta central Senatorial district.

Conclusion

From the result of the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between communication patterns in the family, conflict resolution styles in the family, parenting styles and delinquent careers among secondary school students. **Hence, t**his underscores the notion that delinquent careers among secondary school students are, to a considerable extent, dependent on the quality of family dynamics, highlighting the need for interventions that prioritize promoting positive family relationships and environments to mitigate the risk of delinquency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should be encouraged to provide a stable and supportive family environment, characterized by warmth, love, and consistent discipline, to help prevent delinquent behavior among secondary school students.

2. The government and stakeholders should develop and implement policies and programs that address the root causes of delinquent behaviour, such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality, and provide opportunities for students to engage in positive activities and develop life skills.

3. Schools should establish mentorship programs that pair students with positive role models, such as teachers, counsellors, or community leaders, to provide guidance and support and help students develop positive values and behaviors

Work Cited

Alzaben, A., et al. (2023). Family communication patterns and criminal behavior: *A study in Jordan. Journal of Family Studies, 29(1), 1-15.*

Argnew, R. (2006). Delinquent careers: A sociological perspective. *Journal of Crime and Delinquency, 43(2), 131-148.*

Farrington D. (2003) Conduct disorder, aggression, and delinquency. In M. Lerner and Lawrence Steinberg (eds.), Handbook of Adolescent Psychology. New York: Wiley, in press.

Gupta, S., & Geekita, R. (2019). Family Communication Pattern Questionnaire (FCP). *Journal of Family Psychology, 33(3), 345-355.*

Herrity, J. (2023). Conflict resolution styles and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 67(2), 245-262.*

Koerner, A. F., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2002). Family communication patterns and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Family Communication, 2(1), 1-18.*

Kurdek, L. A. (1994). Conflict resolution styles in couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 56(2), 341-354.*

Okorodudu, G. N. (2010). Family dynamics and delinquency in Delta central Senatorial district. *Journal of Social Sciences, 23(2), 131-140.*

Olson, D. H., Portner, J., & Lavee, Y. (1985). Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES-III). Family Process, 24(2), 193-208.

Ricketts, T. (2020). Family flexibility and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Family Issues, 41(5), 631-650.*

Strategies for Monitoring the Successful Delivery of Inclusive Education in the Classroom

Richard Owusu
University of Africa, Zambia
Department of Education
Email: kwamenoah521@gmail.com
Phone Number: +27 60 421 9776

Abstract

This study explored strategies to monitor the successful delivery of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms. It particularly emphasized the importance of identifying and addressing the gaps that often exist between education policy and actual practice. Tackled from the principles of social constructivism and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the research explored how teachers are able to identify and support students with special needs, recognizing the diverse challenges they face. Employing qualitative methods, the study incorporated a thematic analysis of teacher responses to gaining deeper insights into their experiences and perceptions. Among the key strategies identified are systematic observation, which allows teachers to closely monitor student engagement and diverse assessment techniques that cater to various learning styles. Again, personalized interactions that build trusting relationships and necessary environmental modifications that create an inclusive atmosphere. The findings underscored the critical role of continuous monitoring tools, progress tracking systems, and effective feedback mechanisms to promote a more inclusive educational environment. Furthermore, the study stressed the importance of implementing structured accountability frameworks and providing ongoing professional development.

Keywords: Inclusive education, teacher strategies, special needs, classroom monitoring, policy implementation

Introduction

One of the prominent issues which informed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) discussions held in Rio de Janeiro 2012 under the auspices of the United Nations was Quality Education (SDG 4). The SDG 4 opines that Quality education "should be all-in as well as being impartial to ensure lasting openings for all and sundry by 2030" (UNDP,2012). In consonance

with the Sustainable objective, the entire world is devoted to providing quality education by eroding any kind of impediment that will militate against universalism for all learners.

South Africa's Department of Education is on a quest to achieving the aforementioned (quality education for all) and has formulated and carried out a lot of divergent policies in the educational sector (DBE, 2016). A case in point is the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy. The aim of the policy document is to provide every learner regardless of their socio-economic class, tribe, family, sex, strength or capacity or intelligence with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfillment and meaningful participation in the society as citizens of the country (DBE,2012). It emphasizes inclusivity as the central part of each school's planning and teaching by teachers and other stakeholders having a sound understanding with regards to identification and how to address the barriers that affect learning and to make provision for diversity.

The National Curriculum and Assessment Policy have been criticized for its fast-paced, lock-stepped and content-heavy demands (Andrews, Walton, & Osman 2021) preventing teachers and other stakeholders to play their roles effectively in providing quality and inclusive education for all. Furthermore, the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) which aims to provide a framework of procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school supports other Department of Education policies to create inclusivity.   Challenges still exist though as the provision of these policies and its implementation are insufficient. This is due to lack of monitoring and accountability systems by the various stakeholders. This study therefore is to (1) explore how teachers are able to identify learners with Special needs in their classroom and (2) draw out strategies to monitor Inclusive Education in the classroom. This study is significant because it will aid in identifying the inconsistency in the Inclusive Education classroom and recommend monitoring tools for accountability purposes in Inclusive Education practice.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, social constructivism theory and the theory of Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) were adopted. Social constructivism is a learning theory that Lev Vygotsky introduced in 1968. The theory of social constructivism captures the significance of collaborative learning settings that cater to a variety of learners, including individuals with disabilities. This perspective aligns with the views of Rannikmäe, Holbrook, and Soobard (2020), who assert that institutions should honor each other's distinctiveness and create an environment where people can develop their understanding of reality from their individual viewpoints. A key aspect of Vygotsky's social constructivism is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which underscores the teacher's role as a facilitator in the learning process. The ZPD indicates that through the support of a teacher (facilitator), learners can achieve comprehension and mastery of skills that they would struggle to grasp independently. The teacher assists learners in building self-trust, confidence in their skills, and proving their capability to accomplish assigned tasks.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model clarifies the readiness to participate in inclusive teaching. It is essential for comprehending the elements that affect teachers' intentions and actions regarding inclusive education. As per the TPB, individual behavior is motivated by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control over actions. These theoretical frameworks provide a thorough insight into the interactions that contribute to the effective implementation of inclusive education. These theories points to the importance of teacher attitudes, social interactions, and the wider cultural environment in shaping practices related to inclusive education.

Literature Review

Inclusive Education in the classroom is not only about access to education by all learners but "belonging, nurturing and educating all learners regardless of their differences (Engelbrecht *et. al* 2015). Inclusive Education is not about accommodating learners ensuring that each learner's learning needs are catered for and any possible barriers removed so that all the learners can benefit from the outcomes of the lesson in the classroom (Yeboah, *et al.,* (2023). Teachers who are the fundamental implementers of any educational policy and first point of call-in achieving inclusivity have the core mandate to identify the learning needs of their learners and address them.

Teachers have had to adapt not only to align with the shift towards a more just and equitable education system due to past injustices, but they also must navigate new policies, curriculums, and a variety of classrooms that include learners with diverse disabilities that require accommodation (Hooijer *et al.,* 2021). However, they are usually faced with a herculean task of creating and implementing inclusivity in the classroom due to factors like fast paced curriculum, large classroom sizes etc. These factors prohibit teachers in identifying learning barriers and address them by using different strategies. Due to this, teachers adopt the "all fit all" approach in order to be able to finish the teaching plan and curriculum on time. The "all fit all" approach tends to sideline learners who are unable to catch up with the style of teaching and tend to deprive disadvantaged learners of their right to quality education.

Faced with this challenge, teachers end up resorting to giving out the same standardized lesson and activities, as prescribed in the curriculum which is grade appropriate and not learner appropriate as it should be with regards to those with learning disabilities. (Nkonyane & Hove 2014). Furthermore, Nkonyane & Hove (2014) believes that many teachers do possess neither the knowledge bases nor the skills to embrace the policies of inclusive education, hence they feel sacrificed when they are required to have children with learning disabilities in their classroom because they have to prepare for programmes and activities of learning for students with learning disabilities in their class when he/she still has to attend to the needs of those who are average and above average.

The implementation of policies has created diverse means for teachers and other stakeholders to use different strategies to achieve the goals of these polices. However, the implementation of the polices in the classroom is easier in theory than in practice. Loreman (2017) believes that implementation of inclusive education teaching and learning should be considered critically, as such teachers are to come up with learning and teaching activities that are inclusive and sensitive to learners' diversity.

Methodology

Research Context

The study was conducted in Cathcart High School in the Amathole West District in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. The school is located in a rural area with a population of about 800 learners with 40 qualified teachers. It has an average class size of 32.

Sample

Intentional sampling, also known as purposive sampling, was employed as a method for selecting samples. This sampling technique involves the strategic selection of specific elements from the population to serve as a representative sample. The sample size of the study was 8 teachers. 2 from the foundation phase (grade R – 3), 2 from the intermediate phase (grade 4 -6), 2 from the senior phase (grade 7-9) and 2 from the further education training phase (grade 10 -12). The participants in the study were chosen due to their easy accessibility and their existing knowledge of Inclusive Education, making them suitable representatives of the target population. Participants were identified with their initials for the sake of anonymity. (Mr. G, Ms. M, Mrs. W, Mrs. K, Miss. A, Ms. N, Mrs. Q, Ms. R).

Data Collection

Questionnaires were physically distributed to the participants of the study. After three days, the completed questionnaires were retrieved followed by a semi – structured interview to get a deeper insight of the questionnaires that have been answered.

Data Analysis

Thematic framework was used to examine the data in this study. Thematic analysis is a systematic approach for identifying themes present in the collected data. This strategy was implemented to pinpoint the themes evident within the gathered information. A common pattern from participant responses were recognized and categorized into four distinct themes.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

The thematic analysis of the data uncovered four key themes that shed light on how teachers recognize learners with special needs in their classrooms. Each theme emerged through thorough examination of the responses from participants in the questionnaire. The identified themes were: Observation of Learner Behaviors, Academic Performance and Assessment, Direct Interaction with Learners, and Physical and Environmental Indicators.

Observation of Learner Behaviors

This theme surfaced as a prevalent approach utilized by educators to recognize students with special needs, as noted by Mr. G, "The student leaned her neck to copy notes from another student rather than from the board... which raised my suspicion and led me to interview her."; Mrs. K stated, "Observing daily while moving around the classroom is beneficial."; Ms. A mentioned, "I recognized the students by focusing on every detail within the classroom."; Ms. N remarked, "Observations helped me" the level of student's engagement and participation in

class was key." Teachers consistently watch learners' behaviors and actions in the classroom to detect indicators of special needs.

Academic Performance and Assessment

Utilizing a variety of assessment methods enables educators to accurately evaluate the academic abilities of students in the classroom. Since assessment and academic achievement are essential for the effective identification of learners with special needs, this was noted by Mr. G, Mrs. K, and Mrs. Q. This observation emphasizes the ways in which teachers adapt their lesson plans to promote inclusivity and guarantees that students with special needs receive extra resources to aid their learning.

Direct Interaction with Learners

Ms. A mentioned that "Every learner is unique so I ensure that I get to understand each of them by knowing their cultural background, hobbies and learning style and what makes them unique. In that way it is easier to trust which stimulates more learning". Likewise, Mrs. Q indicated that she **uses more one-on-one instructional time where she is able to understand the needs of learners and provide the necessary support. Teachers employed these strategies to identify learning obstacles in their students and implement effective support measures.**

Physical and Environmental Indicators

Adjustments are implemented in the classroom setting to accommodate various needs: Learners with hearing impairments are positioned at the front to assist them in observing the teacher's lips for improved comprehension. The learning atmosphere is varied to guarantee that every learner experiences a sense of inclusion. Chances are provided for learners to connect with each other, promoting an inclusive and culturally sensitive environment.

Discussion

Teaching and Learning confirm that teachers need to know the characteristics of various disabilities, difficulties and conditions, their impact on learning, and appropriate educational responses (Engelbrecht & Walton, 2022). This discussion combines research findings with theoretical viewpoints and contemporary literature to explore strategies to monitor the successful delivery of Inclusive Education in the classroom.

Participants point at the significance of monitoring student engagement, participation, and unusual behaviors to pinpoint learning obstacles. For example, observing a student depending on classmates for taking notes, as mentioned by Mr. G, aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasizes the importance of recognizing various learning styles and adapting instruction accordingly. Research indicates that the observation of unusual behaviors by teachers, such as challenges with note-taking, plays a vital role in the early detection of learning obstacles (Hattie, 2019). This strategy aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism, where interactions between teachers and students, along with environmental support, are essential for meeting individual needs.

Additionally, implementing a variety of assessment strategies (such as formative assessments, peer evaluations, and portfolios) promotes fair evaluation of students' capabilities. For instance, Mrs. Q's modification of lesson plans aligns with the UDL principle of offering diverse means of action and expression, enabling students to showcase their understanding through different formats. The application of ongoing, informal assessments minimizes bias and provides useful insights into learning gaps, especially for students with disabilities. While balancing standardized testing with personalized approaches can be demanding for educators, it enhances fairness for neurodiversity learners.

Furthermore, personalized interactions as an approach underscored by both Ms. A and Mrs. Q play a crucial role in cultivating trust among students and educators while also uncovering deeper, often underlying challenges to learning and engagement. This practice is closely aligned with the tenets of culturally responsive teaching, stressing the necessity of acknowledging and valuing the diverse backgrounds and varied learning styles of students. Research has shown that individualized interactions not only enhance a student's sense of self-efficacy but also serve as a valuable tool in identifying cultural and learning-related barriers that may hinder academic success (Ladson-Billings, 2020). Additionally, such personalized engagement is instrumental in promoting the social-emotional development of students, particularly those from marginalized communities, ensuring they receive the support needed to thrive both academically and personally.

Intentional modifications to the physical and environmental aspects of the classroom are crucial for meeting the diverse needs of all learners. These adaptations enhance resource accessibility and promote an atmosphere of environmental inclusivity. A thoughtfully designed classroom creates flexible seating arrangements that can accommodate various physical and sensory requirements. For instance, strategically positioning students with hearing impairments at the front of the classroom facilitates their ability to see the teacher's face and any visual aids, making it easier for them to read lips and access instructional materials. This thoughtful arrangement allows these students to remain engaged with the lesson and participate actively in discussions.

Moreover, additional modifications, such as providing different types of seating options like adjustable chairs can cater for students with varying preferences and needs. This variety helps to foster comfort and concentration in learning. Creating quiet areas with soft lighting and noise-canceling headphones can also support students with sensory sensitivities, allowing them a space to retreat when feeling overwhelmed. The overall design and arrangement of the classroom play a significant role in shaping educational outcomes. Conducive learning environment directly contributes to students' ability to access information, engage with peers, and feel a sense of belonging. This focus on inclusivity not only enhances academic performance but also promotes engagement and equity among all learners, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have significant implications for teaching practices related to the identification and monitoring of successful Inclusive Education in the classroom. The effectiveness of inclusive education strategies can be assessed through a blend of qualitative

and quantitative methods. Based on participants' interviews and contemporary literature, the study advocates for a comprehensive approach to effectively monitoring Inclusive Education in the classroom, focusing on three key areas namely: observation tools, progress monitoring, and feedback mechanisms.

Observation Tools

The systematic observation of learner behaviors, engagement, and participation is vital in the classroom. Proper observation in the classroom plays the role of diagnostic observation in detecting learning barriers. It fosters early intervention, enabling teachers to make instructional adjustments. Tools like checklists and engagement rubrics will allow educators to track atypical behaviors of students (e.g., avoidance of eye contact, inconsistent participation) without stigmatization.

Progress Monitoring

Consistent monitoring of both academic and social-emotional development is crucial for determining the effectiveness and sustainability of inclusive practices in educational settings. Engelbrecht and Walton (2022) stressed the importance of implementing dynamic assessment models, which prioritize individual growth and progress over static benchmarks. This approach ensures that evaluations are tailored to reflect each student's unique journey, fostering a more supportive and responsive learning environment. Focusing on individual progress, dynamic assessments can provide timely feedback and insights that help tailor instructional strategies to better support each learner's needs, fostering a more inclusive and responsive educational atmosphere.

Feedback Mechanisms

Engaging directly with learners provides rich qualitative insights into the concept of inclusivity in education. Through one-on-one interviews, student reflections, and culturally responsive dialogues, educators can uncover various barriers that may arise from students' cultural identities and individual learning preferences. These meaningful interactions not only foster an atmosphere of trust and self-confidence, particularly among marginalized students, but also equip teachers with a deeper understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds and personal interests. Educators can then tailor their evaluations to more effectively consider the socio-emotional dimensions of learning.

Limitations of Study

This study presents valuable insights into the strategies for effectively monitoring the implementation of Inclusive Education within the classroom setting. However, it is important to recognize several limitations that may affect the interpretation of the findings. While the study offers a rich and detailed descriptive data through a qualitative approach, this methodology inherently limits the ability to generalize the results beyond the specific case examined. The limitations of case study methodology are further emphasized by Adu and Miles (2023), who discuss how such a focused approach might restrict the applicability of the findings. Since the study centers on a singular school, the results may only capture a fraction of

the diverse experiences encountered by teachers and learners in other South African educational environments.

Consequently, any conclusions drawn from this study should be applied cautiously to different settings due to the issues related to representativeness and the limitations in generalizability. Despite these constraints, the findings open avenues for future research. Conducting similar studies in varied contexts with a greater number of schools and a larger pool of participants could enhance the understanding of Inclusive Education and its implementation across different educational settings. Such research could provide a more comprehensive overview and foster better strategies for meeting the needs of all learners.

Conclusion

This study examined strategies for monitoring the effective implementation of inclusive education in classrooms, particularly focusing on how teachers identify students with special needs and evaluate the success of inclusive practices. Approached through social constructivism and the Theory of Planned Behavior, the research points at the interaction between collaborative learning environments and systemic support in addressing gaps between policy and practice. Teachers are the drivers of the process whose attitudes, interactions, and innovative methodologies serve as vital conduits for identifying and addressing the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities. The findings reveal that creating an inclusive educational environment necessitates a multifaceted approach, incorporating systematic observation, varied assessment techniques, personalized interactions with students, and intentional modifications to the physical classroom layout.

Through meticulous monitoring of student behaviors and levels of engagement, teachers can pinpoint early indicators of learning challenges and adapt their instructional strategies in a timely manner. This proactive approach not only aligns with the core tenets of Universal Design for Learning but also reinforces the idea that inclusion is not a one-time initiative but rather an ongoing process. It requires educators to engage in continuous reflection and adaptation to foster an environment where every student can thrive. Inclusive education thrives when teachers deeply know their students and create an environment where everyone feels welcome. By employing a variety of engaging teaching methods tailored towards diverse learning styles and regularly assessing student progress, educators can illuminate the true potential of inclusive education.

Work Cited

Adu, P., & Miles, D. A. (2023). *Dissertation research methods: a step-by-step guide to writing up your research in the social sciences*. Taylor & Francis.

Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7-16.

Andrews, D., E. Walton, and R. Osman. 2021. "Constraints to the Implementation of Inclusive Teaching: A Cultural Historical Activity Theory Approach." *International Journal of Inclusive Education*: 1508–1523. doi:10.1080/13603116.2019.1620880.

Bryant, D.P., Bryant, B.R. & Smith, D.D., 2017, 'Teaching students with special needs in inclusive classrooms: Special educational needs', *ELT Journal* 71(4), 525–528. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccx042

Engelbrecht, P., Nel, M., Nel, N., & Tlale, D. (2015b). Enacting understanding of inclusion in complex contexts: classroom practices of South African teachers. *South African Journal of Education*, *35*(3), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v35n3a1074

Hattie, J. (2019). Visible learning for teachers. In *Routledge eBooks*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003024477

Hooijer, E.L., Van der Merwe, Dr.M. and Fourie, Dr.J. (2021) 'Symbolic representation teachers reflect on inclusive education in South Africa', *African Journal of Teacher Education*, 10(1), pp. 127–152. doi:10.21083/ajote.v10i1.6549.

Inclusive teaching strategies. (n.d.). https://education.nsw.gov.au/campaigns/inclusive-practice-hub/all-resources/secondary-resources/other-pdf-resources/inclusive-teaching-strategies

Inclusive teaching strategies. (2021, June 30). Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning. https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/InclusiveTeachingStrategies

Joy Chikaodi Nwoko, Melissa J. Crowe, Aduli E. O. Malau-Aduli&Bunmi S. Malau-Aduli (2022) Exploring private school teachers' perspectives on inclusiveeducation: a case study, International Journal of Inclusive Education, 26:1, 77-92, DOI:10.1080/13603116.2019.1629122

Ladson-Billings, G. (2020). *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question*. Teachers College Press.

Loreman, T. (2017). Pedagogy for inclusive education. In *Oxford research encyclopedia of education.*

Nembambula, T.A., Ooko, M., & Aluko, R. (2023). Exploring Challenges Experienced by Teachers in Implementing Inclusive Education in Classrooms: A South African Perspective. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies, 10*(2), 1-15.

Nkonyane, V.A., & Hove, N. (2014). The Teacher as a Sacrifice at "Alter" of Inclusive Education in South Africa's Public Schools: Challenges of Inclusive Education. *Mediterranean journal of social sciences, 5*, 1413-1423.

Olav, Muurlink., Bastian, Thomsen. (2024). Qualitative Research Approaches to Social Phenomena. 99-110. Available from: 10.4324/9781003362715-10

Rannikmäe, M., Holbrook, J., &Soobard, R. (2020). Social Constructivism—Jerome Bruner. In Science Education in Theory and Practice (pp. 259-275). Springer, Cham.

Rowan, L., J. Kline, and D. Mayer. 2017. "Early Career Teachers' Perceptions of Their Preparedness to Teach Diverse Learners: Insights from an Australian Research Project." Australian Journal of Teacher Education 42 (10): 71–92.

SA DBE (South Africa. Department of Basic Education). 2016. *Annual Report 2016/2017*. Government Printers.

SA DBE (South Africa. Department of Basic Education). 2012. Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements(CAPS). https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/ CurriculumAssessmentPolicy Statements(CAPS(open in a new window)).aspx.

Saleem, Amna & Kausar, Huma & Deeba, Farah. (2021). Social Constructivism: A New Paradigm in Teaching and Learning Environment. PERENNIAL JOURNAL OF HISTORY. 2. 403-421. 10.52700/pjh.v2i2.86.

Tierney, R.D. (2016). Fairness in educational assessment. In M.A. Peters (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Educational philosophy and Theory*. Singapore: Springer Science+Business Media. DOI 10.1007/978-981-287-532-7_400-1

United Nations. (2012). *The future we want: Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Raio+20)*. United Nations.

Walton, E. and Engelbrecht, P. (2022) 'Inclusive education in South Africa: path dependencies and emergences', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 28(10), pp. 2138–2156. doi: 10.1080/13603116.2022.2061608.

Yeboah, Adu & Aloka, Peter & Charamba, Erasmos. (2023). Teachers' Personal Barriers Hindering Implementation of Inclusive Education in One Mainstream School in South Africa. International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies. Vol.10, No.3. 109-123.. 10.23918/ijsses.v10i3p109.

Assessing the Operational Capacities of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) in Combating Irregular Migration in Kwara Border Controls

Raji, Fatiu Gboyega, Ph.D
Centre for Peace and Security Studies,
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

Samuel Idowu, Ph.D
Centre for Peace and Security Studies,
Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

Adekola, A. A. Ph.D
Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies,
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

and

Raji Shittu, Ph.D
Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies,
University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Abstract

In many parts of the world, irregular migration has remained a global security challenge, exposing many migrant victims to human trafficking, and human rights violations with induced security threats. Despite the efforts of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) at countering irregular migration in Nigeria, the menace still persists in Kwara border control posts., This leads to undocumented entry of persons of concern, which includes smuggling and trafficking in humans, among other acts of security breaches. This study assessed the operational capacities of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) in combating irregular migration in Kwara border control. It specifically identified the **security challenges of irregular** migrants along Kwara border axis, and the operational tactics of NIS in controlling irregular migration. and the challenges confronting NIS in combating irregular migration along Kwara border axis. The study adopted a qualitative method of In-depth Interview (IDI) and Key Informant Interview (KII). Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used in selecting participants for the interview. A total of nine (9) respondents were interviewed and analyzed using content analysis. Findings of the study revealed that the security challenges in Kwara border

axis included smuggling of children for domestic workers, motorcycle/car theft, armed robbery and kidnapping for ransom. The operational control of irregular migration was effective in the area of sufficient **border control designs**, regular training and retraining of personnel. This is in addition to synergies with other security agencies, but ineffective in border patrol capacity, staff strength, logistic needs, funding and sufficient staff motivation to navigate difficult working environment. The challenges of controlling irregular migration by NIS along Kwara borders included: the porous nature of Kwara borders, lack of adequate NIS manpower for effective border management, deficiencies in coordination and sharing of information between NIS and other security agencies. The study concluded that the NIS remains relatively effective in controlling human trafficking in Kwara borders but with many operational challenges. The study recommended that **the NIS should recruit more men and strengthen Border Surveillance Technology, including** cutting-edge instruments, drones, cameras, and sensors **to enhance the operational capacity of NIS at curbing irregular migration at Kwara borders.**

Keywords: Nigerian Immigration Services, Operations, Border Control, Migration, Kwara State, Manpower, Surveillance

Introduction

Migration is one of the most dynamic features of human interaction and population re-distribution in the world (Jacobsen & Khosravi, 2021). The most challenging is irregular migration, which from the perspective of the country of origin, is the migration of persons across international borders without valid travel documents or passports to live temporarily or permanently in foreign countries other than their birth country. This movement violates the immigration laws of both countries of origin and destination. Irregular immigrants are also known as undocumented or unauthorized immigrants. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that there exist 281 million international migrants across the world in 2020, with a substantial proportion of them being irregular migrants (World Migration Report, 2022). These migrants frequently go on dangerous treks, exposing themselves to exploitation, human trafficking, and human rights violations (Jacobsen & Karlsen, 2020).

Irregular migration is also prominent throughout Asia, with the Gulf countries hosting a significant number of irregular migrants, accounting for up to 26% of the overall population in some countries (Frontex, 2020). Furthermore, those found to be Nigerians seem to be on the increase in recent times (United Nations,2020). In sub-Saharan Africa, migration has been a permanent characteristic of the region long before colonization. However, Irregular migration is among the major challenges confronting several countries in Africa (Blum, 2014). According to Vespe and Pappalardo (2017) some of the African countries that have experienced irregular migration in the world include Israel, Sudan, Niger, Chad, Benin, Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, amongst others. The destination of these irregular immigrants in Africa is majorly Egypt, South Africa, and Nigeria (Vespe *et al,* 2017; IOM, 2019).

The rapidly deteriorating security situation in most part of West Africa, especially in Benin,

Togo and Nigeria has its genesis from irregular migrants who migrate across various porous or illegal borders that are located of these States. The porosity of the land borders has paved way for the proliferation of illegal routes to promote illicit activities and security breaches, including but not limited to smuggling of arms, drug and human trafficking, terrorism, inter border armed robbery, and other transnational organized crimes along the borders which impedes economic development (Vespe and Pappalardo, 2017).

Nigeria's porous borders are major reasons behind irregular international migration problems (Adepoju, 2005). There are various illegal pathways mostly in Damaturu and Maduguri in the Northern part of Nigeria that links other neighboring countries like Cameroon, Chad and Niger. These countries further connect to other countries like Libya, Mali, and Sudan. These illegal pathways are unprotected and majorly used by irregular migrant for illegal exchange or purchase of arms and other businesses that are considered illegal such as sales of rice, cars, guns, oil, amongst others (Musa, 2013). There are various unprotected routes that are used by irregular migrants. In Nigeria there are about four thousand and eighty (4,080) routes in Nigeria out of which only ninety-one (91) are legally authorized and protected, this situation puts Nigeria in an unsecured migrant situation (Evans, 2016).

The Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) is the para-military government agency charged with the responsibility of migration management in the country. The primary functions of the NIS include controlling of persons entering and living Nigeria, issuance of travel documents, including Nigerian passports to bona fide Nigerians within and outside the country, issuance of visas and residence permits to foreigners in Nigeria while also carrying out border surveillance and patrol against irregular migrants (IOM, 2014). Thus, the NIS is primarily responsible for effective enforcement of the federal government policy on border security towards regular immigration and emigration of persons. Therefore, this study assesses the operational capacities of NIS, with a view of strengthening its capacity in combating irregular migration in Kwara Border Axis.

Clarification of Key Terms

Border

There is no universally accepted definition of border as Musalli (2015) defined a border as an invisible margin and legitimate jurisdiction between political units such as sovereign states, or federal states. It is also seen as the main line, which demarcates one country from the other. Akinyemi (2013) defines border as the line that links and separates one country from another at the same time, and that it could be a source of benefit, as well as of detriment to the contending states, depending on the degree of their security. As such, countries find it mandatory to apply essential measures in order to protect their borders, on land, air and sea points of entry.

Migration

Migration has been defined as movement of a person or group of persons from one geographical unit to another across an administrative or political border, who wish to settle definitely or temporarily in a place other than their place of origin (IOM, 2021). Migration is the mobility of people from an area of a country (or from one country) to another area of the

same country (or to another country) to establish a new residence (IOM, 2010). Migration is also seen as the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary (Alkasim, 2018). Irregular migration is the movement of a person or group of persons into another currently illegally.

Human Trafficking

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (2018) defined trafficking in persons (otherwise known as human trafficking) as another dimension of the violence, brutality and abuse that occur in the context of armed conflict. Trafficking involves exploitation in forced labor, for domestic servants, sexual exploitation, or armed combat (UNODC, 2018). According to Ifeyinoluwa and Oluwaleye (2018), human trafficking is also the buying and selling of persons for the single purpose of exploiting individuals. The main goal of human traffickers according to Odelola (2020) is the exploitation of their victims to their advantage.

Literature Review

According to Sanchez (2019), migration is an old phenomenon and an emotional one because it essentially deals with individuals who, in many cases, were forced to leave their home countries by the hardship they experienced. As noted by Charles (2022), The rhetoric of disaster gives an impression of the tensions and resentments that can easily be mobilized when the topic of migration is raised. The risks, especially for 'recipient' countries, are widely acknowledged while migrants' risks often receive little attention. This is the first important connection between migration and security: the population in the destination countries harbors fears that migration could lead to a lack of security in the broadest sense, i.e. violence and crime but also social insecurity such as the loss of one's job, competition over social benefits, etc. In the discussions about migration, there is all too often a tendency to adopt a one-sided, negative attitude from a security perspective (Blum, 2014). The reasons for migration are many and varied. These include poverty as almost half of the 680 million people in Africa are still living in extreme poverty while violent conflicts, civil war and displacement of persons from their natural place of abode have curtailed sustainable development in the affected areas. In addition, environmental degradation has continued to cause severe and lasting damage to the environment and deprive people of their livelihood (Musa & Arostar, 2017). Experts call these factors the push factors of migration.

Adeola & Fayomi, (2012) in their study revealed that irregular migration has a lot of implications for human security as it encourages commission of crimes and acts of criminality such as terrorism and insurgency. Babatunde (2009) equally argued that irregular migration has posed a broad variety of security challenges for all actors involved in the process. The scope of migration-induced security risks only becomes visible when applying comprehensive security concepts that address state, regional and human or societal security aspects. The author argues further that even though migration does not cause conflict directly, it influences it under certain circumstances as migrants are sometimes recruited as war combatants. There is no doubt that all the reviewed studies made valuable input on the reasons for migration and its

security implications. In spite of these efforts, few studies were focused on the efforts of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) without focusing their studies on the operational capacity of the security agency to counter irregular migration, an academic lacuna this study intends to fill.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts securitization theory as its theoretical basis of analysis. The proponent of securitization theory could be traced to the work of Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde (1998). The main thrust of Securitization theory is that national security policy is not a natural given but carefully designated by politicians and decision-makers. The Securitization theory states that issues in politics constitute an extreme security challenge with the urgent attention to the label and deal as dangerous, menacing, threatening, and alarming by a 'securitizing actor.' It has the social and institutional power to move the issue 'beyond politics (Eroukhmanoff, 2018).

Irregular migration on this basis, is a security issue that is not just out there but requires its handling as a major crisis by security actors (Government) (Albert-Makyur and Mbanaso, 2022). Irregular migration is a 'threat to national security as it shifts immigration/irregular migration from a low priority political concern to a high priority issue that requires proactive actions, such as securing borders (Eroukhmanoff, 2018). Securitization theory therefore, provides a powerful lens for understanding how seemingly ordinary issues can be transformed into urgent security threats, demanding extraordinary measures.

Methodology

Data were primarily generated through the Key Informant Interview (KII) and In-depth interview comprising of Immigration officers (4), government officials (2), and (IDI) village heads (2), community members (3), that were selected through purposive sampling. Participants were drawn from Ilesha- Baruba border post, Okuta border post Kenu border post, Kosubosu border post and Yabua border posts. The respondents were considered relevant to this study because they possess first-hand information (expert knowledge) and have considerable field experience on the issues of border security and the operational capacities of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) in combating irregular migration in Kwara border axis. Primary and secondary data were utilized for this study. The qualitative data in form of semi-structured interview was recorded, transcribed were analyzed using inductive reasoning to generate meanings.

Data Presentation and Discussions

Security Challenges of Irregular Migrants along Kwara Border Axis

An investigation into irregular migrants' problems along the Kwara borders shows a complex tapestry of interconnected challenges that contribute to the ongoing problem of illegal migration. Findings from interview sessions and questionnaires revealed that smuggling of children for domestic workers, motorcycle/car theft, armed robbery, and kidnapping for ransom are the most prevalent crimes perpetrated along the Kwara border axis. Other crime common in the area are the trafficking of people for farming work, smuggling of unauthorized products, smuggling of fake products, and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The problem is exacerbated by the permeable nature of the borders, which allows traffickers and

smugglers to exploit vulnerable migrants. Oral evidence from the interview session affirmed that stealing, smuggling of vehicles and trafficking of persons and drugs are the associated crimes and security threats in the Kwara land border axis that were linked to many irregular migrants. A respondent interviewed in Okuta border axis revealed that:

> For instance, if a vehicle is stolen from Nigeria, there are people in the other side, Benin Republic that will receive it from migrants, especially those who do not document their crossing with border immigration posts to conceal their detection by security agencies. Apart from car theft, many undocumented migrants just kill somebody and cross to the other place because he knows that they will not be able to trace him. (IDI/Resident/45yr/Okuta/2023)

Similarly, the village head interviewed in Ilesha-Baruba revealed that the security challenges associated with irregular migration are mostly car theft and human trafficking:

> The insecurity associated with irregular migration has been stolen properties like vehicles or cars. The criminal element uses an avenue of porous border to carry out this crime. Imagine, last week a vehicle was stolen in Ibadan and we found it here at the point of crossing it to Benin Republic. Every other crime that I had witnessed here has to do with trafficking in of persons either for hard labor or sexual work. (KII/Male/Village head/63yr/2023)

Corroborating the above submission, a senior officer of Nigeria Immigration working at the control border post states that;

> The insecurity linked with irregular migration has to do with human trafficking. Just last week my men caught a woman trying to cross an illegal route with children up to five without a document. We have to refer the case to the NAPTIPs for further investigation. So also in previous years, particularly at the inception of former president Muhammadu Buhari, issues of stolen vehicles and contraband goods have been a major concern for every security personnel stationed at the border. (KII/NIS/5yr/Baruteen/2023).

In line with the above, a village head interviewed in Kenu border post identified human trafficking as the crime associated with irregular migration along the Kwara border post. According to him:

> The insecurity linked to irregular migration along Kwara border posts I would say is human trafficking because, like some of the farmers, they will tell you they need laborers. The laborer is now a kind of mediator. He will go bring the farmers to you, that how many do you need. Well, I would call that trafficking because... Yes, it's trafficking. Even if you call me to come

and farm somebody, trafficking does not mean you have to come and do prostitution first. For anybody to bring you to come and work without proper documentation is trafficking. Be it young people or old people, women or men. So, they do it here. (KII/Male/Village head/ 58yr/2023)

Findings from interview sessions revealed that smuggling of children for domestic workers, motorcycle/car theft, armed robbery, and kidnapping for ransom is the most prevalent crimes perpetrated along the Kwara border axis. Other crimes common in the area are the trafficking of persons for farming work, smuggling of unauthorized products, smuggling of fake products, and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The problem is exacerbated by the permeable nature of the borders, which allows traffickers and smugglers to exploit vulnerable migrants. It is quite easier for irregular migrants to perpetrate the above acts of criminality because they are often not subjected to regular checks since many of them did not pass through the regular borders. The study emphasizes the critical need for a comprehensive approach that addresses not only the symptoms but also the underlying reasons of irregular migration. Strengthening diplomatic ties with neighboring nations to address regional inequities collectively can also play an important role in lowering the motivation for migration.

Nigeria Immigration Service Operational control of Irregular Migration

Many tactics are being employed by the NIS to control irregular migration. These include detection and prevention of irregular exits and entering points. Due to the porous nature of borders in Kwara State, NIS created a synergy with the border host communities to identify the illegal routes within their areas and usually mount officers and men to block and control movement through such routes. A special corps named " border corps" was also established basically to combat trans-border crimes and as well monitoring the exit and entry points of irregular migrants. In an interview with the head of control in Chikanda, he avers that:

> We have staff to carry out the expected duties of registering people going in and out the country at this control post. In most cases when migrant is referred to us, we screen the migrant and cross-check his/her document to ascertain if is allowed in or out of the country (KII/Male/ DSC/54yr/SHQs/2023)

The Deputy State controller explained further on the strategic deployment of personnel at the border post thus:

> We have Border Patrol, Chikanda, Gure Border Patrol, and Kosubosu. These are the major border patrol. If you are posted from the office, they will say go to maybe Kosubosu patrol base, it is the boss there that will then assign to you the border point to mount. Sometimes they may use their discretion, maybe they notice that people are diverting, passing through another road, he may use his discretion to go and cover up for that place (KII/Male/DSC/54yr/SHQs/2023)

In a similar view to the above discussion, the deputy state controller who doubles as border management head in Kwara border commented on monitoring the exits and entry points to prevent irregular migration. He asserts that:

> We have nine (9) patrol routes. They are called border patrol units; Border patrol as the name implies, they move to monitor the movement of people along the border axis and these are the ones we may call illegal routes. We make sure that we mark them that anybody who takes that illegal route must be apprehended. If the person has his papers and the rest of the travel documents, we refer the person to the control posts to take that route because that is where his papers will be documented. (KII/Male/DSC/54yr/SHQs/2023)

Furthermore, NIS engages in Joint border patrol and sharing of intelligence information with other sister agencies, community stakeholders, and as well as relevant government agencies. While commenting on the joint border patrol, a patrol leader said:

> One of the tactics used is that we detail some surveillance to be at the border. Even we use information from the locals to gather intelligence If you see, then we get information, that's why we are able to detect some of where we have not been going before. Let's say maybe like arms now. The worst we do, because we are not on our own when we are playing something like that, we make contact to the office, the office now will direct on how to go about it. Majorly, it is the duty of the police to handle such criminals but you will not say because I am the OC, they ask, you have to contact the office to give you the directive for referral. (KII/Male/DSC/54yr/SHQs/2023)

Speaking on the collaborative efforts of NIS with sister agencies, an Immigration officer revealed that:

> Yes, the collaboration is very superb. The collaboration, inter-agency collaboration and the synergy is very strong, it is not just to have an antagonism with anybody, the friction is not there, there is no friction, everybody play his role. All of us are doing the same work. we meet at one point or the other. If I come across this in my area of duty, what do I do? I refer the matter to the appropriate agency and that is why there is an understanding. We have... Joint Border Team (KII/Male/DSC/54yr/SHQs/2023)

NIS engages in public sensitization and awareness program by engaging vulnerable groups such as youth association and members of the public on illegal migration as well as "Japa syndrome". Another key tactic employed by NIS is regular training and retraining of its personnel. They embark on both local and international training and programs particularly on irregular migration and other trans-border crimes. While reacting to this, a senior officer revealed that:

> The agency is passionate about training and retraining of officers on border management. Border security is one of the very important things that federal government has concern for. Border management training in immigration is one of those issues that the federal government does not play with, because they know our functions and what we can do. So I will tell you that the border management is deepened by the day through several workshops, retraining and so on. (KII/Male/PBO/51yr/ Okuta /2023)

Study on the effectiveness of NIS in controlling irregular migration revealed that a sizable number of respondents believed that the detection and prevention of unauthorized exits and entry along the Kwara border were unsuccessful. Only few thought it was very effective. This indicates the need for better methods and tools to increase the NIS's ability to identify and stop irregular movement operations along this specific border. While commenting on this, a community leader revealed that;

> I am of the opinion that the staff strength capacity of NIS in controlling irregular migration at the Baruten Border area is not enough considering the large expanse of the area which consists of so many inlets and outlets at the Border axis in Baruten. There should be more strategic and effective personnel deployment policies in favor of the land borders because what we have existing at the moment is not producing results. As we witness mass influx of foreigners from Benin, Togo and Burkina Faso to Nigeria from those areas. There is no efficient operational logistics support. Considering the nature of the Border (Baruten) technological knowledge should be incorporated. Motorcycles should be provided to ply the non-motorable routes (IDI/Male/Community leader/44yr/2023)

Also, a representative of Local government chairman in Kaima while commenting on **detection and prevention of unauthorized exits and entry along the Kwara border** revealed that:

> The capacity of NIS to tackle irregular migrant in our local government is very weak due to the inability to have enough logistics on every porous entry point. The worst period is during the rainy season because they did not have a house or place to stay at their patrol units. So, when it start raining you hardly see the NIS staff again patrolling and it is during this period that irregular migrants pass through coming into Nigeria for farming activities (KII/Male/LGA/49yr/2023)

The study on Nigeria Immigration Service's (NIS) tactics in controlling irregular migration along the Kwara border demonstrates the positive and transformative impact of these efforts. NIS's varied initiatives have generated considerable results in terms of border security, reduced incidents of human trafficking and smuggling, and raised public awareness about the dangers of irregular migration. One of the most noticeable outcomes of NIS initiatives is increased

border security. NIS has strengthened its ability to detect and deter irregular migration efforts by implementing advanced monitoring technologies and increasing patrols. This increased surveillance has served as a deterrent, discouraging potential migrants from crossing the border illegally and deterring traffickers and smugglers from exploiting vulnerable persons.

On the effectiveness of NIS operational tactics, mixed opinions were expressed on forming alliances with regional and international organizations to advance the fight against unauthorized immigration. While few respondents thought it was effective, a sizable portion said it was ineffective. This shows how crucial it is to fortify current alliances and forge new ones in order to successfully tackle the problems posed by irregular migration by working together and pooling resources. A sizable majority of respondents expressed favorability toward the NIS and other security services' cooperation in intelligence gathering, while few respondents indicated thy are ineffective. This emphasizes the value of inter-agency collaboration and information sharing to strengthen intelligence gathering and raise the overall efficiency of operations to restrict irregular migration. Responses to advocacy presentations and awareness campaigns on various media channels and at public events were inconsistent. While few of the respondents said it worked, a sizable portion thought it didn't. In order to reach a larger audience and raise public awareness of the problems associated with irregular migration, this implies the necessity for more focused and effective awareness initiatives.

In addition, insignificant number of respondents thought those officers' training and retraining in irregular migration control and management was ineffective. While insignificant number of respondents agreed that it was extremely effective. This demonstrates the value of ongoing professional development initiatives and training programs to provide NIS officers with the expertise and information required to successfully manage the issues posed by irregular migration.

Challenges of Countering Irregular Migration by Nigeria Immigration Service along Kwara Border Axis

There are many challenges of countering irregular migration as distilled from this study. Findings from the interview conducted revealed that the majority of respondents regarded the permeable nature of Kwara's borders as a key difficulty. A significant number of respondents indicated a lack of manpower and logistics to effectively counter irregular migration. Commenting on the challenges of countering irregular migration by NIS along the Kwara border, a NIS officer revealed that:

> I would say some; number one, logistics like mobility, number two shelter you understand? Shelter, infrastructure, that's basic things. Well, based on the, how do you call it, ECOWAS protocols, you know, we have free… in Africa. You know, you can easily move in and out. And if you want to look into that area of paper, you see, some Nigerian foreigners are also in our own country there. And you will see that if you think of Benin Republic or Togo, they are not too harsh on the Nigerians on their paper also. I think that is the same thing applicable to foreigners in Nigeria (KII/Male/PBO/39yr/ Kosubosu/2023)

Another Immigration officer while commenting on this revealed that:

> In terms of manpower, it's poor. As it is now, in this very locality that we are in, there are so many roads people can use that are not motorable, people can even walk. In terms of logistics, and manpower, to be sincere, it's poor working as an Immigration personnel. (KII/Male/NIS personnel /44yr/2023)

Furthermore, a significant number of respondents indicated a lack of information sharing and coordination issues as a challenge between the NIS and other security agencies. In addition, majority of the respondents voiced their worry over the absence of a legislative framework to handle the issue of migrant smuggling. To prosecute offenders and discourage irregular migration, it is critical to have the right laws and regulations in place. The NIS can successfully prevent smuggling and associated activities by establishing and improving legal frameworks. Another challenge cited by the respondents was inadequate funds for staff to patrol border stations. The NIS's capacity to conduct frequent and thorough border patrols may be hindered by a lack of funding.

Also, lack of current technology to track the flow of migrants across border posts was another issue mentioned by respondents. Adopting cutting-edge surveillance technologies like drones, sensors, and biometric systems can improve the NIS's monitoring capabilities and make it possible to track and identify irregular migrants more effectively. The difficulties noted include open borders. A significant number of respondents agreed that lack of motivation for NIS personnel could hamper their performance. For instance, a participant noted that posting immigration officers without adequate motivation and logistics to work could be counter-productive. While commenting on this, a respondent revealed that:

> You see, for everybody to do his own work, there should be motivation. You understand? If, probably, the government want people and they know the causes of every trouble may start from the border area. The people that are supposed to be manning that point should be motivated. So that whatever you want them to go and do it there, they will do it without compromising your work with any money. (KII/Male/Immigration officer/39yr/ Kosubosu/2023).

From the above analysis, irregular migration persists in the study areas because NIS has operational and structural challenges. These challenges include inadequate number of immigration officers at the border posts, lack of resources and equipment to fight smugglers, traffickers and other illegal migrants. The analysis also indicated that most of the immigration officers posted lack adequate knowledge of the areas. The study on challenges confronting NIS in combating irregular migration along Kwara Border revealed fundamental issues confronting the Nigeria Immigration Service in combatting irregular migration along the Kwara border and indicates crucial areas that require concentrated effort. The lack of resources, particularly insufficient staffing and technology, prevents border control initiatives from being fully realized. The permeable nature of Kwara's borders highlight the need for creative ways to

prevent unwanted entry. Because of the versatility of smuggling networks, NIS personnel must maintain constant vigilance and adaptation. Corruption among border control agencies continues to be a source of concern, necessitating strict anti-corruption measures and internal changes. The study's findings highlight the importance of developing a comprehensive plan to handle these difficulties methodically, guaranteeing that NIS can effectively perform its role in ensuring national security and well-being.

The identification of obstacles confronting the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) in its efforts to fight irregular migration along the Kwara border provides a thorough picture of the complexity involved in this undertaking. These obstacles points at the importance of adaptive methods, capacity-building, and structural reforms in ensuring the success of NIS projects. Limited resources emerge as a major impediment to NIS's objective to reduce irregular migration. Inadequate staffing, low financial allocations, and technology inadequacies limit the organization's ability to monitor and secure the Kwara border comprehensively. The vast and diverse geography, along with the ingenuity of trafficking networks, allows for unauthorized entry and criminal activity. Taking on this task necessitates the development of additional border posts, which is the introduction of mobile patrols, and the use of technology-driven monitoring tactics.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and the subsequent discussion, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the appraisal of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS) in its efforts to combat irregular migration along the Kwara Border in Nigeria. According to the study, unlawful migration brings with it a host of problems, including money laundering, illegal mining, child smuggling, domestic workers, human trafficking, and migrant smuggling. The efficiency of several institutional tools used by the NIS to stop irregular migration has also been assessed by the study. While certain abilities have demonstrated level of usefulness, others need to be improved in order to produce the best results.

The study has revealed a number of issues that the NIS must overcome in order to stop irregular migration along the Kwara Border. The permeable nature of the borders, insufficient manpower and personnel resources, deficiencies in coordination and information sharing between the NIS and other security agencies, a lack of a legal framework to address the issue of migrant smuggling, insufficient funding for staff to perform border patrol duties, and a limited use of contemporary technology for monitoring the movement of migrants across the border posts are some of these challenges.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed based on the findings and conclusion of the research:

i. **Securitization of the border:** Nigeria government should prioritize the procurement and deployment of cutting-edge instruments such as drones, cameras, and sensors to strengthen border surveillance and technological infrastructure. Given the ongoing issues created by irregular migration along the Kwara border, it is critical to invest in

cutting-edge border monitoring equipment. This will improve real-time monitoring and early detection of irregular migration efforts.

ii. **There should be Cross-Border Collaboration and Intelligence Sharing.** Because irregular migration is transnational in character, the Nigeria Immigration Service should continue to strengthen its partnership with neighboring nations and international organizations. By establishing cooperative task forces and intelligence-sharing procedures, crucial information on trafficking routes, migratory trends, and criminal networks may be exchanged more easily.

iii. **Nigeria government should strengthen the institutional capacity of NIS through recruitment of personnel and regular funding to increase the overall performance of the agency in controlling irregular migration**

Work Cited

Adeola, G.L. and Fayomi O. O. (2012). The Political and Security Implications of Cross Border Migration between Nigeria and her Francophone Neighbours. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow.*1(3). .Retrieved from http://eprints.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/4661/

Adepoju, A. (2005).Review of Research and Data on Human Trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa, International Migration 43(12) accessed online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 227993664_Review_of_Research_and_Data_on_Human_Trafficking_in_sub-Saharan_Africa

Akinyemi, O. (2013). Globalization and Nigeria border security: Issues and challenges. *Globalization*, *11*.

Albert-Makyur, S. D., &Mbanaso, M. U. (2022). Irregular migration and governance: Implications for Nigeria. *Journal of Global Social Sciences*, *3*(11).

Alkasim, I. (2018). Impact of Pendular Migration on Family Welfare in Katsina State, Nigeria.*Unpublished Materials, Department of Adults Education and Community Services, Bayero University, Kano.*

Babatunde, O.A. (2009). *National Security and Migration: towards an Effective Cross-Border Management in Nigeria*. Geneva: International Organization for Migration.

Blum, C. (2014). Cross-Border flows Between Nigeria and Benin-What are the challenges for (Human) Development. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Available from: http://openknedge.world back.org/handle/10986/6654

Ekpemede, K. (2016). The Nigerian Immigration Service. *The Gatekeeper*.

Eroukhmanoff, C. (2018). Securitization Theory: An Introduction. E-International Relations www.E-IR.info Bristol, England. Access May, 2024.

Evans, W. (2014). The Nigerian Immigration Service. *The Gatekeeper*.

Frontex (2021). Irregular Migrant Report 2020. Retrieved from https:// frontex. europa. eu/assets/ Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2021.pdf

Ifeyinwa A. and Oluwaleye J. (2018).Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Implications to National Development, Impact 3.582 *Case Studies Journal ISSN* (2305-509x)-Volume 7 issue12-Dec-2012. Retrieved From: https://www.academia.edu/7896572 0/Human Trafficking In Nigeria Implications to National Development.

International Organization of Migration (2019).   World Migration Report 2020. IOM, Geneva.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2011). *World Migration Report 2011*. IOM, Geneva. Available at http://publications.iom.int/system/files/wmr2011_en.pdf.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2020), World Migration Report, 2020

International Organization of Migration (2014). Irregular Migration and Cross Border Cooperation.3-6. *International Dialogue Report.* Retrieved from https://nigeria.iom.int/sites/default/ files/ newsletter/ Annex%20XXVl%20%20Report20of %20International%20%Dialogue% 20on% 20irregular%20Migration%Crossborder%20co operation.pdf

International Organization of Migration (2014). Irregular Migration and Cross Border Cooperation.3-6. *International Dialogue Report.* Retrieved from https://nigeria.iom.int/ sites/default/ files/newsletter/Annex%20XXVl%20%20Report20of %20International% 20%Dialogue% 20on% 20irregular%20Migration%Crossborder%20co operation.pdf

IOM (2010). Background Paper WMR 2010, the future of migration policies in Africa. www.publications.iom.int Access May, 2024.

IOM (2019).Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A global review of the emerging evidence base.. IOM, Geneva.

IOM (2021), Situation Report,www.iom.int.org Access May, 2024

IOM (2021). Key Migration Terms. www.iom.intAccess May ,2024

IOM and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2011), *Protecting Refugees and Other Persons on the Move in the ECOWAS Space*. IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa and UNHCR Regional Representation for West Africa, Dakar.Available at https:// publications.iom.int/books/protecting-refugees-and-other-persons-move-ecowas-space.

Jacobsen, C. M., & Karlsen, M. A. (2020). Introduction: Unpacking the temporalities of irregular migration. In *Waiting and the temporalities of irregular*

Jacobsen, C. M., Karlsen, M. A., & Khosravi, S. (2021). *Waiting and the temporalities of irregular migration*. Taylor & Francis. *migration* (pp. 1-19). Routledge.

Musa, N. M., (2013). Immigration Repatriates 230 illegal aliens over Boko Haram menace. *The Guardian*.8. Nigerian Institute of international Affairs.

Musa, S. &Arostar, J. B. (2017). The Role of Social Studies Education to Curb Insecurity for National Development.*Nigerian Journal of Social Studies and Civic Education*, 1(1)

Musalli, N., Harun, A., &Zainuddin, R. (2015). Performance of Border Management Personnel and Its Security Implications in Northern Nigerian Borders: A Pilot Study for Reliability and Validity of Instruments *Public Policy and Administration Research* www.iiste.org ISSN 2224-5731(Paper) ISSN (Online) Vol.5, No.4, 2015

Odelola O. (2020). Socio-Economic Consequences of Human Trafficking on the Trafficked Victims in Selected Communities in Kwara State, A dissertation submitted to the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin

United Nations (2020), Fight Racism: Migrants, Protect NOT Marginalize.www. refugeesmigrants.un.org Accessed May, 2024.

UNODC (2018). United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocols thereto. www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organised-crime/intro/UNTOC.html,

Vespe, & Pappalardo (2017). Dataset on Irregular Migration and Irregular Migrants in the EU, 2017, ISSN 2223-5248, 7 (2), p. 26-33, JRC107749.

Response Capacity of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to Crises of Existence: Challenges of Insurgency-displaced Persons in North-Eastern Nigeria

Oguntola A. P.
Idowu S. A., Ph.D
and
Raji S.A., Ph.D
Centre for Peace and Security Studies,
Alhikmah University, Ilorin.
Mobile: 07061002308
Email address: abideks24@gmail.com

Abstract

The crisis of existence and challenges of insurgency-displaced persons in the North-eastern Nigeria have assumed colossal calamities, including loss of lives and intense sufferings, despite the coordinated response of National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) with other stakeholders. This study aimed at assessing the response capacity of NEMA to the plights of the affected persons in North-eastern Nigeria. The study utilized a mixed research designs, consisting of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A sample size of 500 respondents was purposively selected in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States. While, quantitative data were generated through (8) Key Informant Interview (KII) using snowballing sampling technique. The findings revealed that the response of NEMA towards ameliorating the plights of the insurgency-affected persons included documentation of their profiles, Need Assessment Inquiry, distributing relief materials, re-union of missing victims with family members, and provision of prerequisite training to relevant disasters responders. The study found that the operational capacity of NEMA is characterized by strong management and coordinating capacity, strong operational synergy with other disaster responders. While insufficient logistic and funding capacity, corruption among NEMA officials and weak legal response capacity impeded the operational performance of NEMA the study concluded that NEMA has strong operational capacity but weak legal foundation to ameliorate the plights of the IDPs. The Study recommended improved funding of the Agency and enactment of IDP-specific constitutional roles to enhance maximum amelioration of the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria.

Keywords: Plights; Insurgency Displaced Persons, North-eastern Nigeria

Introduction

In recent years, the act of insurgency has become an acute reality across the world. Many countries have witnessed both internal and external subversive activities of insurgent groups, who violently confront constituted authorities for one reason or the other (Adamu and Rasheed, 2016). For instance, the insurgency war in Yemen between the Houthi insurgents and the government led to humanitarian disasters, including over 100,000 deaths and displacement of more than 2,000,000 people (International Red Cross, 2018).

The rise of violent extremism groups remains one of Africa's most pressing security challenge as the continent has been ravaged by terrorist activities. Most notable of the insurgent sects in North Africa is the Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) which has a working alliance with the global Al-Qaeda network (Imasen, 2014). While in East Africa, violent extremist attacks are carried out intermittently by militant religious groups. In the West and Central Africa sub-regions, the Boko Haram insurgency has ravaged virtually all the countries within the Lake Chad region, especially Nigeria, Chad, Cameroun and Niger, which led to the death of over 100,000 persons with properties worth over $6 billion destroyed (Relief Web, 2020).

The Boko-Haram sect has a firm base in the North-eastern states of Nigeria with Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States as the epicenter of insurgents destructive activities. The Boko Haram has carried out devastating attacks on different segments of the socio-economic life of Nigerians, especially those living in North-eastern Nigeria. Apart from creating a mass scenario of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), insurgency has also generated 177,000 refugees in neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and the Niger Republic (Reliefweb, 2020).

In particular, the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria have become a formidable challenge with intense human sufferings, including hunger, insecurity, and death, among other growing humanitarian crises (Asheley, 2020). Conversely, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has primarily been responsible for the coordination of the stakeholders efforts at curtailing the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria since 2009 (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). Despite their efforts, intense suffering persists in many IDP camps in North-eastern Nigeria. It is for this reason thatthis study examines the response capacity and challenges of NEMA to the plights of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The crisis confronting insurgency-displaced persons have assumed a disturbing phenomenon in North-eastern Nigeria. Though NEMA continues to intervene as primary responder to the plights of the displaced persons with the provision of relief materials and resettlement packages. The agency also coordinates the activities of other responders to the plights of the IDPs, including the security agencies, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and international donor agencies. Despite the above central roles of NEMA in the direct and indirect management of the IDPs, the present living condition of displaced persons is still very worrisome.

Despite the central role of NEMA in responding to the plights of insurgency displaced persons, no critical studies have been carried out to examine the response capacity of the

agency to the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria, a gap this study intends to bridge.

Objectives of the Study

It is to assess the response capacity of NEMA to the plights of insurgency- displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria. Others are to:

i.   identify the plights of insurgency-affected persons in North-eastern Nigeria;
ii. examine the operational response of NEMA to the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria; and
iii. appraise the contributions of NEMA in ameliorating the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria.

Review of Literature

Insurgency and Internally Displaced Persons in North-eastern Nigeria

According to Raji *et' al* (2021), the plights of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria have become a formidable global challenge with overwhelming disastrous implications for human development. Such Challenge include hunger, insecurity, and death, among other growing humanitarian crises (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019). As noted by the authors, Since 2009, North-eastern Nigeria, which consists of six states that include Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, and Taraba has largely been challenged by internal displacement crisis as the States continue to remain the epicenter of insurgent activities in North-eastern Nigeria since 2009.

During the peak of the crisis, the south-wards expansion of the Boko Haram activities culminated in the invasion of Madagali and Michika Local Government Areas of Adamawa State. Mubi, the capital of the Mubi Local Government Area and the second-largest commercial town in the State was temporarily overrun and occupied by the insurgents. The palpable fear led to a mass exodus of IDPs into Yola; the Adamawa State capital where they took refuge in seven camps while others reside within the host communities. The insurgent threat also led to the forced closure of the Adamawa State University, Mubi (Samuel, 2020). According to International Committee of the Red Cross (2016), there are more than 2,000,000 displaced persons across the Northeast along 120,000   Nigerian displaced refugees from the area to the neighboring countries of Cameroon, Chad, and Niger in 2018. The DTM (2020) Round 33 Report put the number of internally displaced persons in the Northeast states of Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Bauchi, and Taraba at 2, 118,550 cutting across 436,058 households as of August 2020 (Ashley, 2020).

One of the implications of the phenomenon of insurgency is human displacement, which still remain one of the most tragic experiences of the victims having disrupted their socio-economic stability through loss of homes, jobs, and family members. While establishing the relationship between Boko Haram insurgency and internal displacement in Nigeria, Ajijola (2017) found that since the insurgents began their campaign of terror against the Nigerian state in 2009, several people across North-eastern Nigeria have been forced to flee their homes to safer places, the outcome of which is an unprecedented humanitarian crisis for the country. The author observes further that apart from being displaced physically from their ancestral homes, IDPs have also been displaced psychologically, emotionally, and socio-economically, which

often leads to traumatic distress for the victims.

The Assessment Capacity Project (ACP) (2018) identifies eight potential risks that every insurgency displaced person faces. These include landlessness, which removes the main foundation upon which the displaced productive capacity, denial of commercial activities and livelihoods of dependent, especially in the rural area where the livelihood of many residents is based on the agricultural produce; thus, reducing their chance of tension-free life. Joblessness is another fundamental feature of insurgency displacement as job loss is very high among the displaced population. Job loss among the IDPs is essentially noticeable in both the rural and urban sectors, especially among those who are self-employed as agricultural laborers or industrial workers. Loss of shelter or homelessness is a major feature of displacement, such loss of a family's home along with their cultural heritage often results in alienation and social status deprivation. Forced displacement leads to loss of access to common property resources, including pastures, forested lands, water bodies, quarries, and agricultural land, community schools, which serve common and collective purposes for the displaced in their natural habitats.

NEMA and Disaster Management in Nigeria

The performance of NEMA in managing disasters in Nigeria over the years has also come under intense scrutiny. A critical segment of the society; the Civil Liberty Organization of Nigeria contends that NEMA has not performed optimally in the discharge of its statutory functions while NEMA claim to be doing its best relative to available resources (Akujobi, 2016). NEMA's efforts towards disaster prevention and mitigation in the views of Ajijola (2015) are grossly hampered by underfunding and lack of technical competence, while also noting that lack of awareness and education about disasters are part of the causal factors of victim's vulnerability. The author suggests that NEMA should build a culture of disaster prevention and mitigation with effective mechanism to identify all potential hazard areas in Nigeria. He observes further that most safety regulations, including building codes, clearing of drainages and water ways, traffic regulations, environmental protection and health safety measures are hardly enforced by NEMA in Nigeria. Similarly, Ajah (2011) observes that NEMA is not ensuring the implementation of many of the regulations and laws meant to improve disaster mitigation in Nigeria noting further that safety regulations relating to building codes and high rise buildings, among others, are not been optimally enforced. Adewole (2011) posits that poor coordination during response activities is one major problem confronting NEMA. As noted by the author, during the flood disaster of 2012 in Nigeria, many responding organizations were working at cross purposes due to poor coordination of assigned responsibilities to save lives and property.

Ajijola (2017) posits that the greatest challenge facing NEMA is how to bridge the gap between relief and recovery. As noted by the author, victims of disasters whose means of livelihood were ruined are usually left to fend for themselves after the initial response relief is provided while most communities whose infrastructures were damage remain unattended to for years unending. Adamu and Rasheed (2016) observes that NEMA lack the capacity to deliver on its responsibility of monitoring the state of preparedness of other stakeholders due to lack of interest and enthusiasm of many stakeholders towards training on disaster

management and their unwillingness to be coordinated, there is also the problem of poor funding of training programs and government inconsistency in disaster management policies, posits the author. Annan (1999) counsels that while the costs of disaster prevention have to be paid in the present, its benefits lie in a distant future. Though the benefits of disaster prevention are not tangible; they are the disasters that did not happen. The author notes further that a comprehensive country-wide threat and vulnerability assessment is fundamental to building a culture of disaster prevention and mitigation in Nigeria.

What has been distilled from this review is that insurgency appeared to have been responsible for internal displacement in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria and that the IDPs are facing series of challenges in the camp while lack of optimal capacity for effective coordination of the activities of the numerous responders to the plights of the IDPS, inadequate training of NEMA on search and rescue missions and poor equipment, among others, are the bane of optimal responses to the needs of the IDPs by NEMA in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Structural Theory as its theoretical framework of analysis. The Structural theory as expanded by Rose (1998) and Paul (2003) explains the immediate and underlying factors which directly or indirectly lead to human displacement from their natural habitat. As noted in the theory, while political, economic, and social factors are critical factors responsible for the displacement of people, structural factors, including conflictive inter-group politics, lack of social justice, weak state institutions, and discriminatory political institutions, bitter religious and inter-tribal acrimonies and inter-group fragmentation are largely responsible for human displacement. Other structural factors for mass displacement include national security challenges, internal and cross-border criminality, and insurgency. The author also identified demographic factors such as environmental pollution, deforestation, drought, and natural disasters as key factors for human displacement. Other sources of demographic-induced displacement are overpopulation, natural disaster, weak economic opportunities, and non-integrated social institutions, which put pressure on human settlement. As noted by Rose (1998), some of these factors, especially violent political competition, natural calamities; such as famine and drought, inter-tribal acrimony, internal and cross border criminality, among others, often lead to forced displacement while socio-economic factors, especially weak employment opportunities and overpopulation could lead to voluntary displacement.

Arguing specifically on the structural politico-economy and power relations factors for insurgent induced internal displacement, Paul (2003) finds that there is a weak structural relationship between the government, the governed and socio-political and economic institutional structures put in place for achieving citizens' personal and group development aspirations. The author posits further that once conflict has amplified up to the crisis level between the government and the governed or among the governed, it often raises other social calamities, including the proliferation of arms, socio-economic dislocation, intense hardship, destruction of lives and property, the devastation of infrastructural facilities and human displacement, which leads further to human sufferings. And that the sustained conflict does prevent conflict victims, especially the internally displaced to get maximum relief assistance from disaster responders who are sometimes attacked by the belligerent fighters through land

and air strikes leading to more epidemic disasters, including diseases because of overcrowded conditions in the IDPs camps.

The structural theory is apt and relevant for this study because the Boko Haram insurgency, which has led to the continued rise in the number of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria, is a by-product of poor governance and religious extremism, which is largely unregulated by the government. The theory offers deep insight into the interlocking factors that sustain insurgency and IDPs in Northern Nigeria

Methodology

The study adopted mixed research design, which consisted of the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Thus, 3 In-depth interview (IDI) were conducted with insurgency displaced persons, 2 Key Informant Interview (KII) were conducted with key officials from NEMA, 2 KII were conducted with high-ranking traditional rulers, 3 KII with relevant security agencies manning the IDPs camps in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. The qualitative method provided a first-hand information on the plights of insurgency-affected persons and responsibility of NEMA towards the victims While, a total of 500 samples were selected across the three States using purposive sampling technique. Secondary data such as books, online materials, newspapers and documentaries were consulted to compliment the primary data. Data derived from questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis, while the data obtained through KII and IDI were analyzed using content analysis to identify trends and patterns relevant to the research objectives.

Results and Discussions
Plights of insurgency-displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria

In response to the question on the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in the North-eastern Nigeria, the data derived from the questionnaire shows that there are numerous plights facing insurgency displaced persons as shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' View on the plights of insurgency displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria;

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Neutral	8	1.6
	Strongly Disagree	35	7.2
Displacement from natural place of abode	Disagree	92	18.8
	Strongly Agree	221	45.2
	Agree	133	27.2
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
	Neutral	6	1.2
	Strongly Disagree	20	4.1
Lossof means of livelihood	Disagree	26	5.3
	Strongly Agree	257	52.6
	Agree	180	36.8
	Total	**489**	**100.0**

	Neutral	5	1.0
Psychological depression from death of of close relatives	Strongly Disagree	32	6.5
	Disagree	51	10.4
	Strongly Agree	285	58.4
	Agree	116	23.7
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
	Neutral	5	1.0
Gender based Violence	Strongly Disagree	35	7.2
	Disagree	65	13.3
	Strongly Agree	294	60.1
	Agree	90	18.4
	Total	**489**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 1 shows that 354 respondents (72.4%) agreed that the plights of insurgency affected persons revolves around displacement from natural place of abode, 127 respondents (26%) disagreed while 8 respondents (1.6%) was neutral. In addition, 437 respondents (89.4%) agreed that the plights of insurgency-affected persons were lost of means of livelihood. In addition, 46 respondents (9.4%) disagreed and 6 respondents (1.2%) was neutral. The table also confirmed that 401 respondents (82.1%) agreed that the plights of insurgency-affected persons were psychological depression from loss of close relatives, 83 respondents (16.9%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral. More so, 384 respondents (78.5%) opined that the plights of insurgency-affected persons were gender based violent, 100 respondents (20.5%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral.

In support of the quantitative data on the plights of insurgency displaced persons in the North-eastern Nigeria, a respondent asserts that:

> Displacement has drastically affected the living conditions and social cohesion of the affected population and communities. Many individuals and families fled from insurgency and lost all their productive assets, homes, and possessions. Particularly, the education system was affected as many Schools were damaged and destroyed, and teachers were threatened and in some cases killed
> IDI/IDPs/Maiduguri/Borno State/June, 2024

In similar vein, another respondent narrated the plights of insurgency-displaced persons in the camp, as he put it:

> Some of the female inmates in the IDPs camp are lured by the stakeholders and strangers from outside with little financial token for sexual gratifications while there are incidences of outright rape in some instances. Shortage of accommodation is a major plight confronting us. In fact, many of the camps are not adequately fit for human shelter. The recent flood disaster has compounded our plights as more people are moved into the camp.
> IDI/IDP/Damaturu/Yobe State/March, 2024

Above narration affirmed that the plights of insurgency displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria are multi-dimensional in nature.

Specific Intervention of NEMA towards ameliorating the plights of insurgency displaced persons

Table 2: shows the respondents' views on the specific contribution of NEMA towards ameliorating the plights of the insurgency-displaced person in North-eastern Nigeria

Variables	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
profiling and documentation of insurgent victims and their needs	Neutral	7	1.4
	Strongly Disagree	31	6.3
	Disagree	78	16.0
	Strongly Agree	248	50.7
	Agree	125	25.6
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
re-integration of missing insurgency victims with family members	Neutral	7	1.4
	Strongly Disagree	30	6.1
	Disagree	39	8.1
	Strongly Agree	229	46.8
	Agree	184	37.6
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
Distribution of relief materials to insurgent victims	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly Disagree	22	4.5
	Disagree	51	10.4
	Strongly Agree	335	68.6
	Agree	76	15.5
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
Providing taining to disasters responders	Neutral	9	1.8
	Strongly Disagree	59	12.1
	Disagree	39	8.1
	Strongly Agree	295	60.3
	Agree	87	17.7
	Total	**489**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 2 shows that 373 respondents (76.3%) agreed that NEMA intervened in profiling and documentation of the population of IDPs towards ameliorating the plights of the IDP in North-eastern Nigeria, 109 respondents (19.3%) disagreed while 7 respondents (1.4%) was neutral. In addition, 413 respondents (84.4%) agreed that NEMA intervened in re-integration of missing insurgency victims with family members were NEMA contribution, 69 respondents (14.2%) disagreed and 7 respondents (1.4%) was neutral. The table also revealed that 411 respondents (84.1%) agreed that NEMA intervened in amelioration the plights of the IDPS by distributing

relief materials, 73 respondents (14.9%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral. More so, 382 respondents (78%) opined that NEMA intervened by providing training to relevant disasters responders on how to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs 98 respondents (20.2%) disagreed and 9 respondents (1.8%) were neutral. While confirming the findings on Table 2, a respondent assert that:

> NEMA has carried out in collaboration with the State Emergency Management Agencies within the North-east, the registrations of the IDPs in the camps, from where about two million inmates were registered as of 2019. The Agency also provided telephone facilities in the camps for IDPs to make contacts with their relatives for possible reintegration with missing relatives.   (**KII/ Camp Commander/ Maiduguri-Borno State/July, 2023)**

In the area of palliative distribution, another respondent confirmed that:

> In terms of ameliorating the plights of IDPs through palliative support to reduce hunger and food shortages, NEMA has so far released Eight Hundred Million (N800, 000,000.00) Naira to supply food items to the IDPs in the North-east while the distribution is ongoing. Part of the money was used by NEMA to purchase 200,000 bags of maize, 50,000 bags of rice and 250,000, a bag of millet for distribution to the IDPs camps in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, with Borno, allocated more than half of the food items because of a larger concentration of the IDPs in the state. (**KII/ Red Cross Volunteer/ Maiduguri-Borno State/April, 2023)**

A respondent who works with NEMA confirmed the increase in food ratio to the IDPs. According to him:

> We have critically assessed the food needs in the camp and the complaint of the inmates and what we have done is to double what we were earlier given to the IDPs. What we are giving them now is 8.4kg as against the 4.5kg they were collecting. The standard practice all over the world is 10.6kg so I think we are not doing badly in that regard **(K11/Female/NEMA Officer/Madagali-Adamawa State/ June,2023)**

In his rating of NEMA in the area of palliative support, an interviewee opines that:

> NEMA has been supporting us in diverse areas. In the area of accommodation, the agency constructed over 3,000 tents to bridge the shortfalls in the make-shift apartments offered to the inhabitants by state government to accommodate more IDPs. NEMA has been providing drugs to major Hospitals in North-eastern Nigeria for the Treatment of Victims of Insurgency (TVI) free of charge. Also, NEMA has been assisting inmates by enthroning skill empowerment programs to prepare them for

post-camp resettlement through relevant skills training and providing them with working tools. **(KII/ IDP /Maiduguri-Borno State/ July, 2023)**

The above findings confirm that NEMA has made credible input towards the amelioration of the plights of the IDPs with a reasonable measure of satisfaction.

Table 3: Shows respondents' views on the response capacity of NEMA to the plights of insurgency-displaced persons.

Variables:	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
strong management coordinating capacity	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly Disagree	58	11.9
	Disagree	70	14.3
	Strongly Agree	144	29.4
	Agree	212	43.4
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
Strong Legal capacity	Neutral	4	0.8
	Strongly Disagree	45	9.2
	Disagree	64	13.1
	Strongly Agree	116	23.7
	Agree	260	53.2
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
strong Logistic capacity	Neutral	8	1.6
	Strongly Disagree	57	11.7
	Disagree	82	16.8
	Strongly Agree	158	32.3
	Agree	184	37.6
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
strong funding capacity for operations	Neutral	5	1.0
	Strongly Disagree	43	8.8
	Disagree	52	10.6
	Strongly Agree	276	56.4
	Agree	113	23.2
	Total	**489**	**100.0**
strong operational synergy with other disaster responders	Neutral	6	1.2
	Strongly Disagree	44	9.0
	Disagree	65	13.3
	Strongly Agree	143	29.2
	Agree	231	47.3
	Total	**489**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2023

Table 3 indicates that 356 respondents (72.8%) agreed that the operational capacity of NEMA was characterized by strong management coordinating capacity, 128 respondents (26.2%) disagreed, while 5 respondents (1%) was neutral. In addition, 376 respondents (76.9%) agreed that NEMA has Strong Operational Legal capacity, 109 respondents (22.3%) disagreed and 4 respondents (0.8%) was neutral. The table also revealed that 342 respondents (69.9%) agreed that NEMA operates on strong logistic capacity, 139 respondents (28.5%) disagreed and 8 respondents (1.6%) were neutral. More so, 389 respondents (79.6%) agreed that NEMA is premised on strong funding capacity for operations, 95 respondents (19.4%) disagreed and 5 respondents (1%) were neutral. Table 3 equally revealed that 374 respondents (76.5%) agreed that NEMA has a strong operational synergy with other disaster responders, 109 respondents (22.3%) disagreed and 6 respondents (1.2%) were neutral.

While confirming the strong management coordinating capacity of NEMA, an interviewee affirmed that:

> By coordinating the activities and support of voluntary organizations and other emergency responders engaged in disaster relief operations in North-eastern Nigeria, NEMA has been able to maximally harness resources to rescue many insurgency victims (**KII/ Red Cross Volunteer/ Maiduguri-Borno State/April, 2023).**

Conversely, an interviewee points out the coordinating challenges of NEMA, which serves at its operational weakness as he opines that:

> Though NEMA is strong at coordinating the efforts to ameliorate the plights of insurgency victims in North-eastern Nigeria, the Agency is also challenged by the weak coordinating capacity of due to its inability to adequately coordinate other responders for the optimal management of the IDPs. For instance, the distribution of relief materials to the IDPs is the primary responsibility of NEMA officials; this responsibility is often hijacked by security personnel to enable them to divert the resources. (**KII/Civil Society Activist/Damaturu-Yobe State/December, 2023)**

Another interviewee asserts further that:

> Although NEMA has developed several Response Plans to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs in the North-East, these plans are rarely subjected to pilot tests, at least in one camp, to confirm their efficacy and get responders acquainted with their roles, and internalize their standard operating procedures for the optimal benefits of insurgency-affected victims. **KII/Civil Society Activist/Damaturu-Yobe State/December, 2023)**

An interviewee revealed the inadequate legal capacity of NEMA to respond to the plights of the insurgency displaced victims, as he contended that:

> While NEMA has adequate legal coverage to respond to national disaster generally, there is no provision in the constitution that focused its activities on the IDPs specifically. Thus the Agency has a relatively weak legal foundation along difficult operational terrains. Within the confines of legal ambit, the IDPs live within the borders of their own country while the responsibility for their protection and assistance rests on their national government, unlike the refugees whose protection is guaranteed in international law. However, due to the lack of precise and codified domestic laws to protect the IDPs in Nigeria, their protection has been incoherent, fragmented, and on an ad-hoc basis. (**KII/ IDPs Camp Commander / Yola-Adamawa, November, 2022**)

The findings confirmed that NEMA has the capacity to ameliorate the plights of insurgency displaced persons but such capacity is not strong enough to eliminate their total calamity from the insurgency experience.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from this study shows that the Boko Haram insurgency was primarily responsible for internal displacement in North-eastern Nigeria with tremendous negative impacts on the victims many of whom are currently displaced as refuges and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). This finding confirms Fatile (2015) and Raji, *et, al* (2021) earlier discoveries that insurgency currently account for 98 percent of displacement in North-eastern Nigeria. It is quite evident from this finding that insurgents need to be contained to ensure the safety of the inhabitants of North-eastern Nigeria.

Conversely, it is evident that the intervention of NEMA has helped to ameliorate the suffering of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria in collaboration with other relevant responders. Thus, NEMA contributed by profiling and documenting the IDPs and responded to much of their needs by re-integrated and re-united missing insurgency victims with family members, distributing relief materials, and provided training to relevant disasters responders on how to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs. Despite these relative achievements, NEMA has been finding it increasingly difficult to manage the plethora of IDP crises due to logistic and financial problems that essentially borders on their large numbers and scarcity of resources to adequately fund the IDPs projects by NEMA. As found in the study, NEMA, needs N4 billion quarterly to take care of the IDPs in the three affected states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, out of which N1.1 billion are made available quarterly for the purpose. This amount is grossly inadequate. NEMA sources much of its IDPs funding from non-governmental organizations but the economic recession, which was largely caused by the COVID19 pandemic in Nigeria and global economic meltdown, has dwindled funding by donor agencies. The above unfavorable trends leave NEMA in financial limbo most of the time to adequately care for the IDPs thus confirming the presumption that NEMA has no sufficient financial capacity to adequately ameliorate the sufferings of the IDPs. This finding corresponds with Ajijola (2015)

who found that NEMA's efforts towards disaster prevention and mitigation are grossly hampered by underfunding and lack of technical competence.

The capacity of NEMA to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs is also challenged by weak coordinating capacity of the Agency due to lack of effective coordination of the efforts of the numerous responders by NEMA for proper management of the IDPs. NEMA responders include local and international relief agencies, security agencies, and medical personnel but sometimes, many of these responders encroach into NEMA's areas of responsibilities while abandoning their primary roles due to improper coordination of duties. For instance, the distribution of relief materials to the IDPs is the primary responsibility of NEMA officials; this responsibility is often hijacked by security personnel for primordial motives, including diversion of relief materials. Although NEMA has developed several response plans to adequately respond to the plights of the IDPs in the North-east, these plans are rarely subjected to pilot tests, at least in one camp to confirm their efficacy and get responders acquainted with their roles to enhance the internalization of their standard operating procedures. This position aligns with the submission of Adewole (2011) who posits that poor coordination during response activities is one major problem confronting NEMA.

NEMA is also bedeviled by training and logistic problems. Many of the responders are hardly trained on rescue operations. Thus, inadequate training of responders on search and rescue missions and other requisite skills are challenging to the success of NEMA in its task of responding to the plights of the IDPs. The current standard of NEMA's operational equipment is very low to respond adequately to the plights of the IDPs. The agency needs well-equipped mobility, including helicopters, vehicles, and communication gadgets, among others, for quicker responses to rescue operations in the camps, most especially in Gwoza and Konduga camps where the Boko Haram fighters still lay siege to attack relief workers and divert relief materials for their use.

Other critical factors that were responsible for weak responses of NEMA to the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria as found in this study include weak legal foundation. Within the confines of legal ambit, the IDPs live within the borders of their own country while the responsibility for their protection and assistance rests on the government. However, due to the lack of precise and codified domestic laws to protect the IDPs in Nigeria, their protection has been incoherent, fragmented, and on an ad-hoc and humanitarian basis without any specific constitutional mandate for NEMA to specifically focus on the IDPs. These non-protective legal gaps have worsened the intractable position the IDPs have found themselves as citizens as the capacity of NEMA to effectively manage internally displaced persons is mainly limited to providing short-term solutions on the humanitarian ground rather than legal.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the Boko Haram insurgency was primarily responsible for internal displacement in North-eastern Nigeria and that the displacement created serious crisis of existence and challenges of survival for the victims. The study equally concluded that NEMA has contributed a lot to the de-escalation of the immense suffering of IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria. However, though the agency has recorded reasonable measure of achievements in

managing the plights of the IDPs in the affected areas, it currently has no optimal operational response capacity to perform these tasks due to the protracted nature of the insurgency and limited funding of its operations. The agency is also incapacitated by legal, coordinating, logistics, and operational inhibitions. The study therefore concluded that NEMA is in the best position to ameliorate the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria if adequately supported by relevant laws and specific operational legal mandates to tackle the plights of the insurgency displaced persons in North-eastern Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the optimal response of NEMA to the plights of the IDPs in North-eastern Nigeria. NEMA should be legally mandated to specifically focus on the amelioration of the plights of the IDPs and the agency should be well equipped, trained, and financed by relevant stakeholders, including the federal and state governments to curtail the current challenges facing the IDPs in the camps.

The NEMA should harmonize the operations of all agencies working with it for better coordination and optimal performances while stiffer penalties, including long term imprisonment, should be meted out to any responder caught diverting relief materials meant for the IDPs by the concerned authorities to serve as deterrence to others.

Work Cited

Adamu, A., Rasheed, Z.H. (2016) "Effects of Insecurity on the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Northern Nigeria: Prognosis and Diagnosis".   Global Journals Incorporation 16 (I): 8-11. https://globaljournals.org/GJHSS_Volume16/1-Effects-of-Insecurity.pdf

Adesote, S.A., Peters, A. (2015). "A Historical Analysis of Violence and Internal Population Displacement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, 1999-2011". International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies. Vol.2, No.3. Sep 2015. Pg1. http://www.rcmss.com.ISSN:2354-1598 (online).

Ajijola, O. (2017) "Ideas on North-East Nigeria's Internally Displaced Persons and Rehabilition Strategy". Retrieved 11/6/2016 from https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/ideas-northeast-Nigeria-internally- displaced-persons-ajijola.

Anthony, I., Nwobashi, H.N. (2016): "The Nigerian States and Responses to Plight of Persons Internally Displaced by Boko Haram Insurgents: Implications for Socio-Economic and Political Development". Research on Humanities and Social Sciences. https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/ RHSS /article/view/32138

Assessment Projects Capacity (2018). "Briefing Notes on Nigeria". .http://www.caps.org

Ashley, C. (2020).   "An Overview of Qualitative Research Methods: Direct Observation, Interviews, Participation, Immersions, and Focus Groups". https:www.thought co.com/qualitative-research-methods-3026555

Badurdeen, F.A. (2010). "Ending Internal Displacement: The Long-term IDPs in Sri Lanka".https:// www.RSC.ox.ac.UK/files/publications/working-paper-series/wp66-ending-internal-displacement-2010.pdf.

Dan, N. (2012). "An Investigation of Qualitative Research Methodology for Perpetual Audio Evaluation". Licentiate Thesis: Lulea University of Technology. https:// www. Diva-porta.org>diva2:990443

Displacement Tracking Matrix Index (2018). "Counting the Losses from Internal Crises in Nigeria": Focus on the North-east (www.dtmi.org).

Global Report on Internal Displacement. (2019). "Urban Internal Displacement and Developmental Efforts". (https//www.internal-displacement.org).

Human Rights Watch. (2018). "Status of Human Right Around the World". (https:www.hrw.org).

Hussain, M. (2008). "Interrogating Development; State, Displacement and Popular Resistance In North-East India". Sage Studies on India's North East, Gauhati. https://www.amazon.com/ Interrogating-Development-Displacement-Popular-Resistance-ebook/dp/B078SMST8M

Imasuen, E. (2014). "Insurgency and Humanitarian Crises in Northern Nigeria: The Case of Boko Haram". African Journal of Political Science and International Relations 9 (7): 284-296. https://academicjournals.org/journal/AJPSIR/article-full-text-pdf/9324F3C53778

International Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2019). "Key Findings from Global Report on Internal Displacement" (www.internaldislacement.org).

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). (2016). "Internal Displacement in North-East Nigeria: Operationalizing the Kampala Convention in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States". http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org

International Committee of the Red Cross. (2018). "Migration and Displacement: Humanity with its Back to the World." International Review. Issue number 904. Pg 16. ISSN (Paper) 2224-5766, ISSN (online) 2225-6484. https://iiste.org/journals/index.php/RHSS/article/view/32138

National Bureau of Statistics. (2018). "Demographic Statistics in Nigeria in 2018". Demographic Statistics Bulletin. https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/775

Mba, R. (2017). "IDPs and the Need for Reinterpretation". https://www.medium.com@ruthmba//the-plight-of-internally-displaced-persons-idps-and-the-need-for-reinterration-B7555c212f37

National Emergency Management Agency. (2018). "National Emergency Disaster Survey". NEMA Abuja Office. www.Nema-preventionweb.net.organizations

Paul, C. (2003). "Rebellion as a Quasi-Criminal Activity". SAGE Journals. https:journals.sagepub.com

Pritha, B. (2020). "An Introduction to Qualitative Research Collection and Analysis of Non-numerical and Non-experimental Data". https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research

Ramswamy, S. (2008). Political Theory, Ideas, and Concepts. India: Macmillan, p.115. https://scholar.google.co.in/citations?user=Uy3L9jsAAAAJ&hl=en

Relief.web. (2020). "North-east Nigeria: Displaced Report 33 for August 2020". https://www.relief.web.int/report/Nigeria/North-east-nigeria-displacement-report-33-august-2020.

Rose, A. (1998). "Input-Output Structural Decomposition Analysis: A Critical Appraisal. Economic Systems Research". https//www.researchgate.net

Smith, A. O. (2002). "Displacement, Resistance and the Critique of Development: From the Grassroots to the Global". RSC Working Paper 9. Oxford University: International Development Centre. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/93DBFB51B743EBE5C1256C3700537385-Grass_roots.pdf

Samuel, O. (2020). "North-East Universities Presses-on in the Shadow of Boko Haram". https://www.universityworldnews.com/post-mobile.php?story=20200708133324548

Enhancing Science Learning for Children with Special Needs through the Use of Audiovisual Materials

Richard Owusu
Department of Education
University of Africa, Zambia
Mobile: +27 604219776
Email: kwamenoah521@gmail.com
ORCID iD: 0009-0007-8273-4954
(Corresponding Author)

Joseph Abidemi Raimi
Faculty of Education
University of Lagos, Nigeria
Mobile: +234 907 059 4706
Email: raimiabidemi12@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-2558-9613

Fatima Yusuf Miko
Faculty of Education
SuleLamidoUniversityKafin Hausa, Nigeria
Mobile: +234 703 109 0229
Email: fatimayusufmiko@slu.edu.ng
ORCID ID: 0009-0005-9067-9436

and

Dzifa Monu Awudi
Faculty of Education and Human Development
Temple University, Philadelphia USA
Mobile: +1 (845) 625-5206
Email: Stella.awudi@temple.edu
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-3228-1236

Abstract

Science education often involves abstract concepts that can be difficult for children with cognitive, sensory, or developmental challenges to grasp through traditional, text-heavy teaching methods. Audiovisual materials provide a multimodal approach that combines visual and auditory

channels, helping to reduce these barriers and foster greater engagement. This study explored the effectiveness of audiovisual resources in improving science comprehension among children with special needs, drawing on the principles of Multimedia Learning Theory, which emphasizes the importance of engaging multiple senses in the learning process. Using a quasi-experimental design, the research compares the learning outcomes of children with special needs taught with audiovisual materials to those taught through conventional methods in inclusive classrooms. Findings indicated that audiovisual tools such as, animations, narrated videos, and interactive simulations, significantly enhance concept retention, learner engagement, and classroom participation. Beyond confirming their usefulness, the study captured how audiovisual materials, when intentionally designed, can transform science instruction into a more inclusive and accessible experience. The study concluded with recommendations for integrating audiovisual strategies into science classrooms to create equitable learning environments for diverse learners.

Keywords: Audiovisual Materials, Science Learning, Children with Special Needs, Multimedia Learning**,** Inclusive Instruction

Introduction

Multimedia Learning Theory (MLT) is a powerful framework for understanding why audiovisual materials enhance comprehension in children with special needs. The theory rests on the principle that humans learn through dual channels which are visual and auditory, and that learning is maximized when information is processed through both simultaneously without overloading working memory. Mayer (2021 p.83) explains that "people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone", underscoring that science concepts, which are often abstract, can become more meaningful when presented using a combination of visuals and narration. For example, showing an animation of molecular motion while explaining it verbally provides learners with multiple ways of constructing mental models. This is especially critical for children with disabilities, who may have reduced processing capacity in one channel and thus benefit from compensatory access through another.

An important contribution of MLT is its emphasis on design principles that reduce extraneous cognitive load and increase meaningful learning. For instance, Mayer (2021) introduced the *segmenting principle*, noting that segmenting positively impacted retention … and transfer … reduced cognitive load. This means that long instructional videos should be broken into shorter, learner-paced chunks. Çeken and Taşkın (2022) reviewed multiple studies and concluded that the application of segmenting, signaling, and coherence principles improved outcomes in STEM learning environments. However, they observed that most of these studies focused on adults or university learners, not younger children or those with disabilities, leaving a research gap in applying these principles to special education settings. In the context of science learning, these theoretical insights imply that audiovisual materials must be more than decorative tools. Poorly designed resources may overwhelm learners with irrelevant details while carefully structured ones can blur understanding and retention. Thus,

Multimedia Learning Theory not only justifies the use of audiovisual materials but also sets the standard for how they should be designed to serve children with diverse cognitive profiles.

Ndoh and Umbugadu (2024) reported that students with hearing impairment performed significantly better in basic science when they are taught with multimedia instructional materials. The study conducted showed not only the multimedia institutional material improved comprehension but also increase motivation, suggesting that audiovisuals address both cognitive and affective domains of learning. The use of animations, videos, and narrated visuals helps sustain attention and stimulate curiosity about scientific phenomena for learners who often experience disengagement in text-heavy instruction.

Understanding how children with special needs process information is crucial for designing effective audiovisual materials. Armstrong-Gallegos and Nicolson (2020) discovered that children with SEN showed significantly poorer filtering of irrelevant audiovisual information compared with typically developing peers. This means that learners with disabilities are more vulnerable to distraction when presented with multimedia that contains irrelevant sounds or visuals that doesn't add to body of knowledge. In science instruction, where audiovisual resources often combine narration, diagrams, and animations, cognitive overload should be minimized. Hence, careful alignment of audiovisual design with learners' cognitive state is necessary to ensure comprehension rather than confusion.

Objectives
The objectives of the study are to:
1. Investigate the effectiveness of audiovisual materials in improving science comprehension among children with special needs.
2. Compare the learning outcomes of special needs learners taught with audiovisual aids and those taught through conventional methods.
3. Identify specific audiovisual design features (e.g., synchronized narration, captions, pacing, segmentation) that most strongly support engagement, comprehension and retention for diverse learners in inclusive science classroom.
4. Recommend strategies for integrating audiovisual content into science instruction to foster inclusive and accessible learning environments.

Research Questions
1. How effective are audiovisual materials in improving science comprehension among children with special needs?
2. In what ways do the learning outcomes of special needs learners taught with audiovisual aids differ from those taught through conventional teaching methods?
3. Which specific audiovisual design features (such as synchronized narration, captions, pacing, and segmentation) most effectively enhance engagement, comprehension, and retention among diverse learners in inclusive science classrooms?
4. What strategies can be recommended for integrating audiovisual content into science instruction to promote inclusive and accessible learning environments?

Statement of the Problem

Although audiovisual resources have been shown to improve science learning for students with special needs (Ndoh&Umbugadu, 2024, Ainsworth *et al.*, 2022,), most studies focus on general benefits such as motivation and short-term engagement neglecting the *specific design features* that support comprehension and long-term retention. Research also shows that children with special needs often struggle with filtering irrelevant audiovisual input (Armstrong-Gallegos & Nicolson, 2020,), with few works has examined how to adapt multimedia design to reduce such cognitive overload.

In addition, much of the literature examines single disability groups in isolation (e.g., hearing or visual impairments), while fewer studies explore inclusive classrooms where learners with diverse needs study together (Singh &Suknunan, 2023). This creates a gap in understanding how audiovisual materials can be systematically designed and implemented to maximize accessibility, comprehension, and participation for all learners in inclusive science settings.

Literature Review

A good body of research supports the proposition that well-designed multimedia instruction can mitigate cognitive limitations, particularly for learners with special needs. Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory (2021) remains foundational and it states that people learn more deeply from words and pictures than from words alone. This dual-channel hypothesis has been supported in diverse educational contexts, including science education, where combining visuals and narration can reduce extraneous load and improve comprehension. Kassa (2024) found that integrating multimedia with dynamic classroom instruction significantly improved biology achievement relative to conventional methods.

Ong (2022) investigated multimedia learning objects in special needs settings, concluding that interactive visuals significantly aided concept internalization among learners with disabilities. However, learners with special needs often struggle with filtering distractions which is why, Armstrong-Gallegos and Nicolson (2020) observed that children with SEN showed significantly poorer filtering of irrelevant audiovisual information compared with typically developing peers, reinforcing the necessity of coherence and signaling principles during instructional design. In the broader learning technology domain.

Gallud*et al.* (2023) reviewed multiple studies of technology-enhanced and game-based systems for students with disabilities, emphasizing that cognitively overloaded multimedia environments can hinder rather than help learning. The concept of seductive details is also relevant here as extraneous visual or auditory content, even if engaging, can distract learners and reduce retention. More recently, the application of artificial intelligence (AI) and adaptive multimodal systems offers new promise. Bewersdorff*et al.* (2025) describe how multimodal large language models (MLLMs) can dynamically integrate text, image, and sound to tailor presentation modalities. Such systems if properly constrained can adjust complexity, pacing, or modality per learner, potentially maximizing cognitive efficiency without overloading learners' working memory.

Empirical research strongly supports the positive effects of audiovisual tools in special education, particularly in science and STEM contexts. Mikropoulos and Iatraki (2022)

conducted a systematic review of 21 studies (2013–2021) on the use of digital technology in science education for students with disabilities. They reported that increased motivation was the most consistent result, while positive learning outcomes were sensitive to the affordances and instructional integrations of the technologies used. Ainsworth, Bholah, and Foulsham (2022) similarly concluded that multimedia simulations enhance motivation and reduce learning barriers, and allow learners to revisit material to "personalize learning pathways".

VanUitert et al. (2024) used DIALS, a multimedia environment with animated experiments, to support neurodivergent students in science explanation tasks; their findings indicated that students exposed to DIALS showed deeper conceptual reasoning than peers using text-only materials. In biology classrooms, Kassa (2024) found significantly higher gains in post-test scores under multimedia + dynamic classroom instruction than in control groups. Turan (2021) demonstrated that augmented reality (AR) applications (which combine visual, interactive, and spatial cues) improved learning outcomes for students with specific learning difficulties in science, emphasizing that AR's multimodal nature can compensate for deficits in traditional representations. In the area of special needs, Ong (2022) showed that multimedia learning objects interactive, segmented visuals with audio narration led to improved recall and understanding in students with learning difficulties. Aghasafari, Needles, and Malloy (2025) explored STEAM multimedia environments for students with disabilities, noting that when arts and multimedia were integrated, learners showed more robust engagement and demonstrated deeper conceptual understanding across STEM domains.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has become a central framework to guide inclusive multimedia instruction. AlRawi et al. (2021) reviewed interventions from 2008–2018 and identified that UDL designs often incorporate multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression to support diverse learners. Their synthesis found that UDL-based multimedia interventions improved accessibility for students with disabilities across contexts. The meta-analysis by Almeqdad (2023) further confirmed that UDL implementation in K–12 and higher education settings leads to statistically significant gains in learning when multiple representation strategies are embedded.

In inclusive science learning settings for students with complex support needs, a study by the SAGE journal Expanding Science Learning for Students with Complex Support (2024) argues for designing multimodal instructional environments that anticipate sensory, cognitive, and motivational constraints rather than retrofitting adaptations later. In online and blended settings, research also attests to UDL's efficacy. A review in International Journal of Learning, Teaching & Educational Research (2025) demonstrates how UDL principles applied to online multimedia (captions, transcripts, alternative modalities) substantially benefit learners with disabilities in managing diverse access requirements. Saini, Nordin, Hashim, & Abol (2024) explored UDL strategies in the context of intellectual disabilities in inclusive classrooms in Malaysia; they found that flexibility, visual aids, clear voice/speech, and technology supports are among the key strategies teachers employ to scaffold learning. Given these findings, inclusive multimedia design for science education should proactively embed UDL features such as captions, adjustable pacing, interactive elements, multiple modalities and refrain from post-hoc retrofitting.

The theoretical, empirical, and inclusive design literatures collectively affirm that multimedia and audiovisual tools can substantially improve science learning for children with special needs when grounded in cognitive theory and UDL. The consistent benefits in motivation, engagement, comprehension, and self-concept serve as compelling evidence. Nonetheless, the literature also reveals significant gaps: most studies focus on secondary or higher levels rather than early grades, and few systematically compare specific design features across different disability categories. Moreover, long-term retention, transfer effects, and scalability in resource-constrained settings are underexplored. The present study addresses these gaps by implementing a controlled investigation of audiovisual materials in early-grade science classes for children with special needs, focusing on design fidelity, modality interaction, and measurable learning gains.

Theoretical Framework

By merging the strengths of Multimedia Learning Theory (MLT) with the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, this study creates a powerful perspective. This framework guides the effective design and application of audiovisual materials, ultimately clarifying how they can best enhance science education for children with special needs.As accorded to Meyer (2021), MLT offers a cognitive framework built on three fundamental principles of how people learn from words and pictures. First, the dual-channel assumption proposes that humans possess separate distinct channels – one for processing visual information and another for auditory or verbal information. Second, the limit – capacity assumption asserts that each of these processing channels can only handle a finite amount of material at any one time, underscoring the limitations of working memory. Finally, the active processing assumption posits that true, meaningful learning happens when leaners actively engage their minds to select, organize and integrate the new information within these channels to construct a coherent mental model.

Meyer's MLT explains the effectiveness of using audiovisuals by detailing the mechanisms behind tis learning process. For children with Special needs (SEN), who often struggle with processing information through a single processing channel. MLT underscores the advantage of a multimodal approach which provides a compensatory benefit. Meyer (2021) noted that, the principle is straightforward: learning is enhanced when learners are presented with both words and pictures rather than just words. Beyond this general justification, MLT offers specific evidence – based design principles that directly address common cognitive challenges.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework, established by CAST (2018), offers the necessary pedagogical and ethical blueprint for enacting inclusive education practices, complementing the cognitive focus of learning theories like MLT. Furthermore, UDL centers around proactively designing flexible learning environment with comfort by championing three core principles to accommodate learner variability: offering multiple means of engagement addressing the affective or 'why' of learning, and incorporating multiple means of action and expression by addressing the 'how' of learning.

The core connection between UDL and the study's focal point is that it offers a proactive framework for creating inclusive classrooms that benefit a diverse range of learners rather than simply integrating accommodations after the fact, UDL principles ensures that instruction is

designed from the beginning to be inherently flexible. As supporting research confirms, instructional methods rooted in UDL not only enhance the participation and comprehension of learners with disabilities but also provides parallel support to their peers without disabilities (Singh &Suknunan, 2023,). Audiovisual materials naturally align with UDL's access through varied formats like captions, narration, visuals, and interactive features. This fundamental alignment guarantees that the study's conclusion will reflect a measure of both overall effectiveness and equitable efficacy.

Methodology

A Systematic Literature Review methodology was employed as a method which is rigorous, transparent, and replicable, allowing for the synthesis of existing empirical findings to answer the research questions without collecting new primary data.
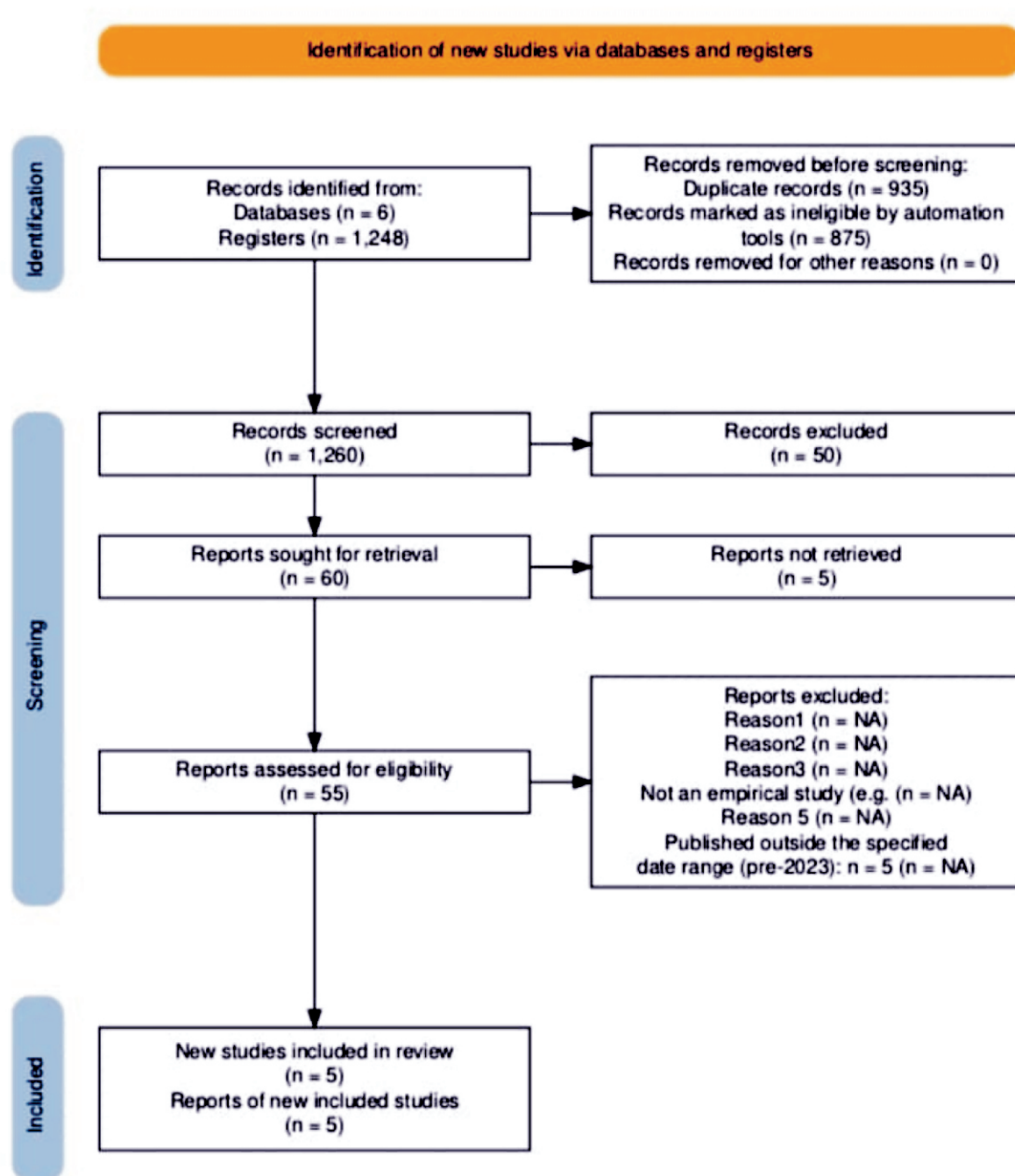
1. Research Design

The study followed a systematic review design as outlined by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. The process involves identifying, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing all relevant prior research on the topic.

2. Data Collection Strategy

The data collection consisted of published scholarly works. The search strategy was executed in four phases:

- **Phase 1: Identification.** Electronic databases were systematically searched, including ERIC, PsycINFO, PubMed, Web of Science, and Scopus. The search used a Boolean string combining keywords and their synonyms: (audiovisual material, multimedia, Science Learning, Children with special needs, inclusive education, Multimedia Learning and Inclusive Instruction.

- **Phase 2: Screening.** The initial pool of results was screened based on titles and abstracts against pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria:
  * *Inclusion*:
  (a) Empirical studies (experimental, quasi-experimental, qualitative);
  (b) Focus on K-12 students with identified special needs (e.g., learning disabilities, sensory impairments);
  (c) Intervention involves audiovisual/multimedia science instruction;
  (d) Measured outcomes related to comprehension, retention, or engagement; (e) Published in English between 2023 and 2025.
  * *Exclusion*:
  (a) Studies focused solely on general education without a special needs' subgroup;
  (b) non-empirical articles (e.g., editorials, pure theory);
  (c) Studies where the intervention is not primarily audiovisual (e.g., robotics without a significant media component).

- **Phase 3: Eligibility.** The full text of the remaining articles was retrieved and assessed for eligibility against the same criteria.

- **Phase 4: Inclusion.** The final list of studies for in-depth analysis was established. A PRISMA flow diagram will document the entire process.

Data Analysis: Narrative Synthesis

Data Extraction

A standardized coding sheet was used to extract data from the five selected studies (2019-2025). Key extracted elements included: research design (e.g., quasi-experimental, systematic review), participant characteristics (e.g., neurodivergent students, intellectual disabilities), audiovisual intervention details (e.g., DIALS environment, STEAM multimedia), specific design features (segmentation, captions, interactive visuals), and measured outcomes (conceptual reasoning, engagement, test scores).

Thematic Analysis

Rq1: Effectiveness on Comprehension & Retention:

The synthesis indicates that audiovisual materials consistently lead to improved science learning outcomes compared to conventional methods. VanUitert *et al*. (2024) found that students using the DIALS multimedia environment showed deeper conceptual reasoning than peers using text-only materials (p. 410). Similarly, Aghasafari *et al.* (2025) observed that students in STEAM multimedia environments demonstrated deeper conceptual understanding. Almeqdad's (2023) meta-analysis provides overarching support, confirming that UDL-based interventions, which heavily utilize multimedia, lead to statistically significant gains in learning.

Rq2: Influence of Specific Design Features:

The impact of audiovisuals is heavily moderated by their design, aligning with MLT principles. The absence of proper design can be detrimental; Gallud *et al*. (2023) caution that cognitively overloaded multimedia environments can hinder rather than help learning. Conversely, features that manage cognitive load are beneficial. The preference for "visual and sensory motor modalities" (*Instructional Science*, 2024) underscores the importance of modality choice. Features like interactive, segmented visuals with narration (Ong, 2022) and adjustable pacing (Ainsworth *et al.,* 2022) are cited as key factors in improving recall and personalizing learning pathways.

Rq3: Response by Disability Type:

The analysis reveals differentiated responses across disability categories. The studies stress that students with learning disabilities show a strong affinity for visual and sensory-motor modalities (*Instructional Science,* 2024). For neurodivergent students, interactive multimedia environments like DIALS successfully support the development of complex science explanations (VanUitert *et al.*, 2024). For students with intellectual disabilities, successful integration relies on UDL strategies, including flexibility, visual aids, [and] clear voice/speech (Saini *et al.*, 2024).

Rq4: Teacher Integration Strategies:

Effective integration strategies emergent from the synthesis are rooted in UDL. Teachers should proactively select or create resources that incorporate multiple means of representation, such as captions and interactive elements (CAST, 2018). Furthermore, leveraging technology

that allows students to revisit content at their own pace (Ainsworth *et al.*, 2022) is a critical strategy for personalization. The research advocates for embedding these features from the outset to create inherently accessible lessons rather than retrofitting them later. A primary limitation of this study is its reliance on a relatively small body of recent literature, which may not fully capture the long-term effects or the vast spectrum of disabilities.

Findings and Discussion
Findings

The systematic synthesis of recent empirical studies (2019-2025) demonstrates that audiovisual materials significantly enhance science learning outcomes for children with special needs compared to conventional, text-heavy methods. The analysis confirms that well-designed multimedia resources lead to superior conceptual understanding and retention. For instance, students using interactive, multimedia environments like DIALS exhibited deeper conceptual reasoning than peers using text-only materials (VanUitert *et al.*, 2024). Similarly, integrating arts and multimedia in STEAM contexts resulted in deeper conceptual understanding among learners with disabilities (Aghasafari *et al.*, 2025). A meta-analysis by Almeqdad (2023) corroborates these results, finding statistically significant gains in learning from interventions incorporating Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, which rely heavily on multimodal presentation.

Crucially, the effectiveness of these tools is not universal but is contingent upon specific design features aligned with Multimedia Learning Theory (MLT). The positive outcomes are directly linked to design choices that manage cognitive load. This includes the use of segmentation, learner-paced content, and the elimination of extraneous information. Conversely, cognitively overloaded multimedia environments can hinder rather than help learning (Gallud *et al.*, 2023). The analysis also revealed differentiated responses across disability types. Students with learning disabilities showed a marked preference for "visual and sensory motor modalities" (*Instructional Science*, 2024), while those with intellectual disabilities benefited most from UDL-based strategies incorporating "flexibility, visual aids, [and] clear voice/speech" (Saini *et al.*, 2024).

Discussion

These findings matter because they move beyond establishing a general benefit for audiovisual use and provide evidence-based blueprint for their design and implementation in inclusive science classrooms. The confirmation that MLT principles are effective for children with special needs addresses a critical gap, as noted by Çeken and Taşkın (2022), who found that most prior research focused on adult learners. This study demonstrates that for children with disabilities, who often exhibit significantly poorer filtering of irrelevant audiovisual information (Armstrong-Gallegos & Nicolson, 2020), adhering to principles like signaling and coherence is not merely beneficial but essential to prevent cognitive overload and facilitate knowledge construction.

What is new in this synthesis is the explicit connection between specific MLT design features, UDL guidelines, and outcomes for distinct disability profiles within an inclusive setting. It moves from asking *if* audiovisuals work to defining *how* they work best for whom.

For example, the finding that neurodivergent students excel with interactive simulations like DIALS (VanUitert *et al.*, 2024) points to the value of tools that support active processing and hypothesis testing, which may compensate for challenges with traditional instruction.

For implementation, these results advocate for a shift from post-hoc accommodation to proactive, inclusive design. Teachers and content developers should embed accessibility features from the outset. This includes creating short, segmented videos with clear cues (signaling), providing closed captions and adjustable playback speeds, and incorporating interactive, touch-based elements where possible. Professional development should focus on training educators to critically evaluate audiovisual resources not just for content accuracy, but for their cognitive design—assessing pacing, visual complexity, and adherence to UDL principles. Ainsworth *et al.* (2022) stressed that, technologies that allow students to revisit content at their own pace are powerful for personalization. Therefore, implementation requires equipping teachers with the skills to curate and create resources that are inherently flexible, transforming the science classroom into a truly equitable and effective learning environment for all.

Conclusion

This systematic review affirms that audiovisual materials, when grounded in the principles of Multimedia Learning Theory and Universal Design for Learning, significantly enhance science comprehension and engagement for children with special needs. The key finding is that their efficacy is not inherent but is contingent upon intentional design—features like segmentation, signaling, and multimodal options are critical for managing cognitive load and catering to diverse learning profiles. These results matter because they provide educators with an evidence-based framework for selecting and creating resources, moving beyond generic use to targeted, inclusive pedagogical practice. Therefore, it is recommended that future research conducts longitudinal studies and that educational developers create an open-access repository of pre-evaluated, well-designed audiovisual science lessons aligned with the specific design guidelines identified in this work.

Work Cited

Aghasafari, S., Needles, T., & Malloy, M. (2025). Multimedia arts learning: connecting STEAM among special education students. *Discover Education, 4*(Article 44), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1007/s44217-025-00440-7

Ainsworth, S., Bholah, A., & Foulsham, T. (2022). Digital technology supports science education for students with disabilities: A systematic review. *Education and Information Technologies, 27*(7), 9943–9965. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11317-9

AlRawi, J. M., Alawiya, M., & Mustaffa, M. (2021). Universal design for learning for educating students with disabilities: Review of literature. *Frontiers in Psychology / PMC.* https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9788711/

Almeqdad, Q. I. (2023). The effectiveness of universal design for learning: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Cogent Education.* (20-24)https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2218191

Armstrong-Gallegos, S., & Nicolson, R. I. (2020). Problems in audiovisual filtering for children with special educational needs. *i-Perception, 11*(6), 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1177/2041669520951816

Bewersdorff, A., Hartmann, C., Hornberger, M., Seßler, K., Bannert, M., Kasneci, E., Kasneci, G., Zhai, X., & Nerdel, C. (2025). Taking the next step with generative artificial intelligence: The transformative role of multimodal large language models in science education. *Learning and Individual Differences, 118*, 102601. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2024.102601

CAST. (2018). *Universal Design for Learning guidelines version 2.2.* CAST. http://udlguidelines.cast.org

Çeken, B., & Taşkın, M. (2022). Multimedia learning principles in different learning environments: A systematic review. *Smart Learning Environments, 9*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-022-00200-2

Gallud, J. A., Carreño, M., Tesoriero, R., Sandoval, A., Lozano, M. D., Durán, I., Penichet, V. M. R., & Cosio, R. (2023). Technology-enhanced and game based learning for children with special needs: A systematic mapping study. *Universal Access in the Information Society, 22*(1), 227–240. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-021-00824-0

Kassa, M. M., Azene, M. K., Mengstie, S. M., & Ferede, M. W. (2024). Effect of using multimedia and dynamic classroom integrated instruction on grade 11 students' biology academic achievement. *Heliyon, 10*(18), e37315. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e37315

Mayer, R. E. (2021). *Multimedia learning* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Mikropoulos, T. A., & Iatraki, G. (2022). Digital technology supports science education for students with disabilities: A systematic review. *Education and Information Technologies, 28*, 3911–3935. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11317-9

Ndoh, U. N., & Umbugadu, M. A. (2024). Multimedia instructional materials in teaching basic science concepts for students with hearing impairment. *Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education, 4*(3), 181–192. https://doi.org/10.35912/jshe.v4i3.1623

Ong, J. S. M., & Yahaya, N. (2022). Using multimedia learning objects in special needs classroom. *The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational and Social Sciences, 26,* 28–33. https://doi.org/10.55549/epess.1196827

Saini, R., Shukri Nordin, Z., Hashim, M. H., & Abol, M. T. (2024). Universal design for learning (UDL) to facilitate the learning of students with intellectual disabilities within the inclusive educational context in Sarawak, East Malaysia. *International Journal of Special Education, 39*(2), 12–23. https://doi.org/10.52291/ijse.2024.39.18

Singh, J., & Suknunan, S. (2023). Universal design of instruction to enhance learning for university students with visual disabilities. *African Journal of Disability, 12,* 1–8. https://doi.org/10.4102/ajod.v12i0.1156

Turan, Z., & Atila, G. (2021). Augmented reality technology in science education for students with specific learning difficulties: Its effect on students' learning and views. *Research in Science & Technological Education, 39,* 506–524.

VanUitert, V. J., Millirons, E., Coleman, O. F., & Kennedy, M. J. (2024). Learning by talking: Using multimedia to enhance science explanation development of neurodivergent students. *Journal of Special Education Technology, 39*(3), 403–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/01626434241257228