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ESCAE Journal of Management and Security Studies (EJMSS) is a journal of the Faculty of Social Sciences, ESCAE University, (Avotrou Campus) Cotonou, Republic of Benin. The journal accommodates original researches on contemporary social, management and security issues that provoke intellectual discourse and opinion. EJMSS is committed to promote deeper understanding of issues in Republic of Benin and the world at large through scholarly researches that permit cross breeding of ideas. One of the key objectives of EJMSS, is to gather and analyze data/information that are very significant to enrich scholarship, promote security and development in Benin and the entire world.

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Effect of Bank Lending on Agricultural Sector Performance in Nigeria: 2001-2021

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Abstract

Despite Nigeria been endowed with millions of hectares of agricultural land, majority of it were not being cultivated due to inability of farmers' access to finance, and non-willingness of financial institutions to lend to the agricultural sector. This research investigated the effect of bank lending on the performance of agricultural sector in Nigeria between 2001 and 2021. The study employed secondary data and adopted the ex-post facto research design. Ordinary least square (OLS) regression was used for the analysis. The study discovered that there is no significant relationship between interest rate and the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria, where ($F = 0.527, p > 0.05$); inflation rate does not have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria ($p > 0.05$); and that credit to the agricultural sector does have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria ($F = 21.674, P < 0.05$). The study concluded that although there has been inflow of credits to the agricultural sector, it has not translated to a meaningful growth in the sector due to now favourable and harsh economic policies of the government. The study therefore, suggested that government should ensure that the stringent measures attached to credit acquisition such as high interest rate is removed to enable actors in the agricultural sector access the much needed finance.

Keywords: Bank lending, Credit availability, Agricultural growth, Inflation, Interest rate.

Introduction

Importance of agriculture in human history cannot be overstated, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. This is consistent with the reality that Nigeria is a nation that is very well-endowed with a wealth of natural resources. They are completely dependent on agriculture for a livelihood since a major portion of their population lives in rural areas (Ali, Jatau, & Ekpe, 2016). In addition, agriculture has the inert potential to boost economic growth and development as well as increase the productive capacities of industries through the provision of raw materials for industrial purposes, expanding the nation's export base, capital formation, wealth creation, and the creation of more job opportunities than other sectors, among other things (Okuma, 2019). According to this, Sofa (2016) said that a mix of micronutrient deficiencies, under-nutrition, and over-nutrition has

grown widespread in many developing countries, including Nigeria, making the promotion of agriculture even more crucial in light of contemporary global realities and development.

Although being one of the most vital industries in African economy, the agriculture sector's success differs from country to country. In addition, it has been noted that the agricultural sector's performance has sharply decreased as a consequence of the inadequate financing available to boost production (Chandio *et al.*, 2018, 2019; Osabohien *et al.*, 2018; Sennhauser & Jenane, 2015). Additionally, yields of some important crops and other staple foods have historically remained low, at one tonne per hectare, or about one-third of the average level in other parts of the world (Osabohien *et al.*, 2020b). The competitiveness of Africa's exportable crop has decreased over the previous three decades, and the region is now more dependent on imported food products (Chandio *et al.*, 2018; Osabohien *et al.*, 2020a; Sennhauser & Jenane, 2015).

It is evident in the literature that the primary reason for the subpar performance of Africa's agricultural industry, particularly Nigeria, is that farming is done manually, with the use of crude labour on small plots of land, and that finance facilities are inadequate (Chisasa & Nakina, 2015; Guirkingner & Boucher, 2008; Osabohien *et al.*, 2020c). Existing research has shown that the agricultural performance is negatively impacted by the credit limitation that results in the agricultural financing gap (Ojo & Ayanwale, 2019; Osabohien *et al.*, 2018, 2020b). Farmers' inability to get agricultural financing has often been shown to have a negative impact on their capacity to buy the necessary input materials for adequate output (Ojo & Ayanwale, 2019). As a result, improving agricultural performance requires agricultural transformation leveraging finance availability. This is due to the fact that using unrefined tools often leads in low agricultural production (Osabohien *et al.*, 2019a).

How the industry is safeguarded via suitable policies and programmes will determine its ability to realise its full potentials (Osabohien *et al.*, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c). Studies such as Osabohien *et al.* (2020), Chandio *et al.* (2019), Osabohien, Osabuohien, and Ohalete (2019a), Awotide *et al.* (2015), Ojo and Ayanwale (2019), Abdallah, Ayamga, and Awuni (2018), Uger (2013), Adetiloye (2012), and Imoisi, Sogules, and Ekpeyoung (2012) have examined the relationship between credit and agricultural output. However, findings from these studies are inconsistent, but some empirical research has shown that loan restrictions have had a detrimental impact on farm investment and agricultural performance in rural developing nations. Osabohien *et al.* (2020a) examined micro-level household agricultural productivity and loan availability. Abdallah, Ayamga, and Awuni (2018) examined how agricultural credit affected Ghanaian farming households' income, Osabohien *et al.* (2018) examined how credit affected Nigerian households' access to food, and the effect of credit on technical efficiency in Nigeria was examined by Ojo and Ayanwale in 2019. The effect of loans on agricultural revenue in Ghana was examined by Abdallah, Ayamga, and Awuni (2018).

The evolution of sedentary human civilization has been largely attributed to agriculture, which was responsible for producing surpluses of food via the cultivation of domesticated species (Ayegba & Ikani, 2013). Consequently, it has the ability to increase job possibilities, lessen poverty, improve income distribution, hasten industrialisation, and lessen the burden of balance of payments imbalance. It also plays a very important part in tackling issues like food insecurity, reducing

poverty, and promoting human development (Etonihu, Rahman & Usman, 2013). In fact, it is the most prominent industry and a significant source of income for the population (Ijaiya & Abdulaheem, 2000). Yet, according to the CBN (2000), the sector's contribution to the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been declining because of poor productivity brought on by peasant farmers' predominance, dependence on low-tech, primitive farming equipment, and use of the land. The decreased agricultural production in Nigeria has also been attributed to a number of factors. Farmers' restricted access to finance facilities is one of the reasons behind the sector's deteriorating productivity (Nwaru, 2004; Manyong *et al*, 2005; Ilegbinosa, Watson & Itoro, 2012). Hence, using many macroeconomic variables as necessary, this study examines the impact of bank lending on the performance of Nigeria's agricultural sector. The rest of the paper is structured in four sections. What follows is literature review; Methodology; results and discussion; and ends with conclusion and recommendations.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

The significant role of agriculture in nation building all over the world cannot be overemphasized. Agriculture is a major contributor to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product and small-scale farmers play a dominant role in this contribution, Rahji and Fakayode (2009), but their productivity and growth are hindered by limited access to credit facilities (Odoemenem & Obinne 2010). Enhancing Financial Innovations and Access (EFInA) 2008 programme notes that 23 percent of the adult population in Nigeria has access to formal financial institutions, 24 percent to informal financial services while 53 percent are financially excluded. This inclusion affects rural farmers mostly.

Agriculture in Nigeria is the most dominant sector and major source of livelihood for the majority of the population. It accounts for about 70% of employment, and in spite of this, Binswanger, Sinha, Radha (2009) opined that it has not been able to achieve the major objectives of agricultural development which the World Bank (2007) identified to include; (I) increase in food production and farm income, (ii) make household food, water and energy secure and (iii) restore and maintain the natural resources. They stated further that the failure of agriculture to meet these objectives is due to limited use of purchased inputs and mechanization. This limitation is tied to undercapitalization or lack of credit (Aku, 1995).

Lack of available operating capital or credit is a common contributor to market failure (Duong & Izumida, 2002). Swinnen and Gow (1999) claim that agricultural financing availability is limited in poor nations. This is due to the high costs and limited accuracy of the information available in the financial markets. Such issues are well-known as causes of agricultural setbacks (Stiglitz, 1993). According to Abe (1982), the majority of loans taken out by Nigeria's agricultural community come from individuals rather than financial institutions. Yet, given the current state of affairs in Nigeria, these avenues would be woefully inadequate to satisfy the surging demand for agricultural financing.

Commercial Bank Credit and Agricultural Output

A commercial bank is a financial institution that is owned by the government or private businesses for the aim of making a profit, as defined by Essang and Olajide (1974). The bank performs a variety of tasks in the interest of making a profit. The acceptance of public deposits allows for the provision of credit to commercial enterprises, agricultural concerns, and so on, all of which contribute to increased output and employment (Stephen & Osagie, 1985; Ekezie, 1997; Ijaiya & Abudulraheem, 2000). According to Aryeetey (1996b), credit is the amount loaned out till a certain date. Loans, advances, overdrafts, commercial papers, Bankers acceptance, and discounted bills are all included in the broader definition of credit provided by the NDIC prudential guiding lines of 1990. Bail bonds and leases (NDIC, 1990).

Yet, according to Muftau (2003), agricultural credit is defined as money loaned to farmers and ranchers to help them grow food for their animals. Overdrafts, short-term loans, medium-term loans, and long-term loans are all viable options for lending to the agricultural sector, depending on the project's goals and expected duration. When banks provide farmers credit to buy inputs, the money goes straight to the vendors, who in turn have to prove they delivered by providing the bank with a receipt. To prevent the widespread practise of diverting funds, this is done (Adekanye, 1986; Nzotta, 2012).

Nzotta (2012) argues that credit is vital to the agricultural sector because it allows for the revival, expansion, and modernization of all forms of agricultural enterprise that are feasible and desirable from an economic standpoint. This is crucial to achieving economic goals of self-sufficiency in agricultural production. Farmers are less likely to be resistant to adopting new technology when financial barriers are removed, as was shown by Qureshi (2006). This high production and expansion is made possible, in part, by the ready availability of finance to farmers.

Interest Rate and Agricultural Productivity

The rate of interest is a major element that determines agricultural output. One of the goals of agricultural credit policies in the past, as noted by Anyawu, Ukeje, Amoo, Igwe, and Eluemunor (2010), was the supply of enough credit to the agricultural actors at a reasonable price and at the appropriate time. Economic distortions, as argued by Afolabi (2010), are the outcome of government interference in the form of sectoral credit distribution, oligopolistic tendencies, interest rate limits, and a highly concentrated market structure that led to monopoly. Many empirical research have looked at how interest rates affect agricultural output. The research conducted by Omojimite (2012) on the connection between agricultural sector development in Nigeria, macroeconomic policy, and institutions provides strong evidence in support of the notion that institutions are more crucial in economic growth. The report suggested liberalising credit rates for the agricultural sector and strengthening institutional supports, particularly in the areas of farmer extension services and subsidised inputs. Using yearly data from 1986 to 2009, Amassoma, Nwosa, and Ofere (2011) studied the correlation between Nigeria's loan rate, interest rate deregulation, and agricultural output.

The authors used an ordinary least squares (OLS) approach to econometric estimation, with the cointegration test revealing a long-run link between the variables and the ECM test finding a

positive correlation between interest rate deregulation and agricultural output. The report also suggested that the interest rate be set by the market to stimulate growth in agricultural output. The Nigerian government is tasked with facilitating the financial industry's implementation of laws that ensure accessible credit to the chosen sector, particularly all types of farmers as opposed to larger borrowers like the government alone.

Using time series yearly data from 1980 to 2011, Kolawole (2013) empirically explored the impact of interest rate and key macroeconomic factors on the performance of the Nigerian agriculture industry. The ECM model was used inside an OLS regression estimation framework in the research. The ECM model discovered a negative correlation between interest rate spread and agricultural production, indicating a long-term link between the two variables. The value of the currency relative to agricultural output also had a negative correlation. Hence, if the interest rate spread levels and exchange rate are raised, agricultural value added in the nation would fall.

Inflation Rate and Agricultural Output

The government of Nigeria implemented a "cheap money strategy" in the 1960s in an effort to spur economic growth in the wake of the country's independence. Inflation in Nigeria has ranged from hardly perceptible to alarmingly rapid on several occasions. While it was over the national and the West African Monetary Zone (WAMZ) objective of a single-digit inflation rate, inflation pressure in Nigeria was substantially restrained in 2010 and 2011. (CBN, 2011). The headline inflation rate in 2011 was 10.8 percent, down from 13.7 percent in December of the previous year (CBN, 2011).

Crucial to the growth of the economy, agriculture now accounts for 42.1% of total GDP (Okuma, 2019). Strong relationships to employment, national revenue, market prospects for industrial production, and even the elimination of poverty and enhancement of health all stem from agriculture, which remains a key source of food and raw material for agro-industrial processing. The growing cost of food is only one of the many obstacles that the Nigerian agricultural sector must overcome (Ojo & Ayanwale, 2019).

Theoretical Review

Loan Pricing Theory

According to this school of thought, financial institutions will always be motivated to charge exorbitant interest rates in an effort to maximise their profits. As it is very difficult to predict the kind of borrower at the outset of any banking relationship, banks should constantly keep in mind the issues of adverse selection and moral hazard in seeking to generate maximum interest revenue. High-risk borrowers may engage in moral hazard behaviour and embark on very dangerous projects or investments if interest rates are set too high (Olokoyo, 2011). According to Stiglitz and Weis's line of thinking, it's fairly uncommon for interest rates not to be proportional to the risk of the borrowers. This theory is relevant to the current study because banking institutions are always interested in profitability.

Theory of Multiple Lending

According to proponents of this thesis, financial institutions should shift their focus away from share lending and towards equity, mergers, and acquisitions that expand their lending capacity. Less diversity and oversight will be necessary as a result of this. But, this may be achieved if there is a robust equities market. During a period of consolidation and the development of robust stock markets, financial institutions should become less enthusiastic about share lending (loan syndication). Banks' ability to provide many loans at once increases with outside equity, mergers, and acquisitions, lowering the requirement for more diversification and supervision via share lending (Carletti *et al.* 2009). The recent consolidation and recapitalization process in the Nigerian banking system in 2005 highlights the importance of this notion.

Boserupian Theory of Agricultural Development

According to Ekeh (2014), the Danish economist Ester Boserup is credited with developing this hypothesis. According to the Boserupian hypothesis, the proportion of the population (the labour force) employed in agriculture determines the rate of agricultural growth and development. This contradicts Malthusian theory, which states that population growth and size are directly proportional to the availability of food and agricultural techniques, and that in times of food scarcity, the surplus population would perish. Boserup contended that under such stress, people will develop methods to boost food production via the use of more labour, machines, and fertilisers. This is relevant to the current study as so many efforts and labour had been channelled to boost food production in Nigeria, given the Nigerians ever increasing population figure.

Empirical Review

Bank lending was linked to increased agricultural production in Bangladesh, as shown by Islam and Patwary (2022). Bank credit's effect on agricultural production was also studied at the same time. Bank credit and agricultural production are studied using a variety of econometric methods in order to tease out their respective causes and effects. The Annual Reports of the Bangladesh Bank and the World Bank's global development indicators were mined for a 40-year time series of data (1981-2020). Bank credit and agricultural production were shown to have a long-run connection after being subjected to stationarity and cointegration tests and then examined using the Vector Error Correction Model. To further determine the extent to which bank lending affects agricultural production, univariate and multivariate OLS models are run. Both models found that agricultural output in Bangladesh was considerably and favourably impacted by bank lending. These results support the authors' call for Bangladeshi banks to invest more in the country's agricultural production sector.

The effect of agricultural finance on agricultural production was studied by Okore and Nwadiubu (2022). The statistics were from the Statistical Bulletin of the Central Bank of Nigeria. The time frame of the research was from 1986 to 2020. Commercial bank loans to the agricultural sector and the distribution of the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund stood in for direct government support. The GDP share of agriculture was used as a surrogate for agricultural production. The data was analysed using trend analysis and the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Method. Regression findings demonstrate a positive and statistically significant relationship between agricultural

production and commercial bank loans to the sector and the distribution of funds from the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund. As a result, the research found that an increase in agricultural funding results in a corresponding rise in agricultural production. Based on these findings, the report suggests that the government expand funding for agricultural credit guarantee schemes, increase commercial bank lending to agriculture, and establish a comprehensive agricultural finance strategy for the benefit of low-income farmers in rural areas.

Anthony and Tijani (2022) used time series data from 1981 to 2020 to analyse the effect of different types of agricultural finance on Nigeria's food security. The data analysis in this research used the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) Model. Nigeria's agricultural production was used as a surrogate for the country's food security. Hence, commercial bank credit, agricultural credit guarantee programme money, government spending on agriculture, inflation, and interest rate were used to estimate agricultural production. Time series data from 1981 to 2020 were used in the analysis. Food security, as assessed by agricultural production, was found to be significantly affected by commercial bank loan to agriculture, agricultural credit guarantee scheme fund, government spending on agriculture, and interest rate, according to the estimated ARDL model. As a result, the research suggested that the government of Nigeria provide more loan guarantees to encourage farmers to take out loans, and that commercial banks be encouraged to direct more of their lending to agriculture. Lastly, improving the per capita income of the population may help ensure that food is available to those who need it.

According to research conducted by Okeke and Okeke (2022), the impact of macroeconomic factors on agricultural production in Nigeria was studied. This analysis relied on yearly data from 1995 through 2020. The expansion of agricultural production was the dependent variable, whereas the chosen macroeconomic variables—money supply, commercial bank loan on agriculture, currency rate, interest rate, recurrent government spending on agriculture, and inflation rate—were the explanatory factors. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller test was used to guarantee that the variables were stationary. Johansen Co-integration analysis was used to check for a long-term connection. OLS analysis was performed, and the p-value of the F-statistic indicates that the model has statistical significance. The research also showed that commercial bank loans on agriculture, interest rate, and regular government expenditures on agriculture all had negative links with the explained variable over the study period, whereas money supply, exchange rate, and inflation all had positive links. The study authors suggested many measures to boost agricultural output, including lowering interest rates so that farmers may more readily get loans from banking institutions.

Banks' lending to the agricultural sector is essential for increased production performance and, by extension, economic development in Nigeria, as shown by a thorough examination of several literatures (both theoretical and empirical). Despite growing scholarly attention, several questions about the relationship between bank loans and agriculture sector performance remain open.

Methodology

The study adopted an ex-post facto research. This design combined theoretical consideration (a priori criteria) with empirical observations and extracted maximum information from the available

data (Mill, 2019). The study adopted Olanrewaju *et al.* (2018) econometric model as showed below:

$$MANGDP_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BCR_t + \beta_2 INTR_t + \beta_3 EXR_t + U \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

This was modified to include inflation, and credit to the private sector. The functional relationship becomes:

$$AGGDP_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 IFL_t + \beta_2 INTR_t + \beta_3 CRAS_t + \epsilon \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Where:

AGGDP = Agricultural sector Output

IFL = Inflation

INTR = Interest Rate

CRAS = Credit to Agricultural Sector

ϵ = Error Terms

β_0 = Constant

$\beta_0 - \beta_4$ = parameters to be estimated

t = Time factor (Time series)

Apriori Expectation: $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, > 0$

The analysis was done using ordinary least square method.

Results and Discussion

Interest Rate and the Growth of Agricultural Sector

The coefficient of determination, (R^2) revealed that interest rate is responsible for 2.7% variance in agricultural output in Nigeria. A negative ($t = -0.726$) relationship exists between interest rate and agricultural contribution to the GDP. This implied that interest rates in Nigeria does not, in any way favored the growth of agricultural sector. Also, interest rate is not significant ($p = 0.477$) with agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP. Therefore, that there is no significant relationship between interest rate and the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria, where ($F = 0.527, p > 0.05$).

Table 1: Interest Rate and the Growth of Agricultural Sector

Predictor	β	s.e	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
					TOL.	VIF
INTR	-.125	.172	-.726	.477	1.000	1.000
ANOVA						
Model	SS	df	MS	F	sig.	
Regression	9.825	1	9.825	.527	.477	
Residual	354.444	19	18.655			
Total	364.269	20				
Summary Statistics						
Response	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	DW	
AGGDP	.164 ^a	.027	-.024	4.31914	.709	

Source: Author’s Computation, 2023

Inflation Rate and the Growth of Agricultural Sector

The coefficient of determination, (R^2) revealed that inflation rate is responsible for 3.6% variance in agricultural output in Nigeria. The inflation rate only allowed for 1.9% growth in agricultural sector. There is a positive ($t = 0.842$) relationship between inflation rate and agricultural contribution to the GDP. This implied that inflation rates in Nigeria does slightly favored the growth of agricultural sector. Also, inflation rate is not significant ($p = 0.410$) with agricultural sector’s contribution to the GDP. Thus based on the rule of thumb, the positive relationship does not translates into any meaningful growth of agricultural sector therefore, inflation rate does not have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2: Inflation Rate and the Growth of Agricultural Sector

Predictor	β	s.e	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
					TOL.	VIF
IFL	.230	.273	.842	.410	1.000	1.000
Summary Statistics						
Response	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	DW	
AGGDP	.190 ^a	.036	-.015	4.29907	.794	

Source: Author’s Computation, 2023

Credit to the Agricultural Sector and the Growth of Agricultural Sector

The Durbin Watson (DW) showed a satisfactory value which implied a non-collinearity relationship between credit to the agricultural sector and agricultural sector output. The coefficient of determination, (R^2) revealed that credit to the agricultural sector is responsible for 53.3% growth

in agricultural output in Nigeria. The credit to agricultural sector also allowed for 73% growth of the sector. A negative ($t = -4.656$) relationship exists between credit to the agricultural sector and agricultural sector's contribution to the GDP. This implied that credit to the agricultural sector has not translated to a meaningful development of the sector. Although, the negative relationship is significant ($p < 0.05$). Based on the acceptance rule, the study concluded from above Table that credit to the agricultural sector does have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria ($F = 21.674, P < 0.05$).

Credit to the Agricultural Sector and the Growth of Agricultural Sector

Predictor	β	s.e	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
					TOL.	VIF
CRAS	-1.079	.232	-4.656	.000	1.000	1.000
ANOVA						
Model	SS	df	MS	F	sig.	
Regression	194.109	1	194.109	21.674	.000	
Residual	170.160	19	8.956			
Total	364.269	20				
Summary Statistics						
Response	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SEE	DW	
AGGDP	.730	.533	.508	2.99262	1.291	

Source: Author's Computation, 2023

Conclusion and Recommendations

The relationship between interest rate and the growth of agricultural sector, the study found that there is no significant relationship between interest rate and the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria. This is supported by Osabohien *et al.* (2018), and Osabohien *et al.* (2020) where it was concluded that the lending rate (interest rate) must be stable and considerably low in order to attain a reasonable and sustainable development in the agricultural sector. Likewise, Ogundipe *et al.* (2019) and Osabohien *et al.* (2019) stressed that considering the high risk involved in the agriculture, it is important to lower interest rate while extending long-term loan/credit to the agricultural sector for the attainment of sustainable development.

The study also found that inflation rate does not have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria. This was negated by Chandio *et al.* (2018), and (2019) that the presence of high inflation in an economy always deters meaning growth of all the sectors of the economy. Ojo and Ayanwale (2019) stressed that inflation usually reduces the purchasing power of money thereby reducing the values gotten from the purchases and usage of farm input which adversely influences prices and consequently reduces the aggregate values of the output.

Lastly, the study found that credit to the agricultural sector does have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria. This corroborated the findings of Sennhauser and Jenane

(2015), and Osabohien *et al.* (2020b), and also confirmed the conclusion of Osabohien *et al.* (2020a) that the sustainable development goal is largely dependent on food security and this might not be attainable if more credit is not made available to the agricultural sector. This implied that agricultural sector is the bedrock of sustainable development and this must be boosted for a meaningful growth to be achieved.

The study therefore recommended as follows:

1. Government should ensure that the stringent measures attached to credit acquisition such as high interest rate is removed to enable actors in the agricultural sector access the much needed finance. This will in turn boost agricultural output, create job and leads to a greater welfare in the country.
2. There is a need to curb inflation by all possible means so that the purchasing power of borrowers in the agricultural sector will be strengthened for greater productivity.

Since the study discovered that credit to the agricultural sector does have a significant effect on the growth of agricultural sector in Nigeria. Government should make sure that more credit is made available to players in the agricultural sector at a reduced cost to boost the sector's contribution to the GDP.

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Factors Influencing Usage of Electronic Banking Channel: A Decision Making Trial Evaluation Laboratory (DEMATEL) Approach

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Abstract

Internet banking has emerged as one of the profitable e-banking channels with the evolution of technology in the banking sector, the significance of its acceptance and usage has caught researchers' attention over the decade. Several studies have been conducted on the factors influencing loyalty of bank customers and acceptance of internet banking. However, despite the various influencing factors, customer influx is on the increase. Consequently, it became imperative to investigate influencing factors of acceptance and usage of internet banking. The study was driven by three research objectives; to compare the consistency of the influential factors that are associated with the acceptance of e-banking to those examined by (Aishatu et al., 2017). The study was underpinned by the theory of Task fit technology. To obtain primary data for the study, questionnaire was designed and administered to sampled respondents in three selected banks. Analysis was, however done using DEMATEL. Findings show that convenience of internet banking users should be paramount to banks when designing the platform while not losing focus on other factors. The influencing factors of internet banking are in the order of: User Convenience (f_1), Privacy & Security (f_2), Service Speed (f_3), Trust & reliability (f_4), Service charge (f_5). Based on these findings, user convenience has maximum relationship with other factors. Furthermore, another influencing factor is Trust & reliability which is consistent with the research work of Aishatu et al., (2017). Recommendation to improve customers' acceptance and usage of internet banking was made while also highlighting areas for further research.

Keywords: Internet banking, DEMATEL, Factors, Acceptance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The process by which customers make inquiry on their account, lay complaints, track activity on their account among others can be termed banking; it also provides customers with firsthand information on how to manage fund in terms of investments that will yield optimal returns and safe keeping of important document when need be. All these are possible through seamless information technology (Ho, Wu, Lee, & Pham, 2020). Information Technology is not only crucial in the processing of information but also plays a major role in assisting banks to differentiate their products and services. For banks to remain competitive they need to continuously bring up flexible,

reliable and secured service innovations that will assist customers in their day to day dealings. Driven by the aim to expand and have the highest wallet share of the banking market, it becomes imperative for banks not to only invest in bricks and mortar but also ensure each of their electronic banking channel is enhanced to meet their customers expectation as this will increase their market penetration (Ahmed, Streimikiene, Channar, Soomro, & Streimikis, 2021). Others have chosen a more revolutionary approach to meet their customers demand through a new banking services medium: Electronic Banking (e- Banking).

E-banking is defined as a quick means to keep track of transactions on personal or group account on a daily basis via the internet using personal computers, mobile devices and other web-support applications. With e-banking customers can carry out transactions at their own comfort without visiting the traditional bricks and mortar premises. According to Daniel (1999) an identified external force in global transition is technological change. The Traditional bricks and mortar setting is one in which customers must be in the banking premise to carry out most transactions. But with various emerging technologies, banks in developed countries have implemented e-channel banking. Most developing countries have also key in to electronic banking as it assists to meet customer's needs through the robust and flexible e-banking channels. Customers can access series of banking services such as pay bill, check account balances, check transaction history, pay staff salary monthly, transfer funds, online shopping transactions, stopping a cheque, buy airtime, confirm cheque, block Atm card, send complaint just to mention a few. Considering the discerning demands in monetary system, e- banking is an environmentally friendly alternative to achieving the paperless vision.

E-banking has been the bedrock of evolvement in the banking industry and this has provided researchers' reason to focus in the area. Banks uses e-banking platform to provide easiness and safety in the various services they render to their customers. According to Daniel (1999), e-banking enables customer to initiate, make inquiry and monitor financial transaction consummated on their account without visiting the banking premises but interestingly with the convenience and opportunity that comes with usage of e-banking we still have influx of customers in the various bank's premises waiting to be served. During the pilot interview conducted respondents gave insight into why they still visit the banking premises for transactions to be consummated in that, many of these e-banking platforms cannot be trusted in terms of reliability, privacy and security.

Aishatu, Lim and Olajoko (2017) explains that there are determining factors of customer loyalty to internet banking which in turn determines survival of internet banking providers to banks in Nigeria and these factors include bank reputation, customers must be satisfied, have trust and be committed. Other several research work has also been conducted as to determine factors influencing adoption of e-banking from the customers' perspective but surprisingly customers queuing to be served is still being experience in many of the Nigerian banks, it becomes important to research if any of these factors contributing to the loyalty of internet banking user as explained by Aishatu et al.,(2017) will influence customer's usage of e-banking using the Decision-Making Trial and Evaluation Laboratory (DEMATEL) technique. DEMATEL technique is being employed to measure the cause and effect relationships in factors influencing customer's usage of internet banking channel in Nigeria focusing on selected commercial banks with international authorisation in Nigeria.

This study focuses on the cause and effect relationship among factors influencing acceptance of e-banking service in Nigeria based on the perspective of e-banking product experts (users of the platform). During the pilot interview it was discovered that the acceptance of e-Banking by the Nigerian bank's customers is relatively low; this necessitated the need to research why most Nigeria's bank customer do not take advantage of the wide opportunity in the various e-banking channels despite what they stand to gain. The study will contribute significantly to body of knowledge as it would be useful for bank's policy makers and product manager to determine how best to design the various e-banking channels such that it meets the needs of their customer at a cost and speed that represents value to the customer while also contributing to the profitability of the banking industry. It will also impact positively on the economic growth, as it is contemplated that creating robust and effective e-banking channels is key to keep the country afloat in the global market as lots of transactions could be consummated via these channels swiftly. The study is expected to assist other academia and researchers in the nearest future as it complements work of other scholars.

The research is driven by some specific goals and in achieving this; the research is tailored towards the following objectives:

- (i) Identify which factors influence acceptance of e-banking in Lagos, Nigeria.
- (ii) Compare the consistency of the influential factors that are associated with the acceptance of e-banking to those examined by (Aishatu et al., 2017).
- (iii) Determine the causal relationship among factors influencing choice and usage of e-banking in Lagos, Nigeria.

The research question is on a one to one basis with the research objective:

- (i) What are the influencing factors of e-banking in Lagos, Nigeria?
- (ii) Are these influential factors consistence with those explained by Aishatu et al., (2017)?
- (iii) What is the causal relationship among factors influencing choice and usage of e-banking in Lagos, Nigeria?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section highlights the theories that underpin this study, the conceptual, empirical review of relevant literature and the observed gap.

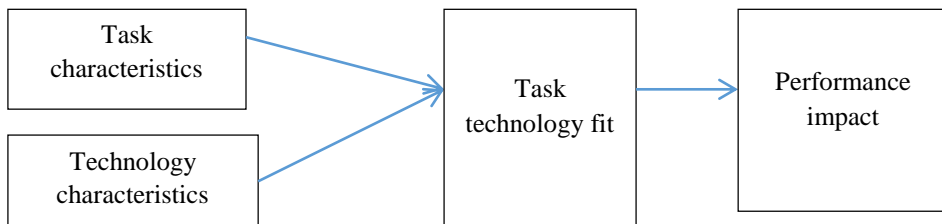
2.1 Theoretical Framework: Task Technology fit theory

This study is underpinned by Technology Task fit theory (TTF), due to its applicability and relevance to the study.

Task technology fit theory (TTF) is used in measuring the effectiveness of technology in a system by analyzing the relationship between technology and tasks the technology was used to support. This theory is widely recognized and it is suggested to be one of the most important evolutions in information system (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995). Technology is embedded into our everyday activities. The functionality and reasoning of individual and organization continues to be shaped by evolving technology (Hanelt, Bohnsack, Marz, & Antunes Marante, 2021). To this end, applying this theory into this area of study will assist to define the extent to which technology will assist its users to accomplish their tasks in order to meet and exceed the expectations of the customers, which is expected to in turn increase customer retention and profitability (Oberländer, Röglinger, & Rosemann, 2021).

Figure 2.1:

Task technology fit model



Source: (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995)

Task Characteristics

This is referred to as individual customer’s actions in turning input to output which for this study indicate the use of internet banking by customers to carry out transaction of their choice and achieving desired result (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995).

Technology Characteristics

This relate to tools utilized by servers in attending to customer’s need (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995).

Task Technology Fit

The extent to which technology supports the customer in accomplishing assigned task (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995) putting into consideration the influencing factors: service charges, privacy and security, service speed, user convenience, trust and reliability.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Relationship between dependent and independent variables was depicted as the framework providing the e-banking factors that were capable of influencing customer service acceptance of e-banking services. Independent variables include: service charges, privacy and security, service speed, user convenience, trust and reliability. While dependent variable is customer usage of e-banking service.

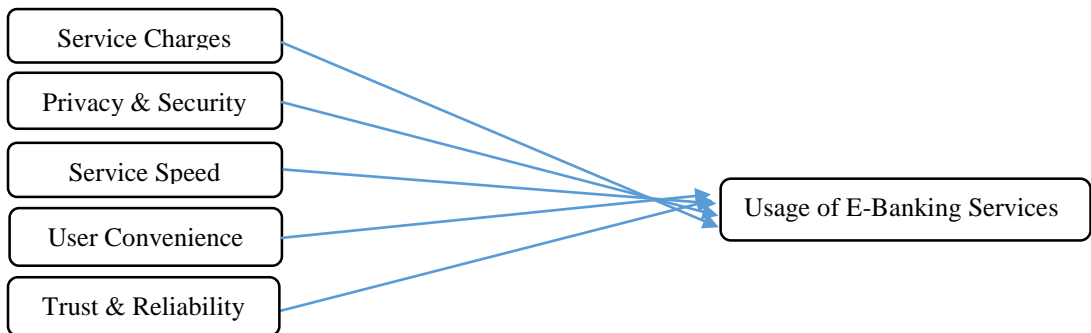


Fig. 2.2: The proposed study. Source: Adapted from Salhieh et al. (2011)

2.3 Global Overview of E- Banking

According to Naveed, Irfan, Aslam, Anwar, and Ayub (2019) there are no sufficient data in the area of e-banking, and across country definition difference makes comparisons need much skill to accomplish. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) it was established that e-banking is widely accepted in Austria, Singapore, and Switzerland just to mention a few. About 3/4 of all banks provide electronic services. E-banking service is widely accepted in Scandinavian countries, in Finland and Sweden just 1/3 of bank customers adopt e-banking channels. In US, only bank customers of the largest banks dominate the proportion of e-banking user. Although, banks offer e-banking services but just 6 percent of the customer utilizes these services.

Recently, banks no longer rely on traditional brick and mortar branches but has combine it with the new electronic platform in providing services to meet the customer's expectation. It is paramount for Banks to provide alternate channels where customers' needs can be met without visiting the Bank's physical branch. A good example is an off-site branch facility like ATM Gallery. 30 virtual banks are present in US; 2 in Asia; and several in European Union, either as subsidiary or branch offices. However, in developing countries the extent to which e-banking is acceptable is much limited.

The role played by e-banking to banks and their customers cannot be over emphasized and it seems banks have ignored the need to step up the quality of e-banking services. Most banks are seriously working on maintaining their web presence to ensure availability of e-banking channels. However, there are setbacks to e-banking penetration in the industry and Nigeria's banking system is not an exception. One major setback of e-banking is the quality of e-banking services, which discourage customer from its usage. This result from e-banking platform that are provided and made available, are neither reliable, secured, prompt, friendly to users, nor does it function satisfactorily. This may be the challenge faced by most e-banking users that leads to infrequent usage of the services (Qamruzzaman, 2017)

2.4 Electronic Banking Concept

We can define electronic banking from different angle based on varied researcher's perspective because electronic banking refers to means by which banks offer distinct service to their customer,

in most cases the customer does not have to visit the bank to initiate transaction, make inquiry or lay complaint according to Daniel (1999); Nazaritehrani and Mashali (2020); Merhi, Hone and Tarhini (2019). E-banking definition varies based on authors understanding of its application. Daniel (1999) explained that e-banking enables customer to interact directly with the bank in order to initiate, make inquiry and monitor financial transactions on their account without visiting the bank. The following are list of e-banking platform;(a) Internet banking (b) POS (Point of sale), (c) Automated Teller Machines (d) mobile banking, and (e) chat banking via Face book messenger- which is newly introduced by some banks in Nigeria.

According to Daniel (1999), we will be referring to internet banking as E-banking for this study. It is the interface between customers and bank, where customers can consummate transaction via a secured website powered by the Bank. The implication of this is that e-banking allows account holder to have access to required account information, monitor transactions on their account and initiate / approve certain banking transactions by logging on to the financial institution web site via a secured URL or app designed by the financial institution for ease of customer's transaction.

To most bank's customer, e- banking means 24/7 access to their account either to cash or deposit money and at times even to make transfers via Automated Teller Machine (ATM).Although, all transactions cannot be consummated via e-banking platform. To achieve success in delivery of excellent service to customer, e- banking is delivered through several platform of electronic Banking. E-banking is a synergy of technologies put together to deliver excellent service to customers and the effect of this has been recognized over time (Owusu Kwateng, Osei-Wusu, & Amanor, 2020). ATM banking as to do with the combination of computer terminal, transaction journal and vault cash, permitting customers to enter the bank's system with a plastic card which is encrypt with Personal Identification Number (PIN) connected to the bank's data base 24/7 (Kwateng, Atiemo, & Appiah, 2018). Bank customers can have access to their account via e-banking platform through a designed network interface on which the bank will have given them a unique ID which the platform will recognize once they log on. The system will have been program to enable them access their account, make inquiry, lay complaint and carry out any kind of retail transaction they may desire. This has led to the need to be vast with computer and everyone wants to be computer literate. Point of Sale is another channel that allows payment for goods bought/ services rendered without providing cash to the merchant at point of purchase but by using the debit card activated by the bank on the merchant's terminal (Tuteja, Sharda, & Hyde, 2019). Electronic banking platform include but not limited to the following: Automatic teller machine (ATM) services, bill payment electronically, electronic transfer of funds, and internet banking. Just as mention earlier, there are various platform of e-banking but for purpose of this study focus is on Internet banking. In that virtually all the transaction that can be carried out within the corners of the traditional brick and mortal can be consummated via internet banking, below is a briefing about internet banking.

- **Internet Banking:** Is another channel, that makes customer closer to their bank and have access to their account 24/7 through the unique bank's website. Through internet banking customers can perform desired transactions without visiting the banking premises. These transactions include: Bill payment, Airtime purchase, fund transfer, increase transaction limit, check transaction history, just to mention a few.

2.5 Empirical Assessment of Electronic Banking Challenges

Four challenges of e-banking have been reported by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); to achieve success of e-banking these challenges must be overcome (UNCTAD, 2002):

Adopting global technology to suit local requirements: For developing countries certain prerequisite must meet before adopting the global technology to suit their local requirement. A good example is the adoption of Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT), not all banks especially in developing countries has been able to migrate to this plan due to inadequate infrastructure, required capital, and unavailability of technical expertise. Another example is the e-payment which fraudulent individuals has taken advantage of to transfer funds from whosoever customer's account that falls their victim making many of the bank customers in developing countries not to embrace the innovation.

Seeking public support for e-finance: Both private sector and public sectors must collaborate for a successful e-finance initiative. A good example is that of the Singapore's successful Trade Net system project financed by the government. It is essential for large businesses and Small Medium Enterprises (SME) to partner with agencies like the World Bank, for project support related to e-financing.

Creation of regulatory frameworks: The inconsistency in regulatory policy, bridge of confidentiality agreement, trading restriction, lack of protection of interest for customers and investors hinders the growth of electronic banking in most of the developing countries.

Encouraging SMEs towards electronic banking adoption: To achieve acceptance and adoption of e-banking among SMEs in developing countries there is need to sensitize them on what they stand to gain if they embrace the use of e-banking product. It will enhance timely consummation of transaction and vast tracking of transactions.

Based on past work of scholars it was shown that there exist a positive relationship between perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness, which are two critical factors on the acceptance of e-banking Alshurideh, Al Kurdi, Masa'deh, and Salloum (2021); Gonçalves, Patrício, Grenha Teixeira, and Wuenderlich, (2020); De Luna, Liébana-Cabanillas, Sánchez-Fernández, and Muñoz-Leiva, (2019); Sharma and Sharma (2019); Ma (2021); Raza, Umer, Qureshi, and Dahri (2020). E-banking enable customers to have access to their account and other product offered by banks 24/7 providing high degree of convenience. Also, an added advantage is the access to computer to carry out transaction that will enhance user's performance according to Dwivedi, Rana, Jeyaraj, Clement, and Williams (2019); Kajol, Singh, and Paul (2022); Daniel (1999); Wassan, Gulati, Ghosh, Mammani, Tabbassum, and Mohiddin (2022); Samsudeen, Selvaratnam, and Hayathu Mohamed (2022); Verma, Kumar, Singh, and Srivastava (2022).

According to Masoud and AbuTaq (2017), it was evident that there is a significant effect of service quality, perceived Usefulness, security, and reliability on adoption of e-banking with service quality having more influence than other factors on the adoption. The use of internet and trust in commercial banks are the key factors determining adoption of e-banking (Anouze, & Alamro,

2019). Banks need to intensify effort in creating user friendly e-banking platforms as this will encourage customers to embrace e-banking (Kajol et al., 2022). For instance, provision of loan calculators, easy loan application process on bank's website draws customers to the bank's website. It can be concluded that there is a positive correlation between friendly flexible e-banking platform features and acceptance of e-banking platform.

According to Raza, Umer, Qureshi, and Dahri (2020); Talwar, Talwar, Kaur, and Dhir, 2020, they claim the quality of the designs, graphics and image quality of the e-banking platform would influence acceptance and usage of the platform. Also, Li, Lu, Hou, Cui, and Darbandi (2021) find that a significant relationship exists between download speed and user satisfaction. Speed of download depends on the memory capacity of the content being copied from the site, the network connection used to download information (Talwar et al., 2020). It is generally perceived that downloading files over the internet may import unwanted viruses. Often time, delayed response of the e-banking platform which can either be due to network or connection failure discourage users as success of the initiated transaction cannot be guaranteed (Li et al., 2021).

To earn customer's loyalty, banking institution needs to work on ensuring customer's expectation of the offered service is met. Buttressed by Singh (2021), the survival of banks in e-banking era, depends largely on banks' ability to earn consumer's loyalty through dynamic product offered and excellent service delivered. According to Merhi et al., (2019), customers are scared of providing information which is perceived important or directly linked to their account as this information might be misused by others over the internet specially to carry out fraudulent transactions. Obviously, customers have doubts about the confidentiality policy of the banks e-banking platform (Verma et al., 2022). Trust and reliability of the platform determines the willingness of the customer to use the platform and also provide sensitive information (Li et al., 2021; Jadir, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2022). Security and privacy are two important determinants of customer's adoption of e-based transaction systems.

The main obstacles preventing optimal adoption of electronic banking can be grouped as follows: security and privacy (Alkhowaiter (2020); Oruç & Tatar (2017); intangibility and physical separation between customer and institution (Alduais, & Al-Smadi, 2022; Carreras, Prados de la Escosura, & Rosés, 2005; Jahan, Ali, & Al Asheq, 2020); limited number of online services offered as well as off-line bureaucracy (Khan, Rana, & Hosen, 2022); lack of information on offered services (Talwar et al., 2020) and lack of technological skills among service users and expert themselves (Oruç & Tatar ,2017; Carreras et al 2005)

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive research design involving cross-sectional survey of internet banking platform users from the various deposit money bank found within Lagos was adopted as it provides the researcher with an opportunity to identify patterns or trends in e-banking services. It also allows for the assessment of different variables influencing e-banking adoption. Primary data collection was

adopted, interview conducted and structured questionnaire used to elicit information from customers of the selected Banks. Three tier-1 deposit money banks with international authorization in Nigeria was considered: United bank for Africa Plc, Zenith Bank Plc, and Guaranty Trust Bank Plc based on their deposit position /first quarter (Q1) profit declared according to Nigerian Banker’s publication (2020). Zenith Bank had N3.69trillion deposit position /profit of N50.5billion, UBA PLC had N3.35trillion deposit position /profit of N30.1billion and GTbank had N2.27trillion deposit position /profit N50.1billion (Nigerian Banker’s publication, 2020).

The entire set of internet banking platform users was the focused population. Sample size of 22 experts was selected from each banks; Sampling was adopted in that it is difficult to reach each individual in the focused population. However, the choice of sampling was dependent on the fact that it will not allow for influence on the quality of collected data; for this reason, purposive sampling was chosen. Purposive sampling is useful in reaching targeted sample quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern (Mohajan, 2020). In all, 66 questionnaire was administered but 60 was returned filled which represent 90.91% response rate.

3.2 Method of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data gathered, the researcher was guided by the research questions and objectives outlined in chapter one. DEMATEL, a Multi-Criteria Decision Method (MCDM) was used to examine the cause- effect relationship among factors influencing customer’s usage of internet banking. For analyses, the internet banking platform and its unique features was considered. The population comprised of all bank’s customer that has the device and the technical know-how of handling the internet banking platform in Lagos, Nigeria out of which 22 experts from each bank was selected. Purposive sampling was adopted as not all respondent that fall within the sampling was willing to participate in survey.

DEMATEL Method

Dematel Technique uses structural model to find solution to complex problem by utilizing matrix, related mathematical theories to calculate cause-effect to each element (Du & Li, 2021). Dematel uses diagraphs instead of the normal graph plotting to portray the contextual relationships and influential strength amongst elements. For this work we will explore the 4 mathematical steps of Dematel:

Step 1: We will compute the direct relation matrix B, each respondent evaluates the degree of influential between any two factors selecting from the Likert scale ranging from 0,1,2,3, and 4 representing ‘not influential’, ‘slightly influential’, ‘moderately influential’, ‘strongly influential’, and ‘extremely influential’ respectively. The degree of influential between factor i and factor j as perceived by the respondent can be notated as: b_{ij} by aggregating the m e-banking experts’ opinion provided the kth expert opinion can be formed where all diagonal element is equal to zero, the individual direct-relation matrix can be denoted as $b_k = [b_{ij}^k]_{n \times n}$ and the group direct -relation matrix can as well be denoted as

$$b_{ij} = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{k=1}^m b_{ij}^k, \quad i, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

Step 2: Establish the initial normalized influential matrix. Initial normalize direct influential matrix

$$G = m \times A,$$

$$\text{Where, } m = \min \left[\frac{1}{\max_i \sum_{j=1}^n a_{ij}}, \frac{1}{\max_j \sum_{i=1}^n a_{ij}} \right] \quad i, j = 1, 2, \dots, n$$

Elements in matrix G falls between 0 and 1

Step 3: Compute the total influence matrix by summing both the direct and indirect effects, the total influence matrix $T = [t_{ij}]_{n \times n}$; $T = X + X^2 + X^3 + X^4 + \dots + X^h = X(I - X)^{-1}$, $h \rightarrow \infty$ and I is an identity matrix. To construct the T- total influence matrix we sum up elements of row and column represented by D and R, respectively. D+R indicate strength of influence and D-R indicates effect of the factor on the acceptance of e-banking in Nigeria.

$$D = [d_i]_{n \times 1} = \left[\sum_{j=1}^n t_{ij} \right]_{n \times 1};$$

$$R = [r_i]_{1 \times n} = \left[\sum_{i=1}^n t_{ij} \right]_{1 \times n}$$

Step 4: The last step is to set the threshold value (α) which will be used in constructing the diagram. We need to set up the threshold value (α) as only the factor effect which is greater than the threshold value will be shown on the diagram and this can only be computed by finding average of elements in matrix T. The diagram is therefore set of elements in (d+r, d-r).

The threshold value (α) is mathematically expressed as:

$$\alpha = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^n [t_{ij}]}{N}, \text{ where } N \text{ indicate total count of elements in matrix } T.$$

Figure 1 is a sample of the diagram showing cause-effect of the criteria

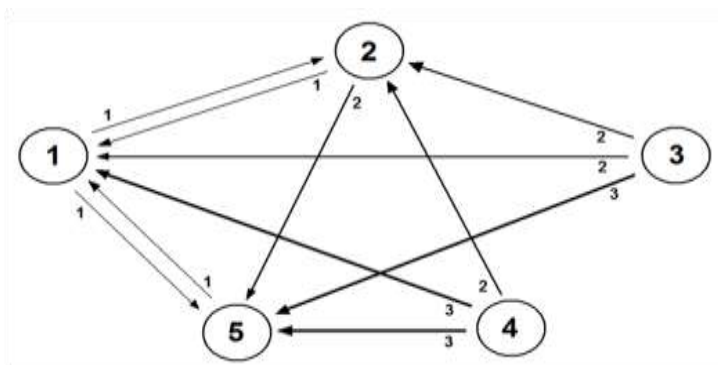


Figure 1 Direct-influence graph in the DEMATEL method

For this study, DEMATEL is choosing over AHP to analyse the data work in that diagonal elements in the initial direct influence matrix equals to zero as well as factors outside the main diagonals that does not sufficiently have influence on others unlike AHP where elements in the diagonals are 1, although AHP and DEMATEL are based on accurate initial matrix which reflects the relationship between the analysed elements.

DEMATEL is one of the multi-criteria decision-making methods, if the analysed objects represent alternative solutions of the decision problem. Suggestions to use DEMATEL in multi-criteria decision making have been proposed and described in numerous papers (Jiang, Chen, Sun, Yazdi, Nedjati, & Adesina, 2021; Du & Li, 2021; Si, You, Liu, & Zhang, 2018; Dalvi-Esfahani, Niknafs, Kuss, Nilashi, & Afrough, 2019; Broniewicz, & Ogrodnik, 2021; Si et al., 2018; Du & Li, 2021).

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

66 copies of the research questionnaire were administered to sampled respondents of the three banks selected with international authorization. 4 point Likert scale was used to arrange the questions with the respondent expressing their opinion in the range: No influence (0) to very high influence (4), 60 questionnaire was returned which represent 90.91% response rate. Therefore, the opinion of 60 experts was used for computation. Dematel, an analytical technique was used to examine the interdependent and feedback among the 5 factors-Service charge (SC), Privacy & Security (PR), Service Speed (SS), User Convenience (UC), Trust & Reliability (TR) by calculating the cause -effect of each dimension.

Results

Table 1 is the initial direct matrix: This was computed using the average value of the 60 E-banking expert’s decision based on the influence of each factor over another. The influence of a factor over itself is zero making the entire diagonal element to be 0.

Table 1: Initial direct matrix

	SC	PS	SS	UC	TR
SC	0	2.31	2.08	2.68	2.40
PS	1.45	0	2.06	2.40	2.40
SS	1.75	2.43	0	2.30	2.40
UC	1.80	2.48	2.60	0	2.55
TR	1.65	2.57	2.35	2.33	0

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 2 below is the direct and Indirect Relation matrix which is the summation of element in each row; this is needed to get the maximum value in the summation column which is used to compute the normalized direct relation matrix in table 3.

Table 2: Direct and Indirect Matrix

	SC	PS	SS	UC	TR	row total
SC	0	2.31	2.08	2.68	2.40	9.47
PS	1.45	0	2.06	2.40	2.40	8.31
SS	1.75	2.43	0	2.30	2.40	8.88
UC	1.80	2.48	2.60	0	2.55	9.43
TR	1.65	2.57	2.35	2.33	0	8.9

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 3 is the Normalized direct relation matrix which is computed by dividing the values of the direct relation matrix in table 2 above with the maximum value in the summation column, the maximum value as seen in the matrix above is 9.47

Table 3: Normalized direct relation matrix

	SC	PS	SS	UC	TR
SC	0	0.243928	0.219641	0.282999	0.253432
PS	0.153115	0	0.217529	0.253432	0.253432
SS	0.184794	0.2566	0	0.242872	0.253432
UC	0.190074	0.26188	0.274551	0	0.269271
TR	0.174234	0.271383	0.248152	0.24604	0

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 4 below is the Total Relation matrix which is computed using

$$T = X[I - X]^{-1} .$$

T was computed using Matlab, *I* is the identity matrix and *X* is size of the matrix (For this work, size of the matrix is 5 by 5. On the Matlab interphase the command: $T = (eye(5) - X)^{-1}$ is typed to get values of the Total relation matrix below. The total relation matrix shows how one factor affects the other. Also, in the Total relation matrix computed below in table 4, we calculate D as sum of the Row and R as sum of the column.

Table 4: Total relation matrix

	SC	PS	SS	UC	TR	D
SC	2.8097	4.0756	3.8409	4.0429	4.0605	18.8296
PS	2.6529	3.479	3.4615	3.6274	3.6615	16.8823
SS	2.8116	3.8722	3.4605	3.8075	3.8496	17.8014
UC	2.9465	4.0567	3.8473	3.7903	4.0398	18.6806
TR	2.8064	3.8846	3.6621	3.8123	3.6504	17.8158
R	14.0271	19.3681	18.2723	19.0804	15.6114	

Source: Researcher, 2023

Table 5 below shows prominence degree (D+R) which explains the degree of relation of each factor over the other and it can be seen that User convenience has the largest prominence degree, meaning it is of importance to the usage of electronic banking channels followed by privacy and security then Service Speed.

For the relation degree (D-R) it explains the kind of relation the factor has with other factors,

Where $D-R > 0$ it implies that the factor influences other factors and this is referred to as cause group, it can be seen that service charge has high influence on other factors followed by Trust and reliability. Similarly, the relation degree where $D-R < 0$ implies the factor get influenced by other factors. From the table below, it is evident that user convenience has a higher influence on other factors in the usage of electronic banking channels followed by service speed lastly followed by privacy & security. This group is referred to as the effect group or receiver.

Table 5: Prominence and Relation degree

	D	R	D+R	D-R
SC	18.8296	14.0271	32.8567	4.8025
PS	16.8823	19.3681	36.2504	-2.4858
SS	17.8014	18.2723	36.0737	-0.4709
UC	18.6806	19.0804	37.761	-0.3998
TR	17.8158	15.6114	33.4272	2.2044

Source: Researcher, 2023

Considering the result of the analysis it is evident that user convenience is the most important factor in considering usage of electronic banking channel while service charge has a higher degree of influence on other factors followed by trust and reliability.

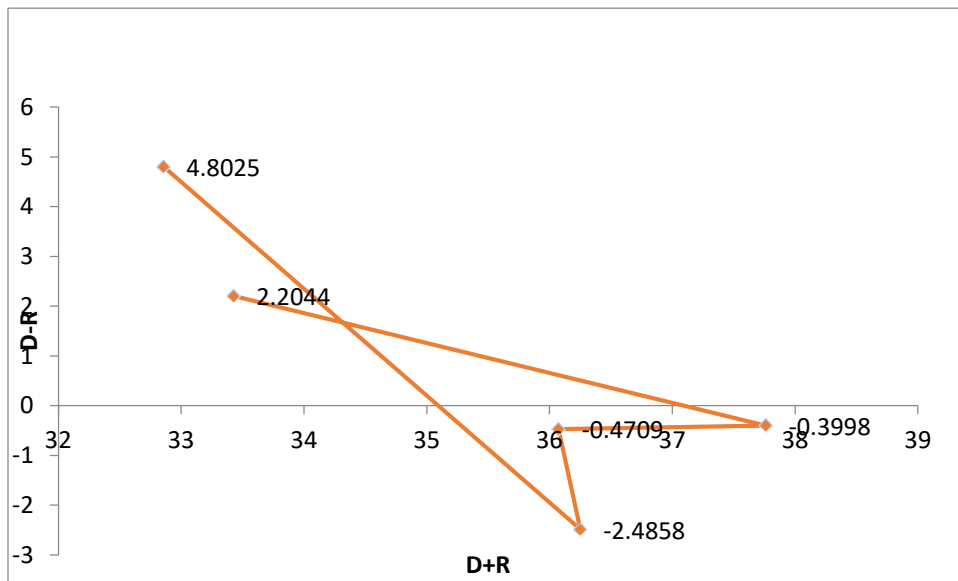
In line with the third objective of this research work, a quick summary of the cause-effect relationship among the factors is thus;

For $D + R$: The factor that has the highest value have more relationship with other factors , this implies $f_1 > f_2 > f_3 > f_4 > f_5$, where f_1 = user convenience (this factor has maximum relationship with other factors), f_2 = privacy and security, f_3 = service speed, f_4 = trust and reliability, f_5 = service charge (this factor has less relationship with other factors).

For $D - R > 0$: The factor with positive value influences other factors, this implies service charge, trust and reliability influences other factors, For $D - R < 0$: The factor with negative value gets influenced by another factor, this implies f_1 , f_3 , and f_2 are influenced by f_5 and f_4 .

Figure 2: Casual Diagram

The Causal diagram explains the concept of direct and indirect effect of the various factors influencing the adoption of e-banking over each other. The relation degree (D-R) is plotted on the vertical line against prominence degree (D+R) on the horizontal line.



On the casual diagram: User convenience, Privacy & Security, Service speed directly impact on the usage of e-banking. These three factors are paramount and if not considered in designing the e-banking platform, it will lead to non-usage of the platform. They have direct cause on the effects: Service charge, Trust & reliability of using e-banking.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

DEMATEL technique is an important method in finding solution to complex problem by utilizing matrix, related mathematical theories to calculate cause-effect of the criteria (Du & Li, 2021).

Dematel also uses diagraph to visualise the contextual relationships and influential strength amongst factors. The focus of this study is to use Dematel method to analyse the acceptance of E-banking among its users' in Nigeria while focusing on the Internet Banking users and five influencing factors was considered from the perspective of 60 e-banking experts but not limiting to this only as the cause-effect relationship amongst the factors was also considered.

The result from this study shows that convenience of internet banking users must be paramount to banks when designing the platform while not losing focus on the other factors, that is User Convenience (f_1), Privacy & Security (f_2), Service Speed (f_3), Trust & reliability (f_4), Service charge (f_5). Service charge, Trust & reliability falls in the cause group and the remaining factors fall in the effect group. Although, several works has been tailored to finding factors influencing acceptance of e-banking in Nigeria but this study contributes to the body of knowledge by using DEMATEL to investigate the cause- effect interrelationship amongst the identified factors. The result from the data analysed revealed that, the acceptance and usage of internet banking by customers will increase with a unit of convenience experienced by the user on the platform, privacy & security, service speed, Trust &reliability and service charge. The result of the analysis further showed that as explained by Aishatu et al., (2017) Trust and reliability are influencing factors of e-loyalty which is consistent with the research findings that Trust and reliability, service charge influences other factors in acceptance and usage of the internet banking platform.

Based on the research findings, this study recommends that:

- 1) User convenience is an important influential factor of using e-banking which bank's product managers should consider when designing the internet banking platform without losing focus on other influencing factors.
- 2) The e-banking platform should be designed in a way it will be easy for users to navigate through the menu option to encourage usage.
- 3) The effect of the factors can be measured on other channels like ATM, POS, and Mobile Banking among others. This will give a better understanding as to what the banks product manager should focus on while designing the various electronic banking channels if they want their customers to use the channels often. This is expected to in turn reduce crowd in the banking halls.

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Media Political Punditry in the Build-Up to Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election

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Abstract

This paper is an analysis of the role of media political punditry in the build-up to Nigeria's February 25, 2023 Presidential Election. The objective of the study was to examine how political pundits and their commentaries significantly shape public opinion and influence the overall political discourse during the election campaigns. Various types of pundits across the media were examined, and challenges confronting the pundits/media in political communication were also examined. The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to investigate roles of pundits in the media coverage. The choice of media platforms, including major Nigerian newspapers, television stations, online news platforms, and social media, was guided by the use of purposive sampling technique, to analyse the media with contents relevance to the study as at the period. This is to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the election campaign. The paper draws upon three theories that capture the concepts and thoughts explored in this study. They are Agenda Setting Theory, Framing Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory. These theories provide a framework for understanding the role of media political punditry and its impact on shaping public opinion and influencing the political discourse during the election. The findings of this study indicate that media political punditry has a significant impact on shaping public opinion and influencing the political discourse within Nigeria. The analysis demonstrates that the voices of political pundits carry considerable weight in swaying public sentiments, shaping voters' perceptions, and potentially influencing voting decisions. The study also found that challenges such as political interference, media economics and hegemonic tendencies undermine the role pundits/media. It is recommended that media organizations prioritize unbiased and balanced coverage of political events, including the activities of political pundits. Furthermore, the paper suggests the importance of conducting evaluative studies after the election to obtain definitive conclusions on the level of success of political communication. These recommendations aim to ensure a fair and informed electoral process.

Keywords: Media, Political Pundits, Effects, Presidential Election

Introduction

Political communication is important in shaping the political process of a nation, and the media serves as a catalyst for sustainable democracy. The media provides a platform for voter education and cross-fertilization of ideas leading to knowledgeable choices in selecting candidates (ACE Project 2012). To this, the media is a catalyst in midwifing and nursing democracy and democratic elections in any nation. (ACE Project 2012) The concept of free and fair elections means that voters must have the liberty to vote and also the knowledge to do so. It equally entails participation in the

process to enable the voters join the political debate. This in turn gives rise to access to proper information on policies, parties, election process, and candidates for the elections (ACE Project 2012).

As the 2023 general election approached, presidential candidates took full advantage of the media to communicate their messages and engage with voters. One important aspect of this is the use of political pundits to sway voters to their side. The media serves as a critical tool for political communication, enabling candidates to reach a wide audience and convey their vision for the country. In Nigeria, the media landscape is diverse, with a range of traditional and new media outlets, including print, radio, television, and online platforms. All these have an array or various types of pundits. Political candidates have leveraged this diversity to reach as many voters as possible and promote their campaigns (Media landscape, 2019)

However, the use of the media for political communication is not without controversy. Critics argue that the media can be used to manipulate public opinion and sway elections in favor of particular candidates or political parties. The media has been accused of bias and of promoting fake news, which can undermine the credibility of the political process and erode trust in democratic institutions. It is therefore essential for the media to adhere to ethical guidelines and principles of journalism to ensure that it remains an impartial and credible source of information for voters (IFJ, 2019)

The remainder of the paper delves into a qualitative analysis of media content, focusing on the roles of media pundits as the campaign for the 2023 Presidential Elections intensified. Special attention was given to a third force in Nigeria's political landscape, which some believe will fade away while others argue that it will present a significant challenge to the dominance of the two main political parties. The analysis sheds light on the influence and impact of media political pundits in shaping public opinion and the electoral process. By examining the roles of media political pundits in the context of Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Election, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of political communication dynamics and the importance of media ethics in ensuring a fair and transparent democratic process.

Objectives of the Paper

The primary objective of this paper is to analyze the role of media political punditry in the build-up to Nigeria's February 25, 2023 Presidential Election. The study examined how political pundits and their commentaries significantly shape public opinion and influence the overall political discourse during the election campaign. Various types of pundits across the media are also highlighted.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach to investigate roles of pundits in the media coverage of the February 25, 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria. The choice of media platforms, including major Nigerian newspapers, television stations, online news platforms, and social media, was guided by scientific criteria, by the use of purposive sampling technique to

analyse the media with contents relevance to the study as at the period. This is to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the election campaign.

Theoretical Frameworks

The paper draws upon relevant theories that succinctly capture the concepts and thoughts explored in this study. These theories provide a framework for understanding the role of media political punditry and its impact on shaping public opinion and influencing the political discourse during the election.

Agenda Setting Theory: The agenda setting theory suggests that media plays a crucial role in influencing public opinion and setting the agenda for public discussion by emphasizing certain topics and issues over others (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In the context of media political punditry, this theory helps explain how political pundits, through their commentary and analysis, can shape the public's perception of important political issues and candidates. Their influence on media coverage can determine the salience and prominence of certain topics, which in turn affects public opinion and the political discourse.

Framing Theory: Framing theory posits that media has the power to influence how events and issues are presented and interpreted by the audience (Entman, 1993). Media political pundits often use framing techniques to shape public opinion by presenting information in a particular way that highlights certain aspects and downplays others. Through their commentary, they can frame political candidates, policies, and events in a manner that influences the audience's perception and interpretation. This theory helps in understanding how political pundits employ framing strategies to shape the narrative surrounding the election and impact public opinion.

Social Cognitive Theory: Social cognitive theory, developed by Bandura (1986), suggests that individuals learn and form opinions by observing others and the consequences of their actions. In the context of media political punditry, this theory helps explain how individuals can be influenced by the opinions and analysis of political pundits. When pundits provide persuasive arguments and present themselves as credible sources of information, viewers and readers may adopt their viewpoints and incorporate them into their own political beliefs. This theory emphasizes the role of observational learning and the impact of influential figures in shaping public opinion. These theories provide valuable insights into the role of media political punditry and its influence on shaping public opinion and the political discourse during the election campaign.

Role of the Media in Political Communication

The media, comprising traditional and new forms, plays a significant role in political communication, especially in Nigeria. According to ACE (2012), new media, including social media and online journalism, have become increasingly essential to political communication. Citizen journalism has also gained ground, particularly in countries with controlled or regulated traditional media. During the 2023 elections campaign, political communication dominates the Nigerian media space.

McNair (2010) describes political communication as a purposeful communication about politics, which encompasses all communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors,

communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and journalists, and communication about these actors and their activities. ACE (2012) categorizes the role of media in political communication into four: media as transparency/watchdog, media as a campaign platform, media as an open forum for debate and discussion/public voice, and media as a public educator.

As transparency and watchdog, the media scrutinizes all promises and actions of political actors, interpreting them for the understanding of the voting public. The media also interrogate political party candidates, providing an avenue for the public to understand who they are, what they promise, and how they will fulfill their promises. In Nigeria, the media has organized various town hall meetings to engage political actors, providing citizens with platforms to engage with candidates. The media also serves as a campaign platform, providing candidates with an avenue to present their manifestos and campaigns, which are subsequently reported as news. Additionally, the media allows the public to participate and ask questions, anchoring debates and discussions in the run-up to elections. Finally, the media acts as a public educator, providing voter education and addressing electoral issues.

The media as political actors: The media, through their different forms of political journalism, can greatly influence and intervene in the political process (McNair, 1995). The media have been accused of having political affiliations in liberal democracies like the United Kingdom and the United States of America (Jenkins, 2016; McNair, 1995). In Nigeria, the press was accused of promoting ethnic politics against national ideals immediately after the country gained independence, leading to military incursions into the Nigerian polity until 1990 (Oloruntola, Ogunrinola, & Aina, 2019). However, the same Nigerian press played a crucial role in forcing the military back to the barracks and restoring democracy in the country (Ibrahim, 2022). The Nigerian media has been an instrument of politics and democracy since the publication of the first newspaper in Abeokuta in present-day Ogun State in 1859 (Ibrahim, 2022). The media played a significant role in the struggle for independence from colonial rule in 1960 and the fight against military juntas, particularly during the regime of Late Gen. Sani Abacha until his sudden death, which led to the restoration of democracy under Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar (Lame, 2019). The history of Nigeria will not be complete without the role of the media in shaping the political landscape.

Media Political Punditry

Punditry is a common feature in political communication and involves the use of professionals, authorities, and specialists to provide opinions and analysis on political issues. As defined by the Collins Cobuild Advanced Learners Dictionary, a pundit is an expert in a particular subject who is invited to give their opinions to the public. Punditry in politics is carried out through different platforms including traditional media and social media. In Nigeria, some of the major political parties have their own set of pundits, such as Festus Keyamo and Femi Fani-Kayode for the APC, and Reno Omokri and Dino Melaye for the PDP, and Kenneth Okonkwo and Ndi Kato for LP (Adegboyega, 2018). These political pundits use their platform to promote their principals and denounce their opponents. They seek to shape the minds of the voting public and create a favorable image of their principals in the minds of the electorate. This is done through various means, including traditional media such as television and radio interviews, as well as social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. The use of social media in political communication has

become increasingly popular in Nigeria due to the high rate of social media usage by the populace (Ojebode & Oyero, 2017).

Defining political reality: According to McNair (1995, p.74), the media plays an active role in defining political reality by forming the dominant paradigm, setting the agenda for public discourse, and performing interpretative functions. They achieve this by interviewing pundits, experts, and professionals in politics, as well as governors, parliamentarians, lawyers, and spokespersons of candidates and parties. This is evident in the case of an interview with the Governor of Anambra State, Professor Charles Soludo, by journalist Seun Okinbaleye, who asked Soludo about the alleged investment of former Governor Peter Obi, a presidential hopeful in the 2023 General Elections under the Labour Party. Soludo's response to the question has dominated political space, with some interpreting it as a hatchet man's job meant to destroy Obi's chances, while others see it as an indication that the election might be rigged before the actual voting (Channels TV, 2022).

The media's role in defining political reality is further exemplified by the presentation of a new political reality in Nigeria towards the 2023 General elections, which holds that votes will count this time around. The traditional media, as well as social media, have spread this message, resulting in the highest youth registration according to INEC so far. The media has also played a role in addressing public concerns about underage voting, with an INEC official assuring Nigerians that no underage voting will be tolerated (Channels TV, 2022).

Blumler (1987, p.170), as cited in McNair (2010), argues that the media's agenda-setting function is their main contribution to the political process, providing cognitive knowledge, informing us about what is happening, and structuring political reality, allotting events greater or lesser significance according to their presence or absence on the media agenda. Bamigbetan (2022), writing for Thisdaylive, contends that the electronic transmission of results from accreditation, counting, and collation to the central server, as well as penalizing over-voting by canceling the results of polling units that exceed the number of accredited voters, is an appropriate way to deter electoral fraudsters and ensure that votes counted count.

Furthermore, the media's role in defining political reality is not limited to just setting the agenda and providing cognitive knowledge. They also perform interpretative functions by shaping the public's perception of political events and issues through their reporting and analysis. As McNair (1995, p.74) notes, the media can "set the tone and mood of public debate, cast politicians and political events in particular lights, and promote certain kinds of political values and ideologies."

Bamigbetan (2022), writing for Thisdaylive, contends that the stronger weight in this matter goes to the electronic transmission of results from accreditation, counting and collation to the central server, technologically excluding unofficial intervention and ensuring that the votes counted count. The provision that penalises over-voting by cancelling the results of polling units that exceed the number of accredited voters is an appropriate rap on the knuckles for electoral fraudsters. This Thisdaylive, report is a confidence booster. The online versions of the traditional media still set the agenda. While the public especially the youth activists push it around through social media platforms.

Blumler (1987, p.170) in McNair (2010), contends, 'at a time when the public's confidence in many social and political institutions has steeply declined . . . voters have become more dependent on media resources . . . for impressions of what is at stake, as previous suppliers of guiding frameworks have lost their credibility'. The media not only provide cognitive knowledge, informing us about what is happening, but they also order and structure political reality, allotting events greater or lesser significance according to their presence or absence on the media agenda. The agenda-setting function of the media is argued by many observers to be their main contribution to the political process (McCombs, 1981, in McNair 2010).

The press/partisanship: The media has long been accused of partisanship in their political reporting, often through the use of slants, framing, and rhetoric, and even outright support for preferred candidates or parties. In Nigeria, many media outlets are either directly or indirectly owned by politicians and their allies, which can result in biased reporting. McNair (1997) noted that individual newspapers actively campaign for their preferred candidate and party and denigrate or criticize others.

One example of partisan reporting in Nigeria is the case of TVC's documentaries to launder the image of APC's Tinubu amid many controversies, which has come under attack (Tyohember, 2019). Critics have accused TVC and the Tinubu campaign organization of using a 12-year-old picture of Donald Duke, taken while at Sokoto High school as a young Tinubu, leading to questions about the credibility of the media outlet. The public voice of the press has also been a subject of debate in the media industry for many years. While some argue that the press serves as a watchdog, providing a platform for public debate and holding those in power accountable, others believe that the public voice of the press is often used as a tool for political communication. A study by the Pew Research Center found that 64% of Americans believe that the news media has a liberal bias, while only 22% believe it has a conservative bias (Pew Research Center, 2020).

One example of the public voice of the press being used as a political tool is the way in which political campaigns are covered by the media. Studies have shown that media coverage of political campaigns can influence public opinion, particularly in how candidates are perceived by the public (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010). This has led to accusations of media bias and manipulation of public opinion in favor of certain candidates or political parties. Despite these criticisms, the public voice of the press remains an important aspect of a democratic society. A free and independent press is essential for holding those in power accountable and ensuring transparency in government. However, it is important for the press to maintain its integrity and avoid being used as a tool for political communication. This can be achieved through transparent and unbiased reporting, as well as adherence to ethical guidelines and principles.

Journalists as Pundits: The media use popular journalist/analysts for opinion formation, articulation, agenda-setting, and evaluation, Arise TV, have Veteran journalist/politician Reuben Abati, Rufai Oseni, and Ojy Okpe, as analysts/pundits. TVC has Jide as a regular analyst and pundit. Channels Television has Okinbaleye as the major pundit among others. The print media is not left out. Omatsaye's article in the Nation Newspaper (August 1, 2022) titled "obituary" referring to Obi has elicited a wide reaction from fellow pundits in different media across the country, such as Vanguard from where Valentine Obienyem, writes an article titled "Omatsaye's

Obituary article” similarly, Hillary Essien, Senior Associate Editor, of the Republic Online newspaper has been chronicling updates titled “Updates on the 2023 elections, covering news on candidates, voting and other related issues”. The 24 November 2022 update is that the United Kingdom is watching Nigeria ‘closely’. He quoted the British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Catriona Laing, as saying that the UK would monitor electoral violence at the polls, either in person or via social media, and consider issuing visa bans as sanctions (the Republic Online 24 November 2022). In a Channels TV discussion forum anchored by Seun Okinbaleye, with a title, “2023 Presidential Election a Three-Horse Race with Peter Obi Leading – ANAP Poll. The discussants Honourable Jibrin, representing NNPP’s Kwankwaso says that the poll is calculated to give Nigerians a false sense of Obi lead. To APC chances he concluded that voting for APC is like boarding a damaged plane because a perceived good pilot is on board. Mr. Daniel Bwala, the spokesperson for PDP Atiku, claims that Obi has no chance of winning in even three states. He quoted another poll that shows that 55.5 percent of Obi’s online supporters live abroad and will not vote. To APC’s Tinubu spokesperson, the poll is meant for the trash bin. Meanwhile, all of them believe that their respective principals will win the election come 2023. The latest political opinion poll published by Yusuf K. (2022) in Premium Times on November 22, 2022, in which Labour Party’s Obi is said to be leading the rest by a good margin means more work for the pundits. Reno Omokiri went to the juggler, telling the whole world that Obi is the least qualified academically. Not minding that the provision is just a school certificate. Omokiri, also said Tinubu, was a drug lord and ironically, defended Tinubu’s certificate forgery allegation. The court later dismissed a suit seeking to disqualify Tunubu on account of that. (November 10, 2022)

Feature articles/column in newspapers: Feature articles/column in newspapers is seen as the highest form of political punditry. According to The Leadership News (August 25, 2022), "by the prognosis of political pundits in Nigeria, 2023 presidential election may be the defining moment and the year for total victory for the former vice president Atiku Abubakar." Dele Momodu, writing for ThisDayLive (August 27, 2022), also shares his earlier predictions on the 2023 presidential election. (Momodu 2022). Idayat Hassan, in her Premium Times article (June 18, 2022), suggests that Nigeria may be experiencing its longest run of uninterrupted democracy, but the quality remains very much in need of improvement. (Hassan 2022). Ikechukwu Amaechi's column in Vanguard (September 1, 2022) argues that "Obi's candidacy redefines Nigeria's presidential democracy." Observers weigh in on what Peter Obi's victory will mean for Nigeria in a Business Day article (September 18, 2022).

According to another Business Day article (November 28, 2022), Nigeria faced a three-horse race in 2023. The full list of the presidential candidates is as follows: Alhaji Atiku Abubakar (People Democratic Party), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu (All Progressive Congress), Dumebi Kachukwu (African Democratic Congress), Mr. Peter Obi (Labour Party), Mr. Rabiu Kwankwaso (New Nigerian Peoples Party), Mr. Kola Abiola (Peoples Redemption Party), Mr. Omoyele Sowore (Africa Action Congress), Prince Adewole Adebayo (Social Democratic Party), Prince Malik Ado-Ibrahim (Young Progressive Party), Professor Christopher Imumulen (Accord Party), Professor Peter Umeadi (All Progressive Grand Alliance), and Yusuf Mamman Dan Talle (Allied Peoples Movement). Among the 12 candidates, there is a general belief that it will be a straight fight

between APC and PDP as usual, but LP Obi's popularity, initially dismissed as a social media frenzy, is making it a three-horse race (Lukmon, J, 2023).

Online punditry: The rise of the internet has given birth to a new form of political punditry in Nigeria. Apart from traditional media that have an online presence, many bloggers are making their mark in the political communication space. These bloggers analyze political communication videos that are then spread across social media platforms. Memes are also a popular tool used by these online pundits to project their preferred candidates while displaying the weaknesses of others. The Obidient movement is an example of a group that is highly skilled in this area. Additionally, all politicians in Nigeria are now present online, with accounts on popular social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Despite the growing influence of online pundits, there are concerns that Nigeria's democracy is under threat due to insecurity in the country. Burkarti (2022) expressed this concern in an article titled "Democracy Under Threat: Why the Security Risk to Nigeria's 2023 Elections Must Not Be Overlooked." In the article, Burkarti stated that Boko Haram, bandits, and separatist groups like IPOB and Oduduwa may pose a serious threat to the upcoming elections. He also noted that in the past, Boko Haram has forced Nigeria to reschedule elections. Burkarti was interviewed on the same issue on Channels Television on December 2nd, 2022 (Burkarti, 2022; Channels Television, 2022)

The bards as Pundits: One other area of political communication punditry is the use of bards, these wordsmiths, employ humor, satire, and irony to comment on political affairs. Also, cartoonists highlight important political issues (McNair 1995). In a study titled "Influence of Satirical Media Content on Orientation to Politics among Nigerian youth", Mustapha et al. (2019) confirm a positive relationship between mediated political satire and youth's political orientation. They also found that the youths were more likely to be influenced by non-state-owned media and social media. In another study titled, "the use motivation of political satire shows and the impact s of viewing frequency on voters' political efficacy and political cynicism (Mr. Brown's show as an example)", Hong and Chang (2019) contend that the impact was more cynical than political efficacy. In Nigeria, a lot of comedians have done songs like "Emilokan," (Meaning it is my turn) by the pirates as part of political communication. The song 'Emilokan' is satire mimicking Tinubu's comments during one of his campaigns.

Broadcasting Punditing: Broadcasting has equally been deployed in political communication in many ways as in the press. It has its own class of pundits. For example, an Arise TV News headline says, "Peter Obi can only be a shop manager, not a president" – Garba Adamu of APC. ("Arise TV News", n.d.). "Why Peter Obi is the best candidate" – Ndi Kato LP spokesperson. ("Channels Television News @10-26/11/2022"). "Atiku to name oil thieves" (Channels Television news @10-26/11/2022). "Be sincere, is this Tinubu, ok?" (Mayegun, 2023) - Maiyegun's Diary Politico (Maiyegun 26th November 2022). This was a comment pointing to the fact the candidate Tinubu might not be healthy and lacks the mental capacity to lead at this time. The Opposition Coalition Group, Coalition United Political Parties (CUPP) held Press Conference anchored by Arise TV News, and presented what they called Omuma magic of irregularities, in the list of registers containing fake names. Speaking through their chairperson Barrister Ugo Chinyere, it commended the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for publishing the registers list. They called on Nigerian youths to vote and stay to protect their votes. They called for the arrest and

prosecution of those involved in including fake names in the register. They called for the arrest and prosecution of those involved in harvesting card numbers and bank account numbers to tune 10 million people for vote buying. The group commended INEC for cleaning about 2.7 million unqualified registrants from the register. This is media punditry at its best. (Channels Television, 2022)

Debates and talk shows/ The political interview: As the 2023, elections approached, structured debate programmes, town hall meetings, and debates became integral parts of media political communication. These platforms provided opportunities for politicians and citizens to engage in healthy debates and discussions on political issues. In Nigeria, several media houses such as Television Continental, Arise Television, and Channels Television created opportunities for political actors to engage in debates and town hall meetings. These platforms allowed citizens to ask questions and contribute to the political discourse. For instance, Channels Television held a town hall meeting in 2021, where political actors and citizens discussed issues surrounding the Electoral Act Amendment Bill. These debates and talk shows have become critical in shaping political opinions and informing citizens' decisions during elections. Political interviews have become a popular feature of broadcast media, especially when there is a news story that concerns a political actor. These interviews provide a platform for politicians to explain their actions, policies, and opinions to the public. In Nigeria, politicians often court the attention of the media to gain exposure and improve their public image. Besides politicians, experts such as lawyers, economists, and former politicians are also invited by various media houses to shed light on political issues. These experts provide valuable insights and analysis that help citizens understand the complexities of political issues.

Social media pundits: Social media pundits have become a prominent feature in Nigeria's political landscape. The Obident movement, which emerged during the 2019 elections, has continued to leverage social media to mobilize youths for political activism. While some pundits in the opponents' camps dismiss them as "social media voters," Jenkins et al (2016) argue that social media pundits can make a difference in election outcomes. They note that in the last two cycles of presidential elections in the US, there has been a sharp increase in voting by youth, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Muslims, and other groups, which is often cited as a key factor in Obama's victories. This trend is also evident in Nigeria, where social media pundits increasingly challenged the dominance of the All-Progressive Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), with the rise of the third power LP.

Olayinka D.S. (2022) further observes that social media has reshaped political education and mobilization in Nigeria, offering a platform for political debates, cyber activism, political campaigns, and mobilization. Political officeholders and politicians, including presidents and governors, now have and manage social media accounts, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, among others. Social media pundits were regular features of the build-up to the 2023 elections, with the various spokespersons of major parties maintaining social media accounts to propagate their party's ideology while exposing the weaknesses of other parties and their candidates. Media pundit bloggers, like investigative journalist Hundeyin, was tracking the allegations of drug scandal against Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a presidential candidate. While Tinubu's camp of pundits, including Festus Keyamo and Femi Fani Kayode, declared the scandal a non-issue, Hundeyin challenged

Tinubu's moral fitness for the presidency in several articles. The emergence of social media pundits has created new challenges and opportunities for Nigerian democracy and underscores the need for better public mobilization and sensitization through citizen sensitization programs and national identity card registration.

Effects of Media Political Punditry on the 2023 Presidential Election

The emergence of the Labour Party as a third force in the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election caused concern for other parties. The media's political pundits attempted to sway voters towards their preferred candidates, while media outlets such as Arise TV and Channels TV were educating voters. However, the question remained as to what extent media political punditry would influence the voting pattern in the elections. McNair (2010) identifies two theoretical assumptions: the Uses and Gratification theory and the selectivity theory. Furthermore, Worcester (1991) listed the deciding factors for voters as the image of party policy, the image of party leadership, and the image of the party itself. A meaningful evaluation of the election outcome must be carried out after the election, as the effects of political communication cannot be accurately determined before. McNair argues that media effects require an understanding of the social semiotics of a given communication situation, and Boorstin (1962) coined the term "pseudo-event" to describe the media's increasing tendency to cover unreal, unauthentic and manufactured happenings.

In addition, the effects of media political punditry on elections can also be influenced by the media agenda-setting theory. This theory posits that the media has the power to influence the public's perception of political issues by choosing what topics to focus on and how to frame them (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The media's coverage of political issues and candidates can shape the public's understanding of what issues are important and what positions candidates hold, ultimately affecting their voting behavior. Furthermore, the media can also have an indirect influence on the voting patterns through its portrayal of candidates. The cultivation theory states that exposure to media content over time can shape an individual's beliefs and attitudes, ultimately influencing their behavior (Gerbner, 1969). In the context of political communication, the media's portrayal of candidates can affect voters' perceptions of their competence, trustworthiness, and likability, ultimately impacting their decision to vote for them.

It is important to note, however, that the effects of media political punditry on elections are not always clear-cut. The media's influence can be limited by a variety of factors, including voters' pre-existing beliefs and values, the credibility of the media sources, and the influence of other social and political institutions (McNair, 2010). Moreover, the media's influence can be moderated by individual-level factors, such as education level and political knowledge, which can affect how voters interpret and respond to media messages (Mutz, 1998). The effects of media political punditry on the upcoming 2023 Nigerian Presidential election were significant, but not necessarily straightforward. While the media has the power to shape voters' perceptions of political issues and candidates, this influence can be moderated by a variety of individual- and context-level factors. Therefore, any attempts to understand the effects of media political punditry on the 2023 Presidential election must take into account the complex interplay of these factors. Only then can we gain a comprehensive understanding of the media's role in shaping the outcome of this critical election?

Challenges of media pundits in political communication

The role of the media as a crucial actor in political communication is to set the agenda for political opinion molding. The media is considered the fourth estate of the realm, alongside the executive, legislature, and judiciary. To perform their duty effectively, the media needs to be free from political interference. However, this freedom is not always guaranteed, and media pundits face numerous challenges in their quest to uphold their mandate. In a recent editorial by Punch newspaper titled "Media Tyranny, a Threat to Democracy" published on 28 October 2022, the Governor of Zamfara State was condemned for ordering the closure of several media houses, including Radio NG, Pride FM Gusau, NTA Gusau, Gamji TV, Vision FM, and Al Umma TV. The media houses were accused of covering the opposition PDP rally in the state, which the Governor had banned due to renewed insecurity. Instead of holding the opposition party responsible, the Governor blamed the media for doing their legitimate job of reporting the news, including the good, the bad, and the ugly, for the good of society. The closure of these media houses violates the freedom of the press and goes against the Nigerian Constitution's provisions on the freedom of the media. As Punch newspaper emphasized, "Politicians must respect the freedom of the media, which is a fundamental human right, to do their job." However, even with freedom of the press, some scholars argue that the media is still a business. Commercial-oriented media, such as radio and television, are funded by advertising, which can influence their role as the mouthpiece of society for fear of withdrawal of adverts. Despite this argument, the role of the media remains critical in promoting economic growth and sustainable democracy.

The media and hegemony: The media are often accused of being a tool for the creation and maintenance of hegemony in society. The success of the Buhari administration in 2015 and 2019 has been attributed to the media's influence on public opinion. The media is often accused of being biased towards a particular political ideology or party, leading to the promotion of that party's agenda and ultimately influencing electoral outcomes. This phenomenon is not unique to Nigeria, as media hegemony has been observed in other countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom. Several factors contribute to media hegemony, including ownership influence, commercialisation of media content, media proliferation, and competition. Media owners may have their own political leanings, which can influence the editorial direction of their media outlets.

Findings

The findings of this study indicate that media political punditry has a significant impact on shaping public opinion and influencing the political discourse within Nigeria. The analysis demonstrates that the voices of political pundits carry considerable weight in swaying public sentiments, shaping voters' perceptions, and potentially influencing voting decisions. The study also found that challenges such as political interference, media economics and hegemonic tendencies undermine the role pundits/media.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper emphasizes the importance of media organizations recognizing the profound implications of their coverage on the electoral process. It highlights the need for

upholding journalistic integrity in reportage and underscores the responsibility of media organizations in shaping public opinion during the election period.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that media organizations prioritize unbiased and balanced coverage of political events, including the activities of political pundits. Furthermore, the paper suggests the importance of conducting evaluative studies after the election to obtain definitive conclusions on the level of success of political communication. These recommendations aim to ensure a fair and informed electoral process.

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Conflict, Peace and Security: Understanding African Regional Cooperation in the 21st Century

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Abstract

Conflict, peace and security are terms that cannot be overruled in the discussion of Africa. This paper explores the dynamics of conflict, peace, and security in Africa and the role of regional cooperation in addressing these challenges in the 21st century. The paper then focuses on the various initiatives and institutions established by African countries to promote regional cooperation, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It highlights the achievements and limitations of these organizations in addressing the region's peace and security challenges. The methodology adopted is the content analysis approach. This paper adopts the theory of complex interdependence. The findings of the study reveal that African nations have made strides in developing mechanisms for regional cooperation and conflict resolution. The study concludes by arguing that while regional cooperation is essential to addressing conflicts, peace, and security challenges in Africa, it requires a deeper commitment and cooperation from member states and the international community. It recommends the promotion of inclusive governance, strengthening of democratic institutions, and the enhancement of socioeconomic development as crucial steps towards achieving sustainable peace and security in the African region.

Keywords: Peace, Conflict, Security, African regional cooperation, 21st century

INTRODUCTION

The topical issue of conflict, peace, and security in Africa has been the subject of much research and analysis in recent decades, as the continent has faced numerous challenges in these areas. In the 21st century, regional cooperation has been seen as a key factor in promoting peace and security in Africa. According to Olonisakin (2015), regional cooperation has been vital in promoting peace and security in Africa, particularly through the establishment of regional organisations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). These organizations have played a crucial role in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and building institutions for governance and development in Africa.

One significant development in this regard was the establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002, which replaced the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and aimed to promote peace, security, and development in Africa through regional integration and cooperation (African Union, n.d.). However, the effectiveness of the AU in achieving these goals has been questioned, as conflicts continue to persist in many parts of the continent (Nwizu & Alozie, 2018).

Various factors have been identified as contributing to conflicts in Africa, including political, economic, and social factors. These conflicts have had devastating impacts on African countries, including loss of life, displacement of people, and hindrance to development (Ezeibe & Oguonu, 2014). Regional cooperation has been seen as a way to address these challenges by promoting peace, security, and stability on the continent. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which was established by the AU in 2002, provides a framework for addressing conflicts in Africa through preventive diplomacy, mediation, and peacekeeping (African Union, n.d.).

One of the significant challenges facing regional cooperation in Africa is the need for more resources and capacity to address the various conflicts on the continent. As noted by Olonisakin (2015), many African countries lack the resources and expertise needed to address the root causes of conflict and promote sustainable peace and development. In addition, there are often competing interests among different regional organizations, which can hinder cooperation and coordination. Despite these challenges, there have been some successes in regional cooperation in Africa. For example, ECOWAS successfully intervened in the civil war in Liberia in 2003, which helped to bring about peace and stability in the country. Similarly, the AU has played a key role in peacekeeping missions in Somalia and the Central African Republic (Olonisakin, 2015). Understanding African regional cooperation in the 21st century is crucial for promoting peace, security, and development on the continent. By building strong regional organizations and promoting cooperation and coordination among different actors, African countries can work together to address the root causes of conflict and build a more stable and prosperous future.

From the aforementioned, the paper seeks to examine the relationship between conflict, peace and security with African regional cooperation. The paper is therefore segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discusses the theoretical framework and findings, while the fifth section concludes the paper.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Conflict

Conflict is a term used to describe a wide range of interactions and situations involving disagreement, opposition, or hostility between individuals or groups. According to Deutsch (1973), conflict is "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals." (p. 3). Coser (1959) defines conflict as "a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals." (p. 12)

Rahim (2023) is of the opinion that conflict is "an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (individuals, groups, organizations, or nations) that occurs when one or more of the parties perceive their needs, interests, or values are being frustrated or negatively affected by the other party." (p. 4). According to organizational theorist Mary Parker Follett, conflict is "the appearance of difference, difference of opinions, of interests" (Follett, 1941, p. 19). Follett emphasized the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives and interests in managing conflict.

Conflict scholar Johan Galtung defined conflict as "the presence of at least two parties (individuals or groups) with divergent interests or goals, who feel they are incompatible, and who, as a result, engage in a struggle over scarce resources, power, or values, and in the course of which they damage or harm each other to some degree" (Galtung, 1990, p. 17). Galtung's definition incorporates elements of both Coser's and Gurr's definitions, while also emphasizing the potential for harm or damage in conflicts.

Peace and Security

Contemporary scholars have emphasized the importance of a human-centric approach to peace and security, which prioritizes the protection and promotion of human rights, dignity, and equality. Given the interconnection of political, economic, social, and environmental problems, human security is a people-centred approach to security that aims to safeguard the individual from both violent and non-violent threats (Paris, 2001).

Harmony and the absence of conflict or violence are frequently associated with the phrase "peace". It is typically seen as a state that people should aspire for in everyday usage.

Despite the presumptive general definition of the word, peace typically encompasses a variety of meanings depending on the situation and the speaker. A well-known peace researcher named Johan Galtung made a distinction between positive peace and negative peace, where negative peace is just the absence of war or direct physical violence, in order to help clear up some of this conceptual muddle. Positive peace is inevitably more challenging. It denotes the presence of conditions for political equality and social and economic fairness, whereas negative peace is defined by the absence of (direct) violence. It recognizes and combats social structural factors that prevent people or groups from reaching their full potential. Galtung's idea of positive peace thus emphasizes a more comprehensive examination of peace. The Oxford Dictionary provides five definitions of security, ranging from "a secure [meaning "untroubled by danger or fear"] condition or feeling" to "the safety of a State, company, etc., against espionage, theft, or other danger" to economic notions of providing security.

Former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali (1992) described peace as the coexistence of justice, equality, and human rights in addition to the absence of war or conflict. Galtung (1990) also outlined peace as the absence of interpersonal and structural violence, the presence of peaceful and just interpersonal interactions, and the presence of peaceful and just structures in society.

Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation refers to the process by which countries within a specific geographic region work together to achieve common goals and objectives, often through the establishment of formal institutions and agreements. Amitav Acharya, who defines regional cooperation as "the collective actions of two or more states within a given region to manage shared problems and promote shared interests through institutionalized forms of cooperation" (Acharya, 2004, p. 4). This definition emphasizes the importance of shared problems and interests, as well as institutionalization, in the process of regional cooperation.

Andrew Hurrell, who defines regional cooperation as the process by which governments in a region create and implement shared policies, pool resources, and exercise their sovereignty to achieve objectives that they could not accomplish acting independently. (Hurrell, 2015). This definition highlights the importance of policy coordination, resource sharing, and pooling of sovereignty as key aspects of regional cooperation.

Richard Baldwin defines regional cooperation as "the development of regional institutions that allow countries to reduce transaction costs, coordinate policies, and promote mutually beneficial trade and investment flows" (Baldwin, 1997, p. 1). This definition emphasizes the importance of reducing transaction costs, policy coordination, and trade and investment promotion as key drivers of regional cooperation.

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative methodology was adopted in the study. Data were sought from journals, newspapers, official websites, documentaries and literary works. All piece of information collected are relevant for the study and thematic approach as well as contents analysis were carried out.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Decades ago, the two interesting theories, complex interdependence, and dependency theory were introduced to put emphasis on how differently the relations of the same states and societies may be developed and organized. Both theories contain a clear point: complex interdependence helps to facilitate the relations between societies, and the dependency theory aims at evaluating the reasons why the relations between different types of societies cannot be equally developed (Isiksal, Huseyin 2004)

This paper adopts the theory of complex interdependence. This framework emphasizes the interdependence of states and societies in a globalized world, where issues such as conflict, peace, and security cannot be addressed solely through military or diplomatic means (Keohane and Nye, 1977).

The theory of complex interdependence refers to the idea that in the modern globalized world, states and other actors are interconnected and interdependent in multiple ways, with no one actor able to dominate or control the system. It is characterized by three characteristics such as; the use of multiple channels of action between societies in inter-state, trans-governmental, and transnational relations; the absence of a hierarchy of issues with changing agendas and linkages

between issues prioritized; and the objective of bringing about a decline in military force and coercive power in international relations. This concept challenges traditional realist notions of power and conflict, suggesting that cooperation and mutual dependence can be more effective in promoting peace and security than competition and force (Keohane and Nye, 1977).

In the context of conflict and peace, the theory of complex interdependence implies that traditional military solutions to conflicts may not be sufficient and that alternative approaches based on cooperation, dialogue, and negotiation may be more effective (Haas, 1990). For example, in the African region, conflicts such as those in Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have been characterized by complex interdependence, with multiple actors involved and interdependent economic, political, and social factors at play (Murithi, 2012). Traditional military interventions have often failed to address the underlying causes of these conflicts, leading to prolonged violence and instability.

In contrast, regional cooperation based on the principles of complex interdependence has shown promise in promoting peace and security in Africa. The African Union (AU), for example, has made significant efforts to promote regional integration, economic development, and conflict resolution through peaceful means (Murithi, 2012). By emphasizing the importance of dialogue, negotiation, and mutual dependence, the AU has helped to build trust and cooperation among member states, reducing the likelihood of violent conflict.

One potential weakness of complex interdependence is its limited applicability to the African context. As Acharya (2017) notes, the concept was developed in the context of Western states and may not fully capture the complex power dynamics and histories of African states. In addition, the continent continues to face numerous structural challenges, such as weak institutions, poverty, and underdevelopment, which can limit the potential for interdependence to promote peace and security.

However, complex interdependence remains a useful concept for understanding the potential benefits and limitations of regional cooperation in Africa. By promoting economic and social ties between states, African nations could reduce the likelihood of conflict and build stronger, more stable relationships.

CONFLICT IN AFRICA

Africa has been plagued by various conflicts since the end of colonialism. These conflicts have taken different forms, ranging from inter-state wars to civil wars, and ethnic conflicts.

One of the main causes of conflict in Africa is political instability. Many African countries have experienced a high turnover of leaders, often as a result of coups, civil wars, or elections that are marred by violence and fraud. This has resulted in weak governance and a lack of institutions that can ensure stability and the rule of law (Mbeki, 2014). Political instability has also contributed to corruption, which has undermined economic growth and development, leading to poverty and inequality.

Another factor that has contributed to conflict in Africa is economic inequality. Many African countries are rich in natural resources, but the benefits of these resources have not been evenly

distributed. Instead, they have been captured by elites, resulting in widespread poverty and inequality (Acemoglu et al., 2016). This has fueled resentment among the poor, who feel excluded from the benefits of economic growth.

Ethnic and religious differences have also been a source of conflict in Africa. Many African countries are composed of multiple ethnic and religious groups that have historical grievances against each other. These grievances are often exploited by politicians, who use ethnicity and religion to mobilize support and gain power (Ibrahim, 2015). This has resulted in inter-communal violence, which has often been exacerbated by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The effects of conflict in Africa have been devastating. Apart from the loss of lives and destruction of infrastructure, conflict has also resulted in the displacement of millions of people, leading to a humanitarian crisis. The cost of conflict has also been enormous, with many African countries spending a significant portion of their national budgets on defence and security at the expense of social services such as health and education.

Civil wars, on the other hand, have been the most common type of conflict in Africa. These conflicts have often been driven by political and economic factors and have resulted in widespread violence and displacement of populations. Examples of civil wars in Africa include the conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, Angola, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. To address the problem of conflict in Africa, there have been several efforts at the national, regional, and international levels. These efforts have included peace negotiations, disarmament programs, and development initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict. For example, the African Union has established a Peace and Security Council to prevent and resolve conflicts on the continent (AU, n.d.).

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN REGIONAL COOPERATION

African regional cooperation has had notable achievements and challenges over the years.

Achievements of African Regional Cooperation

- One of the significant achievements of African regional cooperation is the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This initiative aims to create a single market for goods and services in Africa, which will boost trade and economic growth in the region. As of January 2021, 54 out of the 55 African Union member states have signed the agreement, with 41 ratifying it. This shows the commitment of African leaders to promote intra-regional trade and integration (African Union, 2021).
- Another achievement is the peace and security initiatives in the region. The African Union (AU) has taken steps to resolve conflicts and prevent new ones through its peacekeeping missions and mediation efforts. For example, the AU's efforts in Sudan and South Sudan have led to significant progress in resolving conflicts in these countries. The AU has also been instrumental in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) (African Union, 2021).
- Another significant achievement of African regional cooperation is the establishment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is a comprehensive development program that seeks to address the development challenges facing Africa. The

program focuses on issues such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development, and good governance. Since its inception in 2001, NEPAD has been instrumental in promoting regional integration and cooperation in Africa (NEPAD, 2021).

- The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is another noteworthy achievement of African regional cooperation. The APRM is a voluntary self-assessment tool that African countries use to assess their governance and socio-economic development. The APRM helps African countries identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop strategies to address the challenges they face. As of 2021, 40 African countries have voluntarily acceded to the APRM (APRM, 2021).

CHALLENGES OF AFRICAN REGIONAL COOPERATION

1. One of the significant challenges facing African regional cooperation is the lack of funding for regional institutions and initiatives. The African Union, for example, relies heavily on external funding from development partners such as the European Union, which can undermine the continent's sovereignty and independence (Olukoshi, 2008).
2. Another challenge is the weak infrastructure in the region, which hinders economic growth and integration. Poor infrastructure, including inadequate road networks, power supply, and water supply, increases the cost of doing business in the region and affects trade and investment (ECA, 2021).
3. One of the critical challenges of African regional cooperation is the lack of political will and commitment to regional integration among African leaders. African leaders often prioritize national interests over regional interests, which hinders efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation (Alemayehu, 2007).

African regional cooperation has achieved significant milestones in promoting regional integration, peace, and development. However, challenges such as lack of funding, weak infrastructure, and lack of political will continue to impede the success of regional initiatives.

FINDINGS

In the 21st century, African regional cooperation has become increasingly important for promoting conflict resolution, peace, and security in the region. This cooperation is grounded in the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063, which envisions "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena" (African Union, 2015). African regional cooperation has been successful in resolving conflicts and promoting peace in the region. For example, the AU played a key role in mediating the conflict in Sudan, which led to the creation of South Sudan in 2011 (African Union, 2012). Similarly, the AU played a key role in resolving the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 (African Union, 2011). These successes demonstrate the importance of African regional cooperation in resolving conflicts in the region. However, challenges remain in promoting peace and security in Africa. One of the key challenges is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which exacerbate conflicts and make them more difficult to resolve (United Nations, 2014). Another challenge is the prevalence of violent extremism, which poses a threat to peace and security in the region (African Union, 2014). To

address these challenges, African regional cooperation has taken various measures. For example, the AU has launched the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which aims to provide a framework for promoting peace and security in the region (African Union, 2013). The APSA includes various components, such as the Peace and Security Council, the African Standby Force, and the Continental Early Warning System, which works together to promote peace and security in the region. African regional cooperation is essential for promoting conflict resolution, peace, and security in the region. While challenges remain, the successes achieved so far demonstrate the importance of continued cooperation in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

African regional cooperation has become increasingly important in addressing the issues of conflict, peace, and security in the 21st century. The continent has witnessed a significant number of conflicts in the past, but the African Union and other regional organizations have been working tirelessly to prevent and manage conflicts. Efforts to promote peace and security in Africa have been multifaceted, ranging from conflict prevention and mediation to peacekeeping and peace building initiatives. The African Union has also adopted several frameworks and protocols aimed at promoting democracy, human rights, and good governance, which are essential ingredients for sustainable peace.

African regional cooperation has made significant strides in promoting peace and security, but challenges still remain. These challenges include the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, transnational organized crime, and the threat of terrorism. These issues require a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including governments, regional organizations, civil society, and the private sector. African regional cooperation has been critical in promoting peace and security in the 21st century. However, it is essential to strengthen the cooperation to ensure that the continent can overcome the challenges it faces and achieve lasting peace and security.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Several literatures were analysed and the paper made the following recommendations:

1. African governments, alongside international partners, should prioritize investing in early warning mechanisms, preventive diplomacy, and peace building to mitigate conflict risks. Conflict prevention is a crucial strategy for reducing the occurrence and escalation of conflicts in the African region. Encouraging cooperation between states and other stakeholders, such as civil society and regional organizations, can help to identify potential sources of conflict and work towards peaceful resolutions.
2. Enhancing regional security cooperation, such as through the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), can foster trust and confidence among neighbouring countries. Additionally, increasing the capacity of regional security forces to tackle security challenges can improve their ability to manage and respond to conflicts. Addressing security threats requires collaboration and cooperation between states.

3. African governments, with the support of international partners, should prioritize addressing the underlying issues that contribute to conflict. Conflicts in Africa are often rooted in issues related to poverty, inequality, and lack of access to basic services. Addressing the root causes of conflict through initiatives such as job creation, infrastructure development, and education can reduce the likelihood of conflicts occurring in the first place.
4. African governments should prioritize building inclusive and participatory peace processes that incorporate diverse voices and perspectives. Inclusive dialogue can play a critical role in resolving conflicts peacefully. Encouraging dialogue among conflicting parties and involving diverse stakeholders such as civil society, women, and youth can help to foster a sense of ownership of the peace process and increase the likelihood of sustainable peace.
5. African states, with the support of the international community, should work to strengthen their peacekeeping and peace building capabilities. This includes providing training and resources to security forces, supporting conflict resolution initiatives, and ensuring the protection of civilians in conflict zones. Peacekeeping and peace building efforts can help to address the immediate and long-term impacts of conflict.

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Adoption of Social Media Marketing by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria: Engaging Diffusion of Innovation Theory

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Abstract

Social Media Marketing has become a key driver of growth and competitive advantage in many business enterprises in the developed world. Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria are faced with numerous challenges which made mortality rate of small businesses very high. Social media marketing has the potential of enhancing the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. However, its adoption rate among SMEs is still low. The objective of this study therefore is to investigate the factors influencing Social Media Marketing adoption by SMEs in Nigeria using the Diffusion of Innovation framework. This study models the adoption social media marketing by SMEs in Nigeria using Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation theory. The study adopts a cross sectional survey research design using a structured questionnaire to collect data from 450 SMEs located in Lagos Nigeria out of which 142 were found relevant. Data were analysed using multiple regression Ordinary Least Squares Method. Results show that only complexity significantly determines social media adoption by SMEs. Other factors do not have significant effect on social media adoption. As such, it was recommended that attention should be paid to these variables to drive the adoption social media marketing by SMEs.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Diffusion, Adoption, SMEs, Innovation

Introduction

Social media has been widely adjudged as the next attraction for advertising and mass mobilization since the invention of the television set (Esu, & Anyadighibe, 2014). It has grown to be the biggest media platform today with audience bigger than traditional media such as television and radio

(Agbele, Akase, Igyuve and Akpede, 2019). It is widely believed that if Facebook were to be a country, it will be the third biggest after China and India with about 1.5 billion subscribers worldwide (Tankovska, 2021). Globally, there are 3.2 billion internet users of social media out of which an estimated 247 million users are in the US alone (Tankovska, 2021). In Nigeria, it is estimated that 13.7% of the population use social media, a figure that is expected to grow to almost 20% by 2025 (Tankovska, 2021). With a population estimate at 200 million, this means that 27.4 million people use social media in Nigeria in 2020 (Tankovska, 2021). These figures underscore the potential of social media as a strong tool for effective marketing of goods and services..

The huge and growing number of social media users as well as its attractive features has made its use for product and services marketing purposes an absolute necessity in global and local business environment. Built in analytical tools which enable businesses to accurately track the success of advert campaigns and receive valuable feedback from audiences as input for product development and content improvement also contributed to the proliferation of social media for product advertising and promotions (Neti, 2011). Another feature include possibility of targeting and customising advert messages to fit individual circumstances and preferences of target audiences based on their respective digital footprints thereby radically improving the effectiveness of advert and promotion campaigns (Zhang, Jansen & Chowdhury, 2011; Shaltoni, 2016). In addition to this, social media provides a platform for customers and consumers of specific products and services to interact which further strengthen patronage and customer loyalty (Agbele, 2019). Some social media marketing channels include: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok, SnapChat, Google+ and blogs. A burgeoning component of social media marketing is what is now known as Influencer Marketing. This involves the use of social media influencers to market products and services. A social media influencer is an individual with a lot of followers on social media who actively promotes products, services, events, and brands on their respective social channels (Dotts Media, 2018). Big multinational companies like Nike, Emirates Airlines, Netflix, Disney and Microsoft have all embraced social media as a central part of their marketing and consumer engagement campaign (Hanna, Rohm, Crittenden, 2011). The potential for social media marketing for an improved organisational performance is limitless so much so that some scholars call it the 'ultimate marketing machine' (de Swaan Arons, van dan Dreist & Weed, 2014)

Social media marketing is a powerful tool for improving organisational performance of not only big business entities but also Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) (Olotewo, 2016). In Nigeria today, an increasing number of small businesses are turning to Instagram, Facebook Market, YouTube and WhatsApp to market their product and services (Tankovska, 2021). For many of them, Social Media Marketing (SMM) has proven to be useful in gaining competitive advantage, meet corporate goals and improve organisational performance (Alochenu, 2014). To this end, many successful SMEs in Nigeria attribute their success to their social media marketing strategy.

The growth of social media use by the Nigerian populace has been phenomenal. As at November 2020, almost one in every 10 Nigerians uses social media. Despite this seeming proliferation of social media use in Nigeria, many scholars believe that the use of SMM and even Information and Telecommunication (ICT) adoption generally is very slow among SMEs in Nigeria (Apulu & Ige, 2019). According to Akpulu & Ige (2019), there are 41.5 million SMEs in Nigeria in 2019 out of

which less than 10% use social media marketing despite its huge advantages. It is settled in literature that SMEs provide the basis for sustained economic development of any society. It is also known that SMEs drive key indices of economic growth such as employment, price level, Balance of Payment position, income distribution etc. As such when the performance of SMEs improves, the economy grows. It is therefore imperative for relevant stakeholders to provide the requisite frameworks and policies that support the wellbeing of SMEs a critical part of which includes the provision of enabling environment and other prerequisites for an increased adoption of social media marketing.

The objective of this study therefore is to investigate the factors influencing Social Media Marketing adoption by Small and Medium Enterprises in Nigeria using the Diffusion of Innovation framework. In other words, this study determined the impact of the following variables on the adoption of SMM by SMEs in Nigeria: Relative Advantage, Complexity, Compatibility, Portability, Observability and Potential for Reinvention

This paper therefore addressed the following question: do relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, testability, observability and potential for reinvention significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs in Nigeria?

Many definitions of social media marketing have been given by various scholars; however, only a few of these definitions will be taken into consideration in this study. It simply connotes engaging with customers online (Neti, 2011). According to this concept, social media is viewed as an online channel for interacting with customers. According to Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011), social media is also a computer-mediated tool that enables users to produce, share, and exchange data, concepts, and images and videos in online communities and networks. In contrast to traditional marketing channels like television, radio, and print media, social media marketing involves creating engaging content for various social media websites in order to raise awareness and attract the attention of both potential and current customers (Olotewo, 2016). The following are the dimensions of social media marketing:

Interaction: Communication with customers is made possible by social media marketing, which is one of its main benefits. A Facebook page or Twitter account can instantly and simultaneously inform all of its followers on a particular subject (Berselli, Burger, & Close, 2012). By disseminating current, consumer-relevant content, social networking sites promote greater involvement with the online community. It provides customer-posted updates and offers insight into their needs (Fischer & Reuber, 2011).

Accessibility: The social media are readily available and cost next to nothing to utilize. Customers may express themselves conveniently and easily on social media, giving businesses an opportunity to respond. Social networking is simple to utilize and doesn't call for any specialized knowledge or abilities Taprial & Kanwar, (2012).

The importance of using social media advertising for businesses includes the following points; Cost Effective: dissimilar to traditional media that cost a lot to advertise with, social media marketing offers an avenue for businesses to market economically, even free in some cases. Wider Scope: Social media advertising can help businesses reach a larger number of audiences all over the world. Business boundary on social media has no gates or walls. Solid Customer Bond:

Through social listening, social media marketing also gives you the chance to learn valuable information about your target audience's interests and behavior. For instance, you can quickly view user comments on what people are saying or feeling about your company (DeMers, 2014).

Conceptual Review

Marketing as an established discipline has many definition. The American Marketing Association defines marketing as the activities, set of institutions, and processes for developing, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large (Saravanakumar & Sugantal.akshmi, 2012). This study, however, adopts this definition. This definition contains the key components of contemporary marketing: institutions, creation, communication and delivery of value to target members of the society. Social media on the other hand is computer based technology that provide platform for sharing of idea, thoughts and information through networks and virtual communities. As an internet based system, social media provides quick electronic communication of contents (Dollarhide & Drury, 2020). Combining the above two concepts, the study defines social media marketing as the deployment of computer based technology through networks and virtual communities to create offerings that have value, whilst exchanging, informing and receive feedback from customers about the same. This definition is in line with the position of several scholars such as Felix, Rauschnabel and Hinsch, (2006); Alves, Fernandes and Resopo (2018)

Theoretical Review

There are several theories that explain the attitude towards and intention to use a new technology. However, three are most popular among scholars: Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Davies' Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Roger's Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory. This is because most studies that address the adoption of a new technology tend to focus on at least one of the three (Alam, Omar, Ariffin and Hashim, 2018; Olanrewaju, Hossain, Whiteside & Mercieca, 2020). Postulated by Icek Ajzen, the TPB states that attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control determine intention which in turn determines behaviour (Ajzen, 1991; Chen & Li, 2010). However, a major criticism of the TPB is its limited predictive validity (Sniehotta, Presseau & Araujo-Soares, 2014). For this reason, it is less popular among scholars in the acceptance of a new technology discourse (Alam *et al*, 2018).

Unlike the TPB, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) specifically explains the factors that determine the acceptance of technology. TAM theory states that the decision to accept new technologies by users is determined by the following factors: Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use (Davies, 1989). Perceived usefulness is when the degree to which a technology is useful in doing what the user expects it to do. Perceived usefulness on the other hand is the degree which the use of a technology is free from effort. These factors respond to demographics such as age, education, income and social status. Also, the transmission mechanism between these factors and intention to use technology is attitude (Vankatesh & Bala, 2008). Despite its popularity among researchers, TAM has a number of flaws. One of such weaknesses is its low predictive value and heuristic approach (Bagozzi, 2007). A modified version of TAM is the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology Model (UTAUT) which identified the following as determinants of technology usage: performance expectancy, perceived trust, perceived risk,

facilitating conditions and perceived enjoyment. In a study conducted in Malaysia to model the determinants of social media usage by businesses using UTAUT, Nasir, Nawi, Mamun, Shokery, Fazal & Raston (2017) found that perceived risk, perceived trust and facilitating conditions have significant effect on social media usage.

However, the Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) theory explains five main factors that determine adoption of an innovation (Greenhalgh, Robert, Macfarlane, Bate, & Kyriakidou, 2004). These are relative advantage (benefits of using the innovation relative to others that are available), compatibility with systems that exists prior to the new innovation, complexity (which describes how difficult the new innovation is to learn, trialability or testability (the degree to which the innovation may be experimented on an installment basis), potential for reinvention (potential for use for initially unintended purposes) and observability (the degree to which the outcome of an innovation is visible to others (Denis, Herbert, Langley, Lozeau, Trottier, 2002). Since Everett Rogers put forward this theory in 1962, there have been over four thousand articles across several disciplines on diffusion of innovation making it one of the most widely used theories on technology adoption (Greenhalgh *et al*, 2004). This is because of robustness and predictive strength over TAM and TPB (Alam *et al*, 2018). This inform the decision for the adoption of DOI theory as the theoretical underpinning for this study

Empirical Review

Since inception of the use of internet for marketing purposes, many scholars have investigated the nature and characteristics of social media marketing. In a study to find out what makes users to click and share social media adverts, Chang, Yu and Lu (2015) studied how this is affected by argument quality, post popularity and post attractiveness. Using Structural Equation Model to analyse data from 392 Facebook fans, the research discovered that these three variables significantly determine clicking and sharing of social media messages and adverts.

Also worthy of note is the application of DOI theory in the investigation into the adoption and implementation of social media marketing by celebrity chefs by Clerk, Murphy and Adler (2016). The study discovered that a high proportion of respondent celebrity chefs adopted social media as a result of the six determinants. In the same vain, Agbele et al (2019) studied the adoption of social media marketing in Nigeria. The investigation identified challenges militating against the adoption of social media marketing in Nigeria one of which include lack of talents in design and deployment of social media marketing contents.

Previous studies also identified the following as significant determinants of SMM adoption by businesses: cost (Ahani, Rehim & Nilashi, 2017; Parveen, Jaafar & Ainin, 2016; Tieminem & Karjaluo, 2015), facilitating conditions (Ahani et al, 2017; Adam, Jizat & Noor, 2015; Nasir, Nawi, Mamun, Fazal & Raston, 2017; Odoom, Odoom, Anning-Dorson, Anning-Dorson, Acheampong, & Acheampong, 2017). performance expectancy (Shokery, Nawi, Nasir, & Raston, 2017), effort expectancy (Gavino, Williams, Jacobson, & Smith, 2018; Turan, & Karam 2018); perceived enjoyment (Shokery et al, 2017), perceived trust (Vongsraluang & Bhatiasevi, 2017), interactivity (Odoom et al, 2017), system and service quality (Vongsraluang & Bhatiasevi, 2017)

From the literature reviewed in this study, several gaps are apparent. One of such is the lack of clear models that explain adoption social media marketing by business entities and most especially SMEs. Most authors concentrate on the nature and characteristics of social media marketing to the neglect of determinants of its adoption using a widely accepted theoretical framework such as DOI theory. This was also pointed out by Dwivedi, Kapoor and Chen (2015) while identifying gaps in literature and suggested research direction in social media marketing. This study will fill this gap by providing a model that explains the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs in Nigeria. Such a model will help identify the inhibitions to the adoption of social media marketing which will assist in hardware and software design and policy formulation.

A study of Monica (2017), evaluated the effectiveness of social media marketing on customer loyalty at Equity Bank in Kenya. The study concluded that Social media site offer valid information to consumers that has helped respondents remember the Equity bank brand.

Another study by Fridouse, Hajar, Amna and Amal (2017), titled impact of social media on customer's satisfaction: an investigation of Bank Muscat, three dimensions of social media marketing examined: Information Reliability (IR), Responsiveness (R) and Privacy and connectivity (PC). The results revealed that there is a relationship between variables namely Information Reliability and Responsiveness on Customer Satisfaction.

Gbadeyan and Boachie (2016) examined the impact of social media on small business sustainability in Ghana using Tonaton, Konga, Tisu, OLX and Jumia as case studies. The findings revealed that the use of social media has significantly influenced organisational profitability. Also, the findings showed that social media increased brand awareness among the sampled respondents.

In order to determine how users in Port Harcourt, Rivers State perceive social media sites as advertising media, if consumers use the products promoted on them, and how they make purchasing decisions on these social platforms, Nyekwere and Kur (2013) looked at social media sites, primarily Facebook. Despite the difficulties associated with their use, the results demonstrated that social media are effective channels for advertising. Additionally, it was discovered that consumers buy the goods and services promoted on social media primarily because their friends have recommended them and because they actually need those goods and services. In Osun State, Nigeria, research has not yet been done to compare the effects of social media marketing on customers' satisfaction among urban and rural residents. This study aims to close this gap as a result.

Methodology

From literature, the DOI theory posits that the Adoption of Technology (At) is determined the Relative Advantage (Ra), Complexity (CM), Compatibility (Cp), Testability (Ts) Observability (Ob) and Potential for Reinvention (Pr).

Therefore the following hypotheses were tested

H: Relative Advantage, Complexity, Compatibility, Testability, Observability and Potential for Reinvention do not significantly determine adoption of social media marketing by SMEs in Nigeria

The above is made clearer in the following model:

$$\begin{aligned} At &= f(Ra, Cm, Cp, Ts, Ob, Pr) \\ &= \alpha + \beta_1 Ra + \beta_2 Cm + \beta_3 Cp + \beta_4 Ts + \beta_5 Ob + \beta_6 Pt + \varepsilon. (1) \end{aligned}$$

Where

$$\begin{aligned} \varepsilon &= \text{Stochastic Disturbance Term} \\ \beta_{1-6} &= \text{Coefficients} \end{aligned}$$

According to the Small and Medium Scale Enterprises Development Agency (SMEDAN) (2003), Lagos holds the largest pool of registered SMEs in Nigeria. This is perhaps in line with the status of Lagos as the commercial capital of Nigeria. Hence 250 SMEs were selected using random sampling method from a sample frame consisting of all 8000 SMEs in Lagos State on the register of SMEDAN. Sample size was determined using the Yamane formula at $e = 0.05$. Structured questionnaires were designed and distributed to selected 400 samples made up of small business owners to elicit data on the variables provided above in addition to demographic characteristics of respondents out of which 142 were found to be useful representing 36% response rate. The following are sections in the questionnaire: Section A provides information about demographic characteristics of respondents including age range, gender, number of employees in the business, asset base and profit level. Section B was designed to provide data on each of the six determinants of adoption namely relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, testability, observability and potential for reinvention. Section C was likewise designed to elicit data on the adoption of social media marketing by respondents. Sections B and C were designed using the 5 points Likert scale with polar anchors 1: strongly disagree; 2: disagree; 3: neither agree nor disagree; 4: agree; 5: strongly agree. Consistency of data was tested using the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha from data obtain via pilot study made up of 40 small business owners in Ilesa, Osun State. Data was analysed using multiple regression Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method and results computed using SPSS 23.0 software.

As with most studies, this investigation has the following limitations. First, due to the fact that samples were drawn from the Lagos area, generalisation based on the result should be done with caution. Secondly, data used for this study are cross sectional data. Studies have shown that cross sectional data have weak predictive value. Also, data for both dependent and independent variables were sourced from self-reporting questionnaire thus the presence of Common Methods Bias (CMB) cannot be ruled out (Podsakoff, Podsakoff, McKenzie & Lee, 2003). Also, the number of samples size used in this study is low which could limit the accuracy of results

Results and Discussion

The table below shows the summary of demographic features of respondents.

Table 1: Frequency Count of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age of Respondents	Less than 18	4	3
	18 – 24	16	12
	25 – 35	73	51
	36 – 45	34	24
	46 – 55	18	13
	55+	11	8
Number of Years in Business	0 – 5	76	54
	6 – 10	28	20
	11 – 20	21	15
	> 20 Years	17	12
Number of Employees	0 – 5	96	68
	6 – 10	21	15
	11 – 20	15	11
	21 – 30	10	7
	> 30	0	0
Industry where business is operating	Manufacturing	33	23
	Farming	8	6
	Animal Husbandry	4	3
	Food Processing	12	8
	ICT	33	23
	Fashion	16	11
	Retail	28	20
	Construction	9	6

Source: Field Survey (2023)

From Table 1, 142 questionnaires were found to be useful. From this figure respondents were drawn from diverse industries which include manufacturing (mostly cottage industries) farming (crop planting), animal husbandry, food processing Information and Communication Technology, fashion, services and construction.

Table 2: Cronbach Coefficient Alpha

Construct	Number of Items Making Up Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Coefficient
Relative Advantage	6	0.79	
Complexity	5	0.82	
Compatibility	5	0.81	
Testability	2	0.95	
Observability	5	0.80	
Potential for Reinvention	2	0.96	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 2 shows the results of Cronbach Coefficient Alpha to test the internal consistency and reliability of research instrument. From the table, number of items making up each constructs range from 2 to 6. According to Nunnally (1978), benchmark for consistency using the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.8. However, initial results for particularly Testability and Potential for reinvention fell below this benchmark. But after making necessary adjustments to these items, their respective Cronbach's Alpha increased. As such, none of the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha for each construct is below 0.8. Thus the research instrument is consistent and reliable.

The table below shows descriptive statistics of respondents.

Table 3: Relative Advantage

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	11	7.7	7.7	7.7
Disagree	23	16.2	16.2	23.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	30	21.1	21.1	45.1
Agree	54	38.0	38.0	83.1
Strongly Agree	24	16.9	16.9	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 4: Complexity

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	11	7.7	7.7	7.7
Disagree	28	19.7	19.7	27.5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	39	27.5	27.5	54.9
Agree	34	23.9	23.9	78.9
Strongly Agree	30	21.1	21.1	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 5: Compatibility

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	2.8	2.8	2.8
Disagree	50	35.2	35.2	38.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10	7.0	7.0	45.1
Agree	32	22.5	22.5	67.6
Strongly Agree	46	32.4	32.4	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 6: Testability

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Disagree	41	28.9	28.9	32.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22	15.5	15.5	47.9
Agree	42	29.6	29.6	77.5
Strongly Agree	32	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 7: Observability

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	9	6.3	6.3	6.3
Disagree	12	8.5	8.5	14.8
Neither agree nor Disagree	57	40.1	40.1	54.9
Agree	45	31.7	31.7	86.6
Strongly Agree	19	13.4	13.4	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 8: Potential for Invention

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	4	2.8	2.8	2.8
Disagree	25	17.6	17.6	20.4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	32	22.5	22.5	43.0
Agree	58	40.8	40.8	83.8
Strongly Agree	23	16.2	16.2	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Table 9: We have adopted/will adopt social media marketing in our company (Social Media Adoption)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	15	10.6	10.6	10.6
Disagree	36	25.4	25.4	35.9
Neither Agree nor Disagree	20	14.1	14.1	50.0
Agree	64	45.1	45.1	95.1
Strongly Agree	7	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	142	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Tables 3 to 9 show the frequency count of respondents for each construct. Please note that the responses for the following constructs captured in the tables above are averages of the items under each construct. For example there are 6 items measuring Relative Advantage. Thus the actual measure of Relative Advantage is taken as the mean of responses for all 6 items. The same principle was also applied to other constructs.

Table 10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.228 ^a	.052	.010		1.146

a. Predictors: (Constant), Potential for Invention, Relative Advantage, Observability, Complexity, Compatibility, Testability

Source: Author’s Computation using SPSS, (2023)

Table 10 shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient for the model is 0.228 and the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) at 0.052 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.1. This shows that 1.1% of the relationship is explained by the model with a standard error of 1.15. This mean only a small percentage of the adoption of SMM is determined by the six exogenous variables.

Table 11: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9.754	6	1.626	1.238	.291 ^b
	Residual	177.232	135	1.313		
	Total	186.986	141			

a. Dependent Variable: We have adopted/will adopt social media marketing in our company

b. Predictors: (Constant), Potential for Invention, Relative Advantage, Observability, Complexity, Compatibility, Testability

Source: Author’s Computation using SPSS, (2023)

Table 11 showing the ANOVA for the constructs also supports the fact that the model explained that the predictors (relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, testability, observability and potential for reinvention) determine the dependent variable (adoption of social media marketing) with sums of squares for regression at 9.75 at $p > 0.05$ level of significance. This shows clearly that relationship in the model is not significant.

Table 12: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.229	.833		3.875	.000
	Relative Advantage	.027	.084	.027	.317	.752
	Complexity	-.164	.080	-.175	2.053	.042
	Compatibility	.016	.075	.018	-.208	.835
	Testability	.109	.084	.116	1.298	.196
	Observability	.092	.095	.083	.975	.331
	Potential for Invention	.087	.095	.079	.913	.363

a. Dependent Variable: We have adopted/will adopt social media marketing in our company

Source: Author’s Computation using SPSS, (2023)

Table 12 above shows the regression coefficients of the model. From the above, all independent variables except complexity significantly determine adoption of social media marketing with $p > 0.05$. Specifically, Complexity have a significant negative effect on the adoption of social media marketing with a coefficient of -0.175 at $p = 0.04$. On the other hand, Relative Advantage, Compatibility, Testability and Potential for Reinvention all determine Adoption of Social Media but not significantly.

From the above, the hypotheses test result is shown in the table 13

Table 13: Hypotheses test results

Hypotheses	P	Results
H₁ Relative Advantage does not significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs	.752	Accept
H₂ Complexity does not significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs	.042	Reject
H₃ Compatibility does not significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs	.835	Accept
H₄ Testability does not significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs	.196	Accept
H₅ Observability does not significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs	.331	Accept

H₆	Potential for Reinvention does not significantly determine the adoption of social media marketing by SMEs	.363	Accept
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Source: Field Survey (2023)

The results except for complexity are not consistent with the results of many studies on the effect of these determinants on the adoption of a new technology. While most previous studies discovered significant relationships between each component of the identified determinants and adoption of social media marketing (Tura & Kara, 2018; Clerk, *et al*, 2016; Odoom, *et al*, 2017), this study differ. However, even though the relationships are not significant, the effects should not be ignored (Alam *et al*, 2018; Vankatesh, 2008; Greenhalgh *et al*, 2004; Chang *et al*, 2015)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results established the fact the relative advantage positively determines adoption of social media marketing by SMEs in Nigeria. Also, the more advantageous social media marketing is perceived to be relative to traditional marketing media, the higher the adoption rate. This means that more entrepreneurs and businesses will adopt social media as the advantages of its use grow. Therefore application developers and policy makers can improve the use of social media marketing through improved enlightenment on its relative advantage. Also, the study showed that the more complex social media marketing usage is, the lower its adoption rate. The study also shows that high cost of usage also drives down adoption rate. Therefore user friendliness and cost effectiveness should be pursued to increase usage of social media marketing by SMEs. Compatibility was shown to positively determine adoption of social media marketing by SMEs. So also are testability, observability and potential for reinvention. Thus key stakeholders must take note of these drivers of social media marketing usage to stimulate increase in the adoption of this powerful marketing tool.

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The Youths in Security and Peace Building in Nigeria: A Social Identity Perspective

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Abstract

Nigeria has experienced several security challenges in recent years. The challenges have ominously retarded the country's economic growth and social cohesion, and the youth have borne the consequences. Security and peace are critical components for sustainable developments and serve as tools to address social-economic challenges. In this light, the paper examines the role of youths in security and peace keeping in Nigeria. The methodology employed for this study is content analysis. The paper adopts the Social Identity Theory as its theoretical framework. Its findings show that youths have been actively involved in peace building process across different regions. The paper also found that youths face different challenges in their effort to contribute to peacebuilding. It concludes by emphasizing that the potential of the youth in promoting peace and security in Nigeria cannot be ignored. By way of recommendation, the government and relevant stakeholders should create more opportunities for youth engagement in peace promotion efforts.

Keywords: Peace, Security, Peace building, Roles, Youth, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Security and peace are fundamental components of sustainable development, and youth involvement is critical to achieving this goal. Nigeria, being the most populous country in Africa, has been plagued by several security challenges in recent years, ranging from insurgency, ethnic and religious conflicts, to cybercrime, kidnapping, and banditry (Babawale, 2019). The challenges have ominously retarded the country's economic growth and social cohesion, and the youth have borne the consequences.

Nigeria has a youthful population, with over 60% of its citizens under the age of 30 (UNDP, 2019). This demographic group is critical to the country's development, as they represent the country's future leaders and workforce. However, young people in Nigeria face numerous challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and limited opportunities for education and engagement in uncivil activities (Adejumobi, 2015).

Nigeria has experienced several security challenges in recent years. Boko Haram, a terrorist group based in the Northeast region, has caused significant damage to lives and property in the region (Obasi, 2016). There have also been cases of farmer-herder conflicts, which have resulted in the loss of lives and property in several parts of the country (Hassan & Aliyu, 2020). Other forms of insecurity in Nigeria include banditry, kidnapping, and cybercrime.

Young people have played significant roles in Nigeria's security challenges, both positively and negatively. On the positive side, youth-led initiatives, such as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), have contributed to the fight against Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast (Awodiya, 2021). Youth-led movements, such as the #EndSARS protests in October 2020, was a social movement that gained significant momentum, have also brought attention to police brutality and other human rights abuses in the country (Akinwotu, 2020). The movement was primarily driven by Nigerian youth, who utilized social media platforms, particularly Twitter, to amplify their voices and share experiences of harassment and abuse by SARS. On the negative side, young people have also been involved in criminal activities, such as kidnapping and cybercrime (Umar, 2020).

In addition to the challenges faced by young people in Nigeria, the country also faces broader security challenges that impact the entire population. In recent years, Nigeria has experienced an increase in violent conflicts, which have had a negative impact on the country's economic growth and social stability (Olaniyi, 2021). These conflicts are often fuelled by a combination of factors, including ethnic and religious differences, resource scarcity, and political instability.

Despite the challenges facing young people in Nigeria, they have also demonstrated their commitment to peace-building initiatives. Youth-led organizations, such as the Young Leaders for Active Citizenship (YLAC), have been working to promote peace and dialogue among different ethnic and religious groups in the country (Amusan, 2020). Youth have also been involved in conflict resolution efforts in different parts of the country, such as the Middle Belt (Gowon, 2021). There is also the Youth Peace Ambassadors Network (YPAN), which works to promote dialogue and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups, and the Nigerian Youth Parliament, which provides a platform for young people to engage in policymaking processes (Eze, 2020). These initiatives demonstrate the potential of young people to contribute positively to Nigeria's security and development.

The Nigerian government has implemented various policies and initiatives aimed at addressing the country's security challenges. These include military operations against insurgent groups, such as Boko Haram, and community policing initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and trust between citizens and law enforcement agencies (Bachir, 2021). However, these measures have been met with mixed success, and there is a growing recognition of the need to involve young people in security and peace-building efforts.

International organizations, such as the United Nations, have also recognized the critical role of young people in promoting peace and security. In 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2250, which recognizes the positive role of young people in conflict prevention and peacebuilding (United Nations Security Council, 2015). This resolution emphasizes the need to involve young people in decision-making processes and to create opportunities for youth participation in peacebuilding activities.

It is against this backdrop that the paper examines the role of youths in security and peace keeping in Nigeria. The paper is segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discussed the subject matter, while the fifth section concludes.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Security

Security is a complex issue that has been defined in various ways by scholars. One commonly cited definition comes from the Copenhagen School, which defines security as "the condition where the referent object enjoys freedom from threat to its valued interests" (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998: 25). In the context of Nigeria, this includes threats from terrorism, intercommunal conflicts, and criminal activities such as kidnapping and robbery (Umar, 2020).

Other scholars have emphasized the multidimensional nature of security in Nigeria, including economic, social, and political factors. For example, Nwankwo (2019) argues that security in Nigeria is closely linked to the country's economic development, and that addressing economic inequalities and promoting inclusive growth is essential for achieving long-term security.

Similarly, Onuoha (2018: 105) emphasizes the importance of addressing social and political factors, including corruption and poor governance, in order to address security challenges in Nigeria. Onuoha argues that "unless corruption and poor governance are effectively tackled, the security challenges in the country will continue to linger".

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, religion and ethnicity are also important considerations in defining security in Nigeria. Religion has been a key driver of conflict in Nigeria, particularly between Muslims and Christians, and has been linked to violence, terrorism, and intercommunal conflicts (Mustapha, 2019). Ethnicity is also a significant factor, with conflicts between different ethnic groups often leading to violence and displacement (Ikelegbe, 2019).

Furthermore, gender and youth are also important considerations in defining security in Nigeria. Women and girls in Nigeria are often subject to gender-based violence, including sexual violence and trafficking, which threatens their physical and psychological well-being (Osuntokun, 2020). Meanwhile, youth are often marginalized and excluded from political and economic opportunities, which can lead to frustration and involvement in criminal or violent activities (Umar, 2020). These various factors highlight the complex and multidimensional nature of security in Nigeria, and the need for a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing security challenges in the country.

Peace Building

Peacebuilding can be defined as a long-term process aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, and recurrence of violent conflict, and promoting social, economic, and political transformation to build a sustainable peace (Bachir, 2021; Olaniyi, 2021). According to Olaniyi (2021), peacebuilding involves a range of activities and strategies, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace education, community dialogue, reconciliation, and social integration.

In the context of Nigeria, peacebuilding is particularly important given the country's history of intercommunal conflict, political instability, and insecurity (Awodiya, 2021; Eze, 2020). According to Awodiya (2021), peacebuilding in Nigeria should prioritize the participation and engagement of youth, given their potential to promote positive change and contribute to sustainable peace in the country.

Furthermore, scholars have emphasized the need for a holistic and integrated approach to peacebuilding in Nigeria, which addresses the root causes of conflict and promotes social justice, equity, and inclusion (Bachir, 2021; Eze, 2020). This approach should involve not only government institutions, but also civil society organizations, community leaders, and other stakeholders in the peacebuilding process.

Peacebuilding can also be defined as a process of creating sustainable peace and preventing the recurrence of violence and conflict through social, political, and economic transformation (United Nations Security Council, 2015). It involves efforts to address the root causes of conflict, build social cohesion and trust, promote respect for human rights, and establish institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution (Bachir, 2021).

It also involves efforts to address issues related to political instability, corruption, poverty, inequality, and religious and ethnic tensions (Eze, 2020). Scholars emphasize the importance of including diverse perspectives and promoting inclusive and participatory processes in peacebuilding initiatives in order to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability (Olaniyi, 2021).

Furthermore, peacebuilding is a dynamic and evolving process that requires continuous engagement and adaptation to changing circumstances (United Nations Security Council, 2015). It involves not only addressing immediate conflicts, but also working towards long-term goals of sustainable peace, development, and justice.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used in this study is content analysis, which involves evaluating concepts, analysing themes, and presenting theoretical perspectives. This study primarily relied on qualitative information gathered from secondary sources, including journals, government websites, and written materials. All the data collected for this study is directly applicable and pertinent to its objectives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper adopts the Social Identity Theory as its theoretical underpinning. The Social Identity Theory, developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), posits that individuals derive their self-concept and sense of belonging from their membership in social groups. These groups may be based on various factors such as ethnicity, religion, nationality, and gender. In the context of the roles of youth in security and peacebuilding in Nigeria, the Social Identity Theory can help to explain the behaviours and actions of youth as members of different social groups.

Youth in Nigeria often identify strongly with their ethnic and religious groups, and these identities may contribute to feelings of marginalization and exclusion (Eze, 2020). However, the Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals can also draw on these identities to form positive group identities and work towards collective goals. This means that youth can use their identity as members of particular social groups to work towards promoting security and peacebuilding in Nigeria.

According to Olaniyi (2021), youth involvement in peacebuilding efforts in Nigeria can be facilitated by promoting a sense of belonging and ownership in the process. This involves recognizing the unique identity of youth as members of different social groups and involving them in the design and implementation of peacebuilding programs. By doing so, youth can feel empowered to contribute positively to their communities and to work towards promoting security and peacebuilding in Nigeria.

In addition, social identity theory emphasizes the importance of intergroup contact and communication in reducing prejudice and promoting positive attitudes towards other groups (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This can be relevant to the roles of youth in peacebuilding efforts, as promoting intergroup dialogue and collaboration can help to reduce tensions and build trust between different groups in Nigeria.

The theory has however been criticized for focusing primarily on the role of social identity in intergroup relations and does not account for other factors that may influence behaviour. It also assumes that individuals only belong to one social group at a time, which may not reflect the complexity of real-world social identities.

However, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding the roles of youth in security and peacebuilding in Nigeria. It highlights the importance of recognizing the unique identity of youth as members of different social groups and involving them in peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of intergroup contact and communication in reducing prejudice and promoting positive attitudes towards other groups in Nigeria.

PAST PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES IN NIGERIA

Peace building efforts in Nigeria date back to the pre-colonial era when traditional methods of conflict resolution were employed to settle disputes among ethnic groups (Oshodi, 2018). With the advent of colonialism and the subsequent independence of Nigeria, various peace building initiatives have been implemented by the government, civil society organizations, and international organizations.

One of the earliest peace building initiatives in Nigeria was the establishment of the National Peace Committee in 1976, which was tasked with promoting peace and resolving conflicts in the country (Ibrahim, 2020). In 1998, the Inter-Religious Council (IRC) was formed as a joint effort between Christian and Muslim leaders to address conflicts between religious groups (Ejimeke, 2019). The country's diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, and culture has often been a source of tension and conflict (Agbese, 2018). The post-independence period was marked by political violence, ethnic and religious conflicts, and military coups, which further destabilized the country (Irobi, 2019).

In recent times, the country has been plagued by conflicts in the Niger Delta region, Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East, and farmer-herder conflicts in various parts of the country (Ejimeke, 2019). To address these conflicts, various peacebuilding efforts have been made by the government, civil society organizations, and international organizations.

In the 1990s, civil society organizations played a significant role in promoting peace and democracy in Nigeria. The Pro-Democracy Movement, led by human rights activists and civil society groups, successfully campaigned for the restoration of democracy in 1999 (Ibrahim, 2020).

In the Niger Delta region, the government established the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Niger Delta Ministry to address the root causes of the conflict in the region (Okeke, 2020). In 2009, the government also launched the Niger Delta Amnesty Program, aimed at disarming and rehabilitating former militants in the region (Eniola, 2020).

In 2013, the Nigerian government established the Presidential Committee on Dialogue and Peaceful Resolution of Security Challenges in the North, also known as the Boko Haram Committee, to address the Boko Haram insurgency in the North-East (Ayodele & Azeez, 2019). The Committee engaged with various stakeholders, including civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, and local communities, to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

International organizations, such as the United Nations and the African Union, have also played a significant role in promoting peace and security in Nigeria. The United Nations has supported peacebuilding efforts in the country through various programs, such as the UNDP's Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (SDGN) program and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Nigeria (UNIPON) (Oshodi, 2018).

Additionally, there has been a rise in grassroots peace building initiatives led by youth, women, and community-based organizations. For example, the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign mobilized youth to advocate for the reduction of the age limit for running for political office, promoting youth inclusion in decision-making processes (Irobi, 2019). Similarly, the Women's Peace and Security Network (WPSN) works to promote women's participation in peace building and conflict resolution efforts (Okeke, 2020).

Despite these efforts, Nigeria continues to face numerous challenges in promoting peace and security in the country. The government's response to conflicts has often been slow and inadequate, and issues such as corruption and human rights abuses have hindered peacebuilding efforts. However, there is still hope for Nigeria, and with sustained efforts from all stakeholders, peace and security can be achieved in the country.

PEACE BUILDING PROCESSES IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a diverse country with over 250 ethnic groups and significant religious and cultural differences (Smith, 2016). These differences have often led to tensions and conflicts, including intergroup violence and civil unrest. In response, various peacebuilding processes have been implemented to promote social cohesion, reduce violence, and build sustainable peace. This section will discuss some of the key peacebuilding processes in Nigeria.

- **Conflict resolution and mediation:** One of the most common peacebuilding processes in Nigeria is conflict resolution and mediation. This involves bringing together conflicting parties to engage in dialogue and negotiation, with the aim of reaching a mutually acceptable solution. This process has been used successfully in various settings, including

resolving conflicts between herders and farmers in the Middle Belt region (Ibrahim, 2020).

- Reconciliation and forgiveness: Another key peacebuilding process is reconciliation and forgiveness. This involves promoting understanding and empathy between conflicting parties and encouraging them to forgive past wrongs. This process has been used successfully in post-conflict settings, including the Niger Delta region, where it has helped to reduce tensions between communities and promote social cohesion (Ejimeke, 2019).
- Peace education: Peace education is another important peacebuilding process in Nigeria. This involves promoting values and skills that foster peaceful coexistence, such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and non-violent conflict resolution. This process has been used successfully in schools and universities across the country, as well as in community-based organizations (Ayodele & Azeez, 2019).
- Interfaith dialogue: Nigeria is a religiously diverse country, with Christians and Muslims comprising the majority of the population. Interfaith dialogue is a peacebuilding process that aims to promote understanding and collaboration between different religious communities. This process has been used successfully in various settings, including the Jos crisis in Plateau State, where it has helped to reduce tensions and promote peaceful coexistence (Agbese, 2018).
- Truth and reconciliation commissions: Truth and reconciliation commissions are bodies established to investigate and document past human rights abuses and promote reconciliation between conflicting parties. Nigeria has established various truth and reconciliation commissions, including the Oputa Panel and the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission, which have played a significant role in addressing past injustices and promoting accountability (Irobi, 2019).
- Community-based peacebuilding: Community-based peacebuilding is another important peacebuilding process in Nigeria. This approach involves working with local communities to identify the root causes of conflict and developing solutions that are tailored to their specific context. This process has been used successfully in various settings, including the Niger Delta region, where community-based organizations have played a key role in promoting peace and reducing violence (Okeke, 2020).
- Security sector reform: Security sector reform is a process that involves restructuring and reforming the security sector to promote accountability, professionalism, and respect for human rights. In Nigeria, the security sector has been criticized for human rights violations and lack of accountability. Security sector reform has been identified as an important peacebuilding process, with the potential to promote trust between security forces and local communities (Oshodi, 2018).
- Gender-sensitive peacebuilding: Gender-sensitive peacebuilding is an approach that recognizes the different roles and experiences of women and men in conflict and post-conflict settings. This approach seeks to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as address the specific needs and concerns of women in peacebuilding processes. This process has been used successfully in various settings in Nigeria, including in the Niger Delta region, where women have played a significant role in promoting peace and sustainable development (Eniola, 2020).

- Transitional justice: Transitional justice is a process that seeks to address past human rights abuses and promote accountability in post-conflict settings. This process includes measures such as prosecutions, reparations, and truth commissions. In Nigeria, transitional justice has been identified as an important peacebuilding process, with the potential to promote accountability and reconciliation between conflicting parties (Irobi, 2019).

CASES OF YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN SECURITY AND PEACE BUILDING

One example of youth involvement in security and peacebuilding in Nigeria is the Fulani community's "Sharo" tradition in Northern Nigeria. In recent times, some Fulani youth leaders have advocated for replacing the flogging aspect of the tradition with peaceful and productive activities like skill acquisition and community service (Salau, 2020). This initiative has helped reduce violent conflicts associated with the Sharo tradition and fostered a sense of community and peaceful coexistence (Salau, 2020).

In Jos, Plateau State, a group of young people formed the "Jos Green Centre" initiative in 2018, focusing on promoting peace and environmental sustainability. The group organized tree planting, clean-up campaigns, and peacebuilding forums to address conflicts between farmers and herders (Musa, 2019). Their efforts fostered positive relationships among different groups and promoted peace and environmental stewardship, earning them recognition and awards (Musa, 2019).

In Maiduguri, Borno State, a youth group known as the "Youth Vigilante Group" (YVG) was established to complement the military's efforts in fighting insurgency and promoting peace (Oluwatobi, 2019). The YVG played a critical role in liberating communities from Boko Haram and worked with local authorities to prevent radicalization (Oluwatobi, 2019).

The "One Million Youths for Peace Campaign" launched in 2017 engaged and empowered Nigerian youth to promote peace and security (UNDP Nigeria, 2019). The campaign involved training, establishment of peace clubs, and support for youth entrepreneurship to address root causes of conflict (UNDP Nigeria, 2019).

These cases illustrate how Nigerian youth have actively contributed to security and peacebuilding, whether through cultural transformations, environmental initiatives, complementing military efforts, or participating in national campaigns. Their involvement has made significant contributions to reducing conflicts and promoting peaceful coexistence.

ROLE OF YOUTHS IN PEACE BUILDING PROCESS

The youth have been identified as a key stakeholder in peacebuilding processes in Nigeria, given their numerical strength and potential for positive impact. The youths in Nigeria could actively and objectively engage in peace-building process in a number of ways as accordingly enunciated in the succeeding context:

- Mediation and conflict resolution: Youth can play a key role in mediating conflicts and promoting dialogue between conflicting parties. This can be done through youth-led mediation initiatives, such as the Youth Peace and Security Network in Nigeria, which

seeks to promote peace and security through youth-led mediation and conflict resolution activities (Abdulraheem, 2018).

- **Advocacy and awareness-raising:** Youth can use their voices to advocate for peace and raise awareness about the negative impacts of conflict. This can be done through social media campaigns, community outreach programs, and other forms of advocacy. For example, the Nigerian Youth SDGs Network has been actively engaged in promoting peace and sustainable development through advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives (Nyeneokpon, 2018).
- **Education and skills-building:** Youth can be empowered with the necessary skills and knowledge to prevent and manage conflicts. This can be done through formal education programs, vocational training, and other skills-building initiatives. For instance, the Nigerian Youth Network on Peacebuilding provides education and training on conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and leadership skills to young people across Nigeria (Achebe, 2020).
- **Civic engagement and participation:** Youth can engage in civic activities and participate in decision-making processes that promote peace and security. This can be done through participation in local governance, community development projects, and other forms of civic engagement. The Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth, and Advancement (YIAGA) has been actively engaged in promoting youth participation in governance and peacebuilding activities across Nigeria (Olowolafe, 2020).
- **Community mobilization and volunteering:** Youth can mobilize their peers and communities to participate in peacebuilding activities, such as community clean-up campaigns, peace walks, and volunteering in conflict-affected areas. The Nigerian Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has been involved in various community development projects, including peacebuilding initiatives in conflict-affected areas of the country (Okeke, 2020).
- **Youth-led peacebuilding initiatives:** Youth can take the lead in developing and implementing peacebuilding initiatives, using their unique perspectives and experiences to create programs that address the root causes of conflict. For example, the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Network in Nigeria has been engaged in various peacebuilding initiatives, including the "YALI RLC Nigeria Emerging Leaders Peace Camp" which provides young people with the skills and knowledge to promote peace in their communities (Ayorinde, 2020).
- **Interfaith and interethnic dialogue:** Youth can play a key role in promoting interfaith and interethnic dialogue, which can help to break down barriers and build trust between communities. For instance, the Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna has been working with youth from different religious and ethnic backgrounds to promote peace and reconciliation in the state (Onyegbula, 2019).
- **Monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses:** Youth can play a role in monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses in conflict-affected areas, which can help to hold perpetrators accountable and prevent future abuses. The Network of Young Female Leaders in Nigeria has been engaged in monitoring and reporting on human rights abuses, particularly against women and girls, in conflict-affected areas (Achimugu, 2021).

- Youth-led initiatives for sustainable development: Youth can contribute to peacebuilding by engaging in sustainable development initiatives that address the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. For instance, the Nigerian Youth Climate Coalition has been engaged in various initiatives to promote sustainable development, including advocating for renewable energy and sustainable agriculture (Bamidele, 2018).

CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTHS IN THE EFFORT TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE BUILDING

The youth play a crucial role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Nigeria, but they also face numerous challenges and limitations. One major challenge is the lack of adequate opportunities for youth participation in peacebuilding initiatives. According to Irobi (2019), youth are often excluded from peacebuilding processes due to their perceived lack of experience and expertise, which can limit their ability to contribute effectively to peacebuilding efforts. Additionally, inadequate resources, such as funding and equipment, can limit the effectiveness of youth-led peacebuilding initiatives (Ejimeke, 2019).

Another major challenge is the risk of violent attacks on youth peacebuilders by armed groups and other violent actors. The volatile security situation in Nigeria makes youth peacebuilders vulnerable to attacks, which can undermine their efforts to build peace and contribute to further insecurity (Okeke, 2020).

Moreover, there is a lack of trust between youth and government officials, which can hinder cooperation and collaboration in peacebuilding efforts. Ayodele and Azeez (2019) note that youth-led peacebuilding initiatives are often met with scepticism by government officials and other stakeholders, which can lead to a lack of support for these initiatives.

Furthermore, socio-economic factors such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality can also limit youth participation in peacebuilding efforts, as they often struggle to meet their basic needs and lack the resources to engage in peacebuilding activities (Agbese, 2018).

CONCLUSION

The role of youth in security and peace building in Nigeria cannot be overstated. As the future leaders of the country, their involvement is essential in creating a more peaceful and secure society. This research has discussed the concept of security and peace building, as well as the Social Identity Theory as a suitable framework for understanding the roles of youth in peacebuilding. The study has also highlighted various peace building processes in Nigeria, including peacekeeping missions, peace education, and interfaith dialogue, among others. However, it is also important to recognize the challenges and limitations that youth face in their efforts to contribute to peace building in Nigeria. These include limited resources, lack of support from government, and the perception of youth as being inexperienced or unreliable.

Despite these challenges, the potential of youth in promoting peace and security in Nigeria cannot be ignored. It is crucial for the government and other stakeholders to recognize and support the

efforts of youth in peace building processes. In doing so, Nigeria can create a more peaceful and secure environment for all its citizens, paving the way for a more prosperous and sustainable future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to stem insecurity and actively engage the youths in nation building, necessary steps are needful. Consequently, all stakeholders need to recognise the dynamic role of the youths. In the light of the problems discussed and observations therefrom, more opportunities need to be created for youth engagement in peace building efforts. This should include mentorship programmes, youth-led initiatives, and formal mechanisms for youth participation in peace-building decision-making processes.

Moreover, increasing access to education and training for youth, particularly in conflict resolution and peacebuilding skills, is of utmost importance. By equipping young people with the necessary knowledge and skills, they can become active agents of peace within their communities. Additionally, developing targeted programs that focus on at-risk youth populations, including those affected by violence or living in conflict-prone areas, is vital. Such programs should provide support and resources to help these youths build resilience and contribute to peaceful solutions.

Addressing the root causes of conflict in Nigeria, such as poverty, unemployment, and political instability, is another crucial aspect. By tackling these underlying issues, a more stable environment can be created, allowing youth to actively engage in peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, embracing technology and social media platforms can play a significant role in promoting peace and amplifying youth voices. Encouraging the use of these tools can enable young people to connect with one another and engage in broader peacebuilding initiatives.

Lastly, fostering collaboration and partnerships between youth-led organizations and various stakeholders such as government agencies, civil society organizations, and international organizations is essential. This collaboration ensures that youth perspectives and priorities are integrated into peacebuilding efforts and policies, promoting a more inclusive and effective approach.

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Understanding the Nexus between Democracy and National Security Challenges: North West Nigeria in Perspective

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Abstract

This paper surveyed the nexus between democracy and national security challenges with particular reference to North West Nigeria. Democratic rule has been regarded by many scholars as the best form of government in any society. This is due to the huge gains that come with democracy, one of which should be good governance. Nigeria's North West is one of the most insecure places with attendant security threats such as banditry, kidnapping, and trans-border crimes amongst others. The objective of this paper is to pinpoint the role a democratic government provides for the society, especially in the provision of essential qualities of good life. A democratic government relies on the idea of the supremacy of the people. In 2022 the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) released its findings that 63 percent of Nigerians were poor owing to low health, education, income and safety levels. In the same rating, among ten of the poorest states in Nigeria, five of these states are from North-Western Nigeria, namely: Sokoto, Katsina, Jigawa, Kebbi and Zamfara. The paper argued that when good governance is lacking in any society, insecurity would be rife and thus circumvent the ideals of a democratic society. The Modernisation Theory was adopted for this paper. The paper recommends the need for Government to pursue policies that are beneficial to majority of the people, stiff penalties should be meted on corrupt public officials among others.

Keywords: Democracy, National Security, Insecurity, Terrorism, Governance

INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons given for the enthronement of democracy in Nigeria was to not just develop the country but it was assumed Nigeria would thrive better in a more peaceful socio – political environment. It was this belief that led to the campaigns against military rule in Nigeria in the first place. The Western idea of democracy is that it creates room for individual members of the society to actualize their full potentials. It does this by providing good governance. Good governance would further provide conducive environment for creation of jobs, education, good health facilities amongst others. The military on the other have often argued that Nigeria seems to fare better when they are in charge and for a while perpetuated themselves in power. Most importantly, the military have pointed out that Nigerians were safer under their watch. However, it is an established fact that it is an aberration for the military to be fully in charge of the day-to-day running of a country as it is widely believed that they are meant to remain in the barracks.

In recent times, Nigeria's security challenges have become horrendous. Terrorism has become Nigeria's biggest problem and it has manifested in the form of banditry, insurgency, kidnapping amongst others. Since Nigeria returned to democratic governance in 1999, the country's security landscape has changed in ways that are alien to the Nigerian populace (Mbachu & Bature, 2013).

Nigeria's North West has been the worst hit with incidents of banditry and kidnapping pervading the states which make up the zone. These security challenges have denied people their source of livelihood, education, and communal life amongst other deprivations. It has made living unbearable for the people who have had to relocate from their traditional homes. One of such cases is the attacks on two villages, Funzai and Kubwat in Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State on Tuesday, 16 May 2023. It was reported that 85 people lost their lives while over 3000 people had been displaced arising from suspected Fulani herdsmen attack.

Nigeria's North West geopolitical zone is home to seven states, namely: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kastina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The zone also happens to fall within Hausa territory and shares borders with countries such as Niger Republic and Benin Republic. It is also a major economic boost to Nigeria's economy while most of the rural areas lag behind socio-economically mainly due to insecurity (Nwabuisi, 2022). The North West has become access points through which terrorists enter the rest of the country. These terrorists often manifest in the form of cattle rustling, kidnapping, and mass killing of farmers as well as religious leaders. These have caused members of the public to cast doubt many times over on the genuine desires of the State to bring respite. Nigeria's northwest is poorer than most other zones in the country; worse government in some areas, and has lower levels of human development (Ojewale, 2021). Nigeria is currently encountering many security challenges and it has been expected that Nigeria's government would have sought for assistance from ECOWAS. However, it is believed that one of the reasons why Nigeria has not done that is due to her status within the region (Musah, 2009). Nigerian over the years has been regarded as the 'Giant of Africa' on so many grounds: population, economic and military size among other factors. The country occupies a pride of place among other African states and has often come to the aid of these African countries in terms of military and economic assistance. She therefore believes seeking of assistance would be condescending and thus reduce this status.

The institution of government is the main instrument through which the human race has pursued a form of "good life" (Zabadi, 2013). This instrument has been described as the surest way through which the aspirations of the people would be achieved. It is believed by the progenitors of good governance that the best way to have all these in place is through a democratically elected government. It is thus believed democracy would ensure that the best atmosphere is created for the citizenry to freely express themselves and make themselves heard. One of the most important tasks of government is to guaranty security of lives and properties as it is generally understood that the best way for socio-economic activities to thrive is through a secured environment. The nature of government employed to carry out the important task of guaranteeing national security has differed from one political clime to the other, ranging from the most despotic to the more participant, accountable and democratic (Zabadi, 2013:543). The paper would do a conceptual clarification before carrying out an overview of insecurity in Nigeria and then consider democracy and connection with national security and then proffer some recommendations.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Concepts such as Democracy and National security need to be properly clarified in order to give this paper a better meaning.

Democracy

Democracy which is derived from the Greek word, 'demokratia'; 'demos' means "people" while 'kratia' implies "rule of governance". Democracy is as old as man in the sense that it has always been about the people and how they are governed. It is a type of governance in which the citizens exercise power and carry out all forms of civic responsibilities, directly or indirectly through their representatives who have been freely elected (Mbachu, 2009). Modern democracy however has its origins in Greece, in particular Athens in 5BC. It was a system of administration by which certain groups of people were elected to represent the people who may have selected them. It also saw the periodic coming together of people to make deliberations on burning issues surrounding their general welfare among other issues. It further brings to the fore the need for certain people to be held accountable for how a state or community is run.

The Athenian leader, Pericles saw democracy as a system of government in which the people are powerful (Jothari, 2018: 491). It is a form of administration in which the governing group comprises the large portion of the population. As noted by Palmer & Perkins (2015), the present state and manifestations of security – related dangers have only continued to put to test democracies and legitimacy of governments. To Rousseau, democracy must see the interest of every citizen and not just that of a few (Srinivasan, 2012). The North western zone is the most populated zone in the country and has also been regarded as also comprising the poorest set of Nigerians.

Shapeera (2012) submitted that the State had functions to play which include amongst others the role of preventing fear, anxiety among other socio – economic functions. All these are enshrined in the social contract existing between the State and the people.

Among the 193 countries of the world recognized by the United Nations (UN), only 123 are assessed to be democratic. These states have set up one form of government or the other that revolves around the people. As a state form, Democracy is to be distinguished from monarchy, aristocracy and dictatorship.

In the opinion of Onyejebu (2020), the level of development and progress in any given nation is often reflected in the good governing system of that nation. Olaniyan & Ifidon (2018) observed that recurring issues in Africa include: absence of good governance whether democracy exists or not, political corruption, personalization of state power, widespread diseases, persistent policy failure on education, economy and infrastructural development and dependence on Western (and now, Asian) expertise. Onodugo (2015) submitted that Democracy is considered by most people as being the most desirable form of government and the best idea for governance on earth. The author further stated that in whichever way democracy may be practiced in any society, it still remained as being the best as it supports the idea that power should rest with the people and that the will of the people should play a decisive role in the organisation and working of the government.

National Security

Nnoli (2016:16) in Biereenu – Nnabugwu (2015) asserted that security can be objectively measured by the absence of threat, anxiety or danger. He went further to state that security was a value associated with confidence in physical safety and other most cherished values. According to Ekoko (1990:3), the primary goal of security is defence against external threats. He further stated that due to the internal threats to lives and properties, state security may seem larger than external threats; national security must therefore be seen as a "dynamic and pragmatic instrument for national

integration...” Eze (2011) posited that the term ‘national security’ is often used by the military to describe a policy objective; the social scientists have adopted it to refer to both an analytical concept and a field of study. He also revealed that in the nuclear age, the national security is a product of the experience of World War 2. It became synonymous with all measures taken to protect sovereign states from all forms of aggressions.

Adeniji (2019:14) posited that National Security refers to the requirements of ensuring the survival of the nation – state, the use of economic, military, and political as well as exercise of diplomacy. Orhero (2020) advanced that the fragile nature of the Nigerian state was partly due to human security deficit. He further observed that some of the problems threatening human security in Nigeria include electoral violence, insurgency, terrorism, communal crises, and armed robbery. Others include kidnapping, piracy, human trafficking, cattle rustling and banditry which have only persistently threatened Nigeria’s security. Atelhe (2014) contended that there was an integral relationship between democracy and national security. The inability of or the failure of democratic governance to improve the wellbeing of most Nigerians is one of the contributing factors to the emergence of the many threats to national security (Omodia & Aliu, 2013).

Kazir (2010:1) was of the opinion that security is the primary requirement of any living organism, hence it is often said that survival for self-preservation is the first law of nature. Brown (1982) in Kazir (2010) also observed that the anxiety over the security of a nation was as old as the nation – state. Additionally, Kazir (2010) also revealed that every nation state often manifested itself in two ways: internal forces as well as external forces, which all have the likelihood of overwhelming the nation and thus subdue the nation. It is the main reason why nations have established military as well as para-military forces/agencies. Kazir (2010) was also of the view that the traditional concept of national security focused on building up defence and security manpower, as well as amassing weapon systems so the moment a threat arises, the State will be able to meet the challenge. Be that as it may, traditional conceptualization of national security has often been about how a nation-state can develop a very virile defence architecture which can assist the state to deter any foreign/external or national security threat. Galtung (1982), revealed that only a strong military system can effectively deter force (attacks) and threats of force (blackmail) aiming at changing the society, and also provide the means of fighting if the attack is not deterred.

During the Cold War, nation-states developed weapons of mass destruction (WMD) to prevent any form of attack. As noted by Kazir (2010), within the period of the Cold War, instances existed, when armaments failed to guarantee security and peace as defined by even the most militarily powerful nations. Some notable examples are listed below:

- i. Humiliation of America during the Vietnam War (1964 – 1973). America was a well-known military super power before then but could not overcome the military tactics of the small Asian country. According to the US Department of Defence, America recorded 58,281 military fatal casualties arising from the War during and resulting from injuries sustained from the war (Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, 2021).
- ii. The international embarrassment faced by Russia at the disintegration of Union of Socialist Soviet Russia (USSR) in 1991 due to domestic socio – economic problems.
- iii. With all its military and technological capabilities, sophisticated secret intelligence network and huge financial base America was incapable of preventing terrorist attacks by

Al Qaeda on September 11, 2001. For many years, Russia dictated to her former colonies on virtually every aspect of their life.

These attacks not only led to the deaths of thousands of Americans and foreigners but became a major embarrassment to the defence and security apparatus. The attacks on the twin buildings of the World Trade Center and Pentagon were critical infrastructure to America's economy and defence.

The world has experienced many other terrorist attacks which have literally brought to question the status of possession of sophisticated military hardware and its relevance to securing lives and properties. It thus confirmed that a State may possess the best armed forces in terms of training and equipment, the most efficient security agencies amongst other indices but yet remain the most insecure place (Nwolise, 1985). The pre and post-Cold War era on national security has often been about the development and acquisition of weapons, military and other security personnel with the sole aim of defending the nation from any form of external aggression. Governments have traditionally been more concerned about external aggressors and more often than not did not see internal threats as possibly disrupting normal lifestyle. Recent internal conflicts and disturbances by belligerent non-state actors have only suggested the need for governments to pay attention to internal threats.

Unlike the traditional approach to national security, the contemporary approach to national security embraces and incorporates social, economic, cultural and even technological variables. It has become intrinsically clear that for a nation to be truly secured, security should also be viewed and approached from a more holistic point of view. Through such approach, decision makers and government officials must see that bad laws, food security, population explosion, bad governance, lack of transparency in public and civil institutions are factors which could make a State to be insecure. Other factors which could lead to insecurity include unemployment, hunger, poverty, amongst others. These factors will no doubt contribute to become critical elements in threatening the security of the nation.

OVERVIEW OF INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

According to Phenson *et al* (2014), every operation of any nation is guided by certain principles. The authors further revealed that insecurity was a social phenomenon which was generally aimed at realizing the following:

- i. Security ensures the protection of lives and property of both citizens and that of government (personnel and property);
- ii. To provide a tranquil and peaceful atmosphere for individuals and groups;
- iii. To create measures and opportunity for assessment and prompt neutralization of threats and the exposure of agents of such threats to legal sanctions;
- iv. Security creates a barrier and builds the walls of defense (separation) around the State and its people;
- v. It builds confidence of safety, promotes peace and order and enemies safe working and residential environment;

- vi. It builds a foundation (bedrock) for socio – economic and political growth, development and stability;
- vii. Security minimizes panic and fear of attack;
- viii. It solves societal problems, exposes criminals, their activities, hideouts, and enhances social justice;
- ix. It uncovers threats and deters aggression; and
- x. Security provides the enabling atmosphere for good social and political order to survive.

The absence of a secured environment or atmosphere implies an insecure place. Since the dawn of the twenty first century, insecurity has become one of the most talked about social problems facing Nigeria. Ozoigbo (2019) observed that insecurity was at the point of being seen as Nigeria’s identity. It has become a recurring decimal in Nigeria to the point that Udoh (2015) observed that it is a phenomenon involving a state of being subject to danger or injury. Nigerians have never been this subjected to feelings of trepidation. Zubairu (2020) rightly observed that Nigeria was currently bloated with insecurity crises which have turned into an unending spate of lack of confidence in the system. Offem & Ichoku (2015) also observed that Nigeria’s state of insecurity has placed the citizens in a perpetual state of fear in their natural habitat as Nigerians have been constantly exposed to fear. Okonkwo *et al.* (2015) succinctly pointed out that Nigeria’s 1999 constitution clearly states that “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.” They further observed that on this responsibility, successive Nigerian governments have failed to carry out this role by providing a secured and safe environment for lives, properties and the conduct of business and economic activities.

In his own work, Udoh (2015) revealed that the indices of security “includes the persistent tension between the north and the south of Nigeria, growing unrest in the Niger Delta area and other parts of the country resulting in rise in violent incidents and kidnappings. As observed by Onoja (2014), Udoh (2015), Ajibola (2016), Ozoigbo (2019), Zubairu (2020), and Ishaya (2021), the causes of insecurity in Nigeria include but not limited to: Boko Haram, politically – based violence, systematic and political corruption, economic – based violence, inequalities and unfairness, unemployment/poverty, porous borders, proliferation of arms and ammunitions, oil bunkering, kidnapping, labour activities, armed robbery, fear, non-compliance with the rule of law, illiteracy, marginalization. All of these causes could be categorised under bad governance and porous borders. When analysed further, bad governance could sum up the reasons why insecurity has continued to pervade the Nigerian society. This is against the ideals of a democratically inclined society where every needs and problems are met unhindered.

Ali (2013) in Ajibola (2016) posited that violent crimes in Nigeria could be traced back to the period from 1960 to 1970. He further observed that since independence, Nigerians have been making demands on successive administrators to put Nigeria on the path of true federalism which is probably going to handle most of Nigeria’s socio – economic as well as political problems. Nigeria’s problems of marginalization, ethno – religious intolerance, revenue sharing problems amongst many others are expected to be sorted out in a truly federalist condition. True federalism is believed would ensure that the two levels of Government: Federal and State would function more effectively in meeting the yearnings of the Nigerian people. By so doing, it is further believed power and important decisions bordering on the general social, economic and political

development of the entire country would be brought closer to majority of the people. But this was not to be as Nigeria's first crop of political leadership failed to pursue this path. Most of these politicians pursued policies that were self – serving, regional and thus maladministration became the order of the day.

One other major problem which has further been exacerbated by the problem of misgovernance is problems associated with Nigeria's borders with her neighbours, especially those she shares with Niger Republic (Sanusi, 1992). The Government security agencies such as the Nigerian Immigration Service have been burdened with poor remuneration, equipment, trainings amongst other challenges. The role of the Government in this regard therefore cannot be over emphasized. A government in power should first consider the most pressing issues bordering on the corporate existence of the country before it enunciates policies. These policies should serve the interests of the people at all times and not just the interests of a few people.

DEMOCRACY AND CONNECTION WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

The Modernisation Theory posits that economic development and social modernization would lead to increased political stability and democratization. In the context of North West Nigeria, this theory further suggests that efforts to promote economic development and improve living standards could help address national security challenges by reducing the appeal of violent extremism and promoting inclusive political participation. Additionally, the theory advocates the need for evolutionary development of the society through reforms and innovation. When modernization increase, the individuals within that society become increasingly important, thus ultimately replacing the family or community as the fundamental unit of society. It stresses on the process of change and also the responses to that change. Proponents of the theory also advanced that modernization can turn into democracy (Lipset, 1959).

Varma (2016) revealed that a striking positive attribute of democracy is that it is a participatory form of government in which every member of the society gets to determine how their affairs are managed. It is system of governance in which certain inalienable needs of the people are met. One of such inalienable needs of the governed is security. The State owes the people this right as it controls all the resources needed to meet this right. The Realist school of thought came up with this idea as they sought to explain the behaviour of states in terms of military and all forms of security (Harrison & Callan, 2013). Proponents of the classical realism such as Carr, Morgenthau, and Schuman believed that a State's projection of power should be both economic and military and such must be provided for the citizens before projecting its image in the international system. Over the years since independence, Nigeria has consistently projected her image in international peace and security by participating in peace support operations, especially those in Africa. Successive leaders have however suggested that in ensuring peace in neighbouring countries, Nigeria should also ensure her own peace and security.

The provision of security constitutes one of the fundamental objectives and no doubt foremost responsibility of every government and the state. This position is further confirmed in the Nigeria National Security Strategy which says that the foremost responsibility/objective of the Strategy is the protection of the Nigerian people and territory by strengthening and equipping the security agencies to comprehensively and decisively address all domestic and external threats to Nigeria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Literatures and records of political activities among and within states suggest that regimes have been forcefully changed due to the seeming inability of such

governments to handle all security – related problems. No wonder, Oyeshile (2019) revealed that the features of a democratic society would include but not limited to sovereignty of the people, accountable leadership, respect for the rule of law, protection of fundamental human rights, freedom of association, religion and opinion. It therefore leaves much to be desired of the Nigerian Government which has failed to address the security situation of Nigeria’s North – west amongst other places where insecurity has gone on for long. The region’s shared borders with Niger Republic seems to have made worst the situation as criminals keep up their activities with reckless abandon, more so that security agencies in the area have complained of poor remuneration, equipment, porous borders among other factors confronting their performance in handling the issues.

According to Edeko (2011) in Ajibola (2016), available data reveals that Nigeria is host to over 70 percent of about 8 million illegal weapons in West Africa. Akinsowon (2021) also submitted that if Nigeria aspires to come out of the quagmire of persistent security threats, there are certain steps which the state must take through its elected representatives. Citizens have willingly surrendered their rights to protect themselves to the Government. Good governance is adjudged as being the surest way through which the people’s lives and properties will be secured. Akinsowon (2021:178) further submitted that “Promoting and sustaining holistic and integrated human development, enabling people lead clean, decent, happy and autonomous lives and encouraging better service delivery and improved accountability.” The Government can only ensure this by empowering Government institutions and individuals to act in the interest of the citizen at all times. Being consistent with legislation as well as government policies, avoiding self-interest and where necessary act against perceived organizational, ethnic or religious interests.

One other crucial role a democratic government can play is in the institutionalization of liaison among security agencies. Close liaison between security agencies is vital in ensuring the security of lives. All agencies have been constitutionally given certain responsibilities and as such trained to effectively carry out such responsibilities. Liaison amongst such agencies is much more important in the area of intelligence sharing, security planning and operations. Security liaison is an inter – personal and inter - departmental interface which expedites working relationship between an entity and other interested party and usually takes place in advance during planning and organizing a function, or between security agencies and departments (Phenson et al, 2014).

Musah (2009) in his assessment of the major factors responsible for insecurity in West Africa observed that “internal politics, regional power plays, and bad governance nurture the acute insecurity in West Africa.” Musah (2009) further observed that, empirical data from conflict zones in West Africa speak unequivocally to the correlation between bad governance and political instability. He further observed that most West African countries at a point were “characterised by institutional corruption and greed, zero infrastructure development, hatred and discrimination along ethnic lines, as well as the alienation and consequent disillusionment of the youth. These factors combined to underscore the integrity of the State, sparking violent conflicts whose effects reverberated across the region. The erosion of state institutions and infrastructure in turn led to the collapse of the formal economy and the rise of the shadow state in which impunity, and criminality flourished.” The wars and conflicts amongst and within African states exposed the vulnerable security apparatuses of the African governments and “for the first time, civilian warlords, militants, and mercenaries became serious factors threatening the very survival” of Nigeria’s hitherto state-centric security arrangements.

Asefa et al (2015:131) submitted that the Nordic states of Europe such as Sweden, Denmark, and Norway had a high standard of governance. There is equal distribution of wealth, unemployment has been reduced to the barest and poverty is almost non – existent, at least not as noticeable as it is in other climes. In Nigeria’s north – west, the reverse is the case as unemployment and poverty are on a high and the commonwealth is not evenly distributed. African countries such as Nigeria, The Gambia, Somalia, amongst a host of others are devoid of good governance and democratic practices. This is why there is a high rate of unemployment/poverty, decayed socio – economic infrastructure, disillusionment, mistrust, ethno – religious bigotry among a host of other issues. The high rate of banditry amongst other issues has further led to the loss of hope in democracy and good governance as they often find it hard to go to their farms and markets. However, to a large extent, countries such as Botswana, Mauritius, Senegal and Ghana differ as they are ranked high among their peers. Good governance is a major means through which threats to national security are effectively managed. Countries which are democratic in the real sense maintain consistency in reducing poverty, diseases, efficient delivery of public service, and provision of qualitative education. Nigeria suffers from multi – dimensional insecurity problems. Most of the causal factors arise from bad governance which is assumed to be an antithesis of democracy. Democratic principles and activities should meet the aspirations and desires of every member of that society in the sense that it is all inclusive, allows freedom of expression amongst other benefits unlike what citizens often experience under autocratic and undemocratic regimes.

Uhunmwangbo & Epelle (2011:121) believed that good governance “...may be defined as the running of the affairs of government in positive and progressive manner beneficial to the governed and which delivers the public goods.” In economics, public goods (also referred to as social goods or collective goods) are goods which are non-excludable and non – rivalrous. Users of public goods cannot be barred from accessing or using them for failing to pay for them. The usage of such goods by an individual member of the society does not prevent others from accessing them and neither does it reduce the quality. However, one of the key factors in all of these is Government’s responsiveness to societal issues. Often times, Nigerian governments are slow in response to security – related problems especially internal security challenges. Cases abound to buttress this point. The Jos ethno – religious conflicts, the militancy in Nigeria’s southern parts, the Boko Haram insurgency, and porous border problems amongst others.

The divisive nature of Nigeria’s democracy has been blamed as being one of the causes of the Jos crises from 2001 onwards. The state governors, who have been constitutionally reposed with the responsibility of providing security to their states, have often stalled. Democracy is designed in such a way that certain important decisions on the people’s welfare are taken decisively and in good time. In recent time, the activities of kidnappers, insurgents among other criminal elements have persisted due to the lacklustre response of the government in eradicating them (Udosen & Uwak, 2021:45). The efforts of the government in tackling security challenges have often been met with criticism due largely to Government’s attitude. One of such was in the government’s handling of Boko Haram which for years has continued unabated. The ability of the group to strike at will further casted doubts on the government’s effort (Besenyo & Mayer, 2015:47) to tackle it. The persistent threat of insecurity in Africa’s most populous nation has been intensified largely due to the unchecked influx of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) into Nigeria (Akinyetun & Bakare, 2022:61). All these issues could have been solved with the timely response from the Government security agencies.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria re-introduced democratic system of governance on 29 May 1999 with the hope of attaining some meaningful development which would be to the benefit of every Nigerian. It was also believed that a democratic system would at the end of the day contribute to the socio – economic transformation of the entire country. In the her twenty – four years of democratic rule, Nigeria’s peace and unity has come under threat and thus resulted into people casting doubts on Nigeria’s adventure into democratic governance. The situation seems to have no cure in sight with blames. The bulk of these blames have been placed at the door of the Federal Government which many have accused to be complicit in the fuelling of the security threats through corruption, unpopular public policies among other issues.

Democracy is predicated on the principle of good governance through which the needs of the governed would be met. It is when these basic needs are met that such a government would be deemed credible and thus enjoy legitimacy. Nigeria’s northwest suffers from a number of issues which have contributed to the persistent insecurity, particularly banditry. These issues include low level of education, poverty, and unemployment among others. All these have contributed to festering insecurity in the zone. To curb this would require the political will of the government in addressing them. Adequate and qualitative education should be provided to reduce illiteracy, jobs must be created so as to reduce the possibility of recruitment of the youths into criminal gangs, amongst other solutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing discussions, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Government should pursue policies that are beneficial to majority of Nigerians and inclusive as well as participatory.
- ii. Government should introduce stiff penalties on corrupt public officials.
- iii. Governance and desire for political offices must be discouraged from vying for such. These offices have become conduits through which individuals illegally enrich themselves at the detriment of the larger population. The Government can achieve this by allowing respective Government agencies to carry out their constitutional duties unhindered.
- iv. Diversification of Nigeria’s economy is crucial in the attempt to create employment for the youth who are often used to perpetuate criminal activities.
- v. Reorganisation of Nigeria’s security agencies is vital for achieving a secured environment. The Nigerian Constitution places security on the exclusive federal list, meaning that both the Federal and State governments have roles to play in meeting the security needs of the people. Every one of these levels of government must therefore initiate new models for securing the lives of the governed

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The Prosecutorial Obstacles to the Fight against Terrorism in Nigeria

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Abstract

The fight against terrorism and financing of terrorists is greatly aided by courts. Section 36 (5) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution, as amended in 2011, stipulates that apprehended terrorists be taken to court to prove their guilt or innocence. According to the section, a person who is accused of committing a crime is assumed innocent unless proven guilty. The Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act of 2022 established crimes related to terrorism, but it makes no mention of how they will be prosecuted. The constitutional guarantee in prosecuting suspects within the bounds of the rule of law is set against this background. The objective goal of the study is to identify obstacles to the efficient prosecution of terrorism cases as well as explore legal options that could expedite the prosecution of such cases. Why is Nigeria's prosecution rate low? In view of prosecutorial responsibilities and difficulties in attending to terrorism and allied cases. Relying on secondary source of data, including published books, articles, newspapers and case precedent, the paper contends that the potential of a trial at the International Criminal Court is being investigated. The paper recommend that legislative framework as well as the requisite manpower and political will should be in place as mechanisms for a successful prosecution of terrorist suspects. Additionally, the office of the Attorney General of the Federation will function better if separated from the Minister of Justice/Commissioner for Justice.

Keywords: Money laundering, Terrorism, Prosecution, Prosecutor, Terrorism financing

Introduction

Nigeria has known no peace since Boko Haram started its attacks in 2011. The period leading to 2011 was devastating as well. The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, two groups primarily concerned with resource management, carried out agitations that led to the damage of national infrastructure. Several bombings in Maiduguri and nearby towns, the 2010 New Year's Eve bombing of the Mogadishu Military Cantonment in Abuja, the bombing of the May 29 Presidential Inauguration in Abuja, and the

October 1 bombing that disrupted the Independence Day celebration are notable terrorist acts that have brought the threat to light, the Bombings of the UN House in Abuja on August 26, the Army Task Force Operational in Abuja on November 4, and the St. Theresa Catholic Church in Madalla, close to Abuja, on December 25, 2011, all occurred in 2011 Andrew Walker (2012). The insurgents invaded the Federal Government College Chibok on April 14, 2014, and 276 girls were taken hostage. Baga was invaded between January 3 and 7, 2015, when the insurgents took control of a military base, killing roughly 2000 people the list goes on and on Andrew Walker (2012). Boko Haram was accused of committing these crimes.

According to Ekpo (2016), Boko Haram is an offshoot of the Maitatsine sect. He traced the origins of Boko Haram back to 1995, when the organization was known as Shabaab and was led by Lawan Abubakar, who then moved to Saudi Arabia to further his Islamic studies. Muhammed Yusuf, who had been acknowledged by the Shakyhs Committee, took over as the group's leader during his absence in 1999. Interestingly, Yusuf had a history of involvement inside the Jama'at Tajdid al-Islam, a group that is affiliated with Islam. He advocated for the application of Sharia and the restoration of genuine Islam in his sermons against complacency.

Boko Haram is an extremist Islamic organization whose name is Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, the name of the organization, "Boko Haram" in Hausa, which translates to "Western education is forbidden" in English, is more widely known. Western-style education, in the view of Boko Haram, was a component of a wider, evil system that included multiparty democracy, secularism, constitutionalism, and man-made rules. All of these organizations are un-Islamic and anti-Islamic in their eyes.

There are several factors that have been implicated in Nigerian terrorism. According to Adelaja, Abdullahi, and Penar (2018), they can be categorized as political, social, religious, ethnic, and economic causes. It became necessary to take legal action in the battle against terrorism, especially in regards to the prosecution of perpetrators.

The Nigerian Government took measures to establish a legal framework for the prevention and combatting of terrorism in Nigeria with the proclamation of the Terrorism Prevention Act in 2011, with additional amendments in 2013 and now abolished in 2022. Although the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act 2022 does not define terrorism directly, it lists the several "acts of terrorism" that fall under its purview. In accordance with provisions 3(1)(c) and 74 of the Terrorism Prevention and Prohibition Act of 2022, the Attorney General of the Federation is now both the prosecuting agency and the prosecuting authority. However, the Act does not outline how terrorism-related offenses will be tried and prosecuted. Thus, existing criminal procedure laws will be used (section 2(1) Administration of Criminal Justice Act, 2015). The detectives, prosecutors, and courts are at the heart of these prosecutions. How could prosecutors efficiently pursue terrorism-related offenses while abiding by the law and prosecutorial principles?

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the prosecutorial responsibilities and difficulties in the prosecution of various acts of terrorism, the funding of terrorism, and money laundering. In doing this, the paper will take into account a number of court rulings from Nigeria and other countries. It will be demonstrated that, despite the existence of guiding regulations that should aid the

prosecutor in the efficient prosecution of terrorism and other related offenses, there is a need for additional training, funding, adequate investigation, and manpower development on the part of the prosecutors, judges, and other stakeholders in the administration of criminal justice. The following sections will be focused on the salient issues hindering prosecution of terrorism cases; components of the terrorism offense and court decisions; powers of the Courts to try crimes of terrorism; protections for the defendant's rights during a terrorism trial, the rights of a terrorist suspect and ended with policy recommendations.

The Issue of Prosecution in Relation to Terrorism

No single definition of terrorism exists. Due to lack of consistency in perception and legislative definition, academic writers have debated the meaning of terrorism for years (Kent, 2007; Omale, 2013; Young, 2006; Hardy & Williams, 2011; Walker, 2007). This is an example of the adage, "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," being used. The African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999, Section 2 Terrorism (United Nations Measures) Order 2001, and Article 2 of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism all mention "acts constituting terrorism" while some statutes attempt to define "terrorism."

While it is generally agreed that terrorism involves criminal violence intended to terrorize a population or exert pressure on a government or other international organization, some laws have added an additional goal of advancing a political, religious, ethnic, or ideological cause (Section 2 Terrorism (United Nations Measures) Order, 2001; Section 5(2) Terrorism Suppression Act, 2002). The International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and the International Convention against the Taking of Hostages have all been incorporated into domestic laws regarding terrorism. Saul (2019) asserts that the majority of States didn't consider passing terrorism Acts until after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, which were sparked by the perceived threat of international religious terrorism, obligations imposed by the UN Security Council, and holes in existing criminal liability and police authority.

Finding a legal definition of terrorism is crucial since only crimes that fit the criteria for such a definition can result in the punishment that is already in place. A precise definition of terrorism is required due to the legal repercussions of labeling someone or an organization as a terrorist organization. Can we restrict the concept of terrorism to only non-governmental organizations or people? In the case of State or non-State actors, can a government or its institutions, such as the Police or the Army, be classified as terrorists? How far may a student movement go before it becomes terroristic or causes the destruction of government property, such as a movement against the termination of an oil subsidy? (2004) Golder & Williams) The risk of domestic legislation lacking an accepted definition of terrorism is that, depending on who is involved, the State may punish any act or omission of persons or groups as terrorism.

It is necessary to highlight that the legal foundation for the fight against terrorism may be political and arbitrary in the absence of a precise definition of terrorism. How far can terrorism be defined precisely without having any political or religious implications? When there is no agreed-upon

definition of terrorism, it is impossible to decide whether to bring charges for regular murder, armed robbery, public disturbance, or other terrorist-related offenses. Section 46 of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) (Establishment) Act, 2004 (African Union Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, 1999), which defines terrorism as the following, is a typical example.

(a) act which is a violation of the Criminal Code or the Penal Code and which may endanger the life, physical integrity or freedom of, or cause serious injury or death to, any person, any number or group of persons or causes or may cause damage to public or property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to

1) intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles, or

2) disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency, or

3) create general insurrection in a state.

(b) any promotion, sponsorship of, contribution to, command, aid, incitement, encouragement, attempt, threat, conspiracy, organization or procurement of any person, with the intent to commit any act referred to in paragraph(a) 1), 2) and 3).

An examination of the above provision especially section 46 (a) shows that any act which is a violation of the Criminal Code or Penal Code may be interpreted to be terrorism in so far as it:

(a) causes serious injury or death to any person or group of persons or

(b) causes or may cause damage to public property, natural resources, environmental or cultural heritage and is calculated or intended to intimidate, put in fear, force, coerce or induce any government, body, institution, the general public or any segment thereof, to do or abstain from doing any act or to adopt or abandon a particular standpoint, or to act according to certain principles, or disrupt any public service, the delivery of any essential service to the public or to create a public emergency, or create general insurrection in a state;

It is submitted that the provision can be divided into harm to individuals and harm to public interest and properties. The first part of the definition under the EFCC Act can be accommodated under (section 315, 316, and 319 Criminal Code Act, 2004) or (section 221 and 224 Penal Code Act).

Without making them crimes of terrorism, even harm to public interests and properties is already punishable under existing criminal law. the choice before a prosecutor is whether to file charges under the EFCC Act for terrorism or under the current criminal code. What the terrorism-related offenses section in the EFCC Act is doing is the researchers' most baffling rhetorical query.

The Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act 2022's absence of a precise definition makes this misunderstanding even worse. Section 2(1) of the Act forbids acts of terrorism, while Section 3 (a)

lists specific examples of terrorism without attempting to define the term. This law classifies acts of terrorism into the following categories:

- (a) Acts against the government or international organization with the aim of compelling it to do or refrain from doing an act.
- (b) Intimidation whether of the government or international organization.
- (c) Causing serious bodily harm or death.
- (d) Destruction of public facilities or disruption of social facilities.
- (e) Kidnapping.
- (f) Acts or omission which constitutes an offence within the scope of a counter terrorism protocol and conventions ratified by Nigeria.’

Terrorism offenses under the Act will undoubtedly be difficult to prosecute because of the erratic nature of terrorist acts. As was previously argued, certain of the offenses are punishable by law. If it has been ratified by Nigeria, any act or omission that likewise constitutes an offense under the counterterrorism protocol and conventions may also be tried there. So, the prosecutor's challenge is to choose which statute to use for the trial of a suspect. This highlights the arguments given by Chukwuemerie (2006). Pertaining to double or twofold crime, as a result, other factors will be taken into account when exercising prosecutorial discretion. A pipeline vandal may be charged under the Terrorism Act rather than the Miscellaneous Offenses Act, and a kidnapper may be charged under the Act rather than the Criminal Code Act, Penal Code Act, Criminal Law, or the Anti-kidnapping Law.

Political concerns may influence the prosecutor's judgment. While a suspect from the ruling party may be charged with pipeline vandalism, acts likely to cause a breach of the peace, murder, or culpable homicide, all of which are punishable by death under the current criminal code, the suspect from the opposition party will be charged under the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act. In order to prevent political victimization, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria, this improper use of prosecutorial discretion must be curbed.

Section 11 of the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, contains a peculiar clause. An assault on an "internationally protected person" is made a crime. The section defines the following offenses: murder, kidnapping, assault on person or liberty, or carrying out a violent attack against such a person's official property, private residence, or mode of transportation in a way that could threaten his person or liberty. In section 99 of the Act, the term "internationally protected person" is defined. Therefore, it is argued that these are offenses may be prosecuted under other laws in addition to the Act.

If a crime is committed against a person inside of Nigeria, it will not matter that person is considered an "internationally protected person". Stronger penalties will not be used as justification for adding this offense to the Terrorism Act. This author believe that the Terrorism Act of 2022 does not in any way help the prosecutor. It receives the same sort of criticism as the EFCC Act.

Components of the Terrorism Offense and Court Decisions

The impact of the force used, which is not directed at a specific person but is intended to instill intense physical and psychological fear and anxiety in the minds of members of the public with the effect of coercing, forcing, and intimidating them to do or abstain from doing any action or to adopt or abandon a particular view, policy, or position, is a crucial aspect of the offense of terrorism that distinguishes it from other offenses of a similar nature.

In the cases of *Musa Abdulmumini v. Federal Republic of Nigeria* (2017) and *Adamu Ali Karumi v. Federal Republic of Nigeria* (2016), the Supreme Court reached this conclusion. In the earlier case, the appellant was one of several people who were arrested and tried at the Federal High Court Jos Judicial Division on charges of conspiring to commit terrorist acts, which is punishable under Section 5 of the Criminal Code Act, illegally possessing a firearm, which is punishable under Section 5 of the same Criminal Code Act, and committing terrorist acts, which is punishable under Section 15(2) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act, 2004. The claimed illegal activities allegedly took place in and around Jos and its surroundings, including Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria, on or about March 8th, 2008.

In the first and third counts, the appellant was named along with several people who were accused of conspiring to commit terrorist activities and actually committing acts of terrorism. He was the 7th and 9th defendant in these two allegations. The two offenses mentioned in the first and third accusations led to the conviction of all defendants, including the appellant in this case. For committing the aforementioned offenses of criminal conspiracy to conduct terrorist activities and the performance of terrorist crimes, they were each given sentences of 2 years and 10 years in prison. A Jos-based Court of Appeal heard the appellant's appeal on his conviction and punishment. Ineffective was he. His appeal was denied by the Lower Court, which also upheld the Federal High Court's decision to condemn him and the terms it imposed on him.

The concurrent of the lower courts that the conduct of the appellant and his group while carrying potentially lethal weapons and moving menacingly through the neighborhood, designed to terrorize and intimidate local residents in accordance with the definition of terrorism in section 46 of the EFCC Act were upheld on further appeal to the Supreme Court.

In the case of *Musa Abdulmumini v. Federal Republic of Nigeria*, the defendant invoked section 59 of the Nigerian Penal Code Law to protect himself and his property. The question was whether a defense under a State law might help a defendant when charged with a Federal offense, even while the court recognized that the appellant was entitled to and the court was required to consider all defenses available to the defendant. The appellant generally cannot use the provisions of a State Law and use the defense therein to plead a statutory defense against a Federal offense for which he is on trial, according to a legal principle declared by the Supreme Court.

While upholding this approach, the court concurred with the appellant's attorney that the defense provided by the criminal and penal codes is also impliedly encompassed by section 46(a) of the EFCC Act, which defines terrorism to include offenses against both statutes. While we concur with the Supreme Court that defenses should be included in other laws, it is argued that this presents a problem for prosecutors who use the EFCC Act to bring terrorism-related charges. Instead of

focusing just on the Act when formulating the charge, they must constantly examine those other statutes.

Powers of the Courts to Try Crimes of Terrorism

Section 76(1) of the Terrorism Act of 2002 grants the Federal High Court of Nigeria sole jurisdiction to try cases involving terrorism and offences related to it, regardless of where the offense was committed. The different courts have implemented practice directions in order to swiftly prosecute terrorism offenses. The Federal High Court Practice Directions 2013 were passed with the intention of developing a system of case management that will guarantee the impartial and fair handling of criminal cases and the practice direction's norms. Additionally, it is done to avoid adding extra time and money to the costs of the parties involved in the criminal justice system.

Other objective of the practice direction includes:

- (a) Ensure that at trials, parties focus on matters which are genuinely in issue;
- (b) Minimize the time spent at trials dealing with interlocutory matters;
- (c) Ensure that possibilities of settlement are explored before the parties go into hearing;
- (d) Ensure that trials are not stalled by unpreparedness of the Court or the parties and that the case is fully ready for trial before hearing dates are agreed; and
- (e) Minimize undue adjournments and delay.

To achieve the above objectives, the practice direction made it an obligation when filing a charge to ensure the following:

- (a) The complainant shall not file a charge unless it is accompanied by an affidavit stating that all investigations into the matter had been concluded and in the opinion of the prosecutor, a *prima facie* case exists against the accused person;
- (b) The prosecutor must ensure that the accused is produced in court on the date of arraignment;
- (c) Where there is a preliminary objection challenging the jurisdiction of the court to hear a case before it, the court shall ensure that the ruling is delivered within 14 days;
- (d) No party may serve a notice of an application on another party on the date scheduled for hearing;
- (e) In furtherance of the need to ensure speedy dispensation of justice, electronic mail and other electronic means may be employed by the court in order to inform counsel of urgent court and case event.

According to the practice guidelines, the prosecution of terrorism-related offenses is given top priority by the court, and it is the prosecutor's job to help ensure swift justice by being prepared and avoiding unnecessary delays and adjournments.

Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Mustapha Fawaz & Others, 2013, is cited from Shuaibu (2014) as a typical illustration of how terrorist cases can be tried quickly. On July 29, 2013, the prosecution

called ten witnesses and submitted 27 exhibits as the case got underway. The defense opened on August 2, 2013, concluded on August 6, and the judgment was handed down on November 29, 2013, while the prosecution finished its case three (three) days later. The third defendant appealed to the Court of Appeal, Abuja Division in (*Abdulla Tahini v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 2014) Division after expressing dissatisfaction with certain portions of the trial court's judgment, and the appeal was heard on June 12, 2014 and Judgment was delivered on 18 July, 2014.

Abdulla Tahini v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014, is the case that is currently before the Supreme Court.

In *Charles Ododo v. Peoples Democratic Party* (2015), the Supreme Court held that terrorism and other listed offenses shall be given priority in the creation and publication of the weekly cause list after taking into account the guiding principles of the Supreme Court Practice Direction 2013, in particular section 2 (a).

The Federal and State Attorneys General, respectively, are given the authority to initiate and carry out criminal prosecutions in all courts, with the exception of a Court Martial, under Sections 174(1)(a) and 211(1)(a) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended in 2011. The Attorney General may exercise these powers directly or through departmental personnel. As long as they get the Attorney General's approval (*Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Adewunmi*, 2007; section 268 (1) ACJA, 2015), private attorneys may also rely on this authority.

The only person with the legal ability to bring charges for terrorism-related offenses is the Attorney General of the Federation. The Attorney General of the Federation is designated as the Act's implementation and administration authority by Section 3 (1) of the Terrorism (Prevention and Amendment) Act, 2022. He is also entrusted with the responsibility of strengthening and enhancing the current framework to ensure the successful prosecution of terrorism-related cases (see Section 74 of the Terrorism Act 2022).

It is submitted that nothing stops the Attorney General from delegating the power to institute and undertake criminal prosecution on his behalf to a State Attorney General or a private legal practitioner (*Serah Ekundayo Ezekiel v Attorney General of the Federation*, 2017) , (*Olusola Abubakar Saraki v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 2016) , (*Ibrahim Shehu Shema v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 2018) , (*Okon Bassey Ebe v Commissioner of Police*, 2008) , (*Marcel Nnakwe v The State*, 2013) , and (*Godwin Pius v The State*, 2016) . In the case of (*David Amadi v Attorney General of Imo State*, 2017) the Supreme Court held that the Attorney General can delegate the power to initiate and undertake criminal proceedings to officers of his department and in (*Olusola Abubakar Saraki v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 2016) , the court further held that it can even be delegated to private legal practitioners. In the recent case of (*Ibrahim Shehu Shema & Ors v Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 2018) the Supreme Court restated the principle of the power of delegation of the powers of the Attorney General under section 211 of the 1999 Constitution.

Protections for the Defendant's Rights during a Terrorism Trial

The right of a defendant to enjoy his personal liberty while awaiting trial under section 35(1) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution of 1999 as amended in 2011 is one of the

constitutional safeguards to a fair trial. Despite the right to personal liberty and the presumption of innocence guaranteed by sections 35 and 36(5) of the constitution, respectively, the courts have been cautious when granting bail applications in situations of terrorism. The instances demonstrate that the threat of terrorism surpasses the right to personal liberty, which is why bail was denied. *Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2007*, case, The Supreme Court considered the appeal against the trial court's denial of bail and the Court of Appeal's affirmation of that decision. The defendant was charged with five offenses in his arraignment: conspiracy, treasonable crime, founding, running, and aiding in running an illegal society, publishing a false statement, and membership of an illegal society. The court outlined the general guidelines for granting bail after declaring: According to the court, 'when national security is in danger or there is a serious possibility that it could be, human rights or the personal rights of individuals who are at fault come in second. Until the National Security can be adequately safeguarded or secured, human rights or individual rights must be suspended. This is not brand-new. It is unquestionably true that no citizen's liberty or right supersedes Nigeria's corporate existence as a unified, harmonious, indivisible, and indissoluble sovereign nation. It's possible that an individual's liberty or right won't even exist if the security of this country is threatened and it survives in fragments rather than in peace. Totally concur with the lower court that a treasonable felony charge is a serious offense that jeopardizes national security. If the appellant or his counsel were in a position of authority, I don't think they would sit down and fold their arms and allow any citizen to terrorize his reign and make it completely dismal or depressing while dancing to the tune of a citizen plotting a coup against them. He's going to fight it all the way to the end.'

The appellant was charged on two counts of willfully providing money with the intent that it be used for a terrorist act, which is against and punishable under Section 15(1) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment) Act 2004, and providing economic resources in order to facilitate the commission of a terrorist act, which is against and punishable under Section 15(1) in the case *Ogwu Achem v. Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014*, where the appellant was charged. He was found guilty. He requested bail while filing an appeal against his conviction. The *Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari* case was cited by the court in rejecting the application, and it was decided that: 'It should be noted that the applicant was found guilty and given a prison term for crimes related to terrorism, which have recently expanded in scope and severity and pose a threat to our country's security. Therefore, while granting bail awaiting appeal to a person found guilty of any related offense, courts should use extreme caution. *Federal Republic of Nigeria v. Dokubo-Asari (2007) 12 NWLR (1048) 320, 358–359*, the Supreme Court approved the lower court's decision to deny the appellant bail until trial on a number of grounds, including a potential threat to national security'

In the case *Musa Umar v. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014)*, the appellant and two other defendants were accused of violating a number of rules in the Terrorism (Prevention) (Amendment) Act, 2013. Prior to the hearing and decision on the allegations against him, he requested bail. The application was denied by the trial court. The Court of Appeal acknowledged on appeal that because this case involves terrorism, which entails serious penalties, the court must exercise caution while granting bail. The court has a responsibility to defend society while taking into account the safety of the country. The appeal was turned down.

The Court of Appeal determined that given the nature of the offense, the lower court was correct to deny the motion for bail. It was determined that the court has a responsibility to safeguard society while considering a bail application, and no legal concept so mandates it as does the crime of terrorism. According to the foregoing examples, bail will rarely be granted in terrorism cases because the crime impacts national security, despite the constitutional right to personal liberty given by section 35(1) of the Constitution.

Witness Protection Program and Terrorism Cases Prosecution

A method known as "witness protection" shields potential witnesses from the general public in order to preserve their anonymity and allow them to freely provide testimony. The hearing in open court will then be closed to the general public. The issue with the witness protection program is that it frequently conflicts with the constitutional guarantee in section 36(4) of the Constitution, which states that anyone accused of a crime has a right to a fair trial by a court or other tribunal within a reasonable amount of time, unless the charge is dropped. It is argued that it is unconstitutional to protect witnesses and bar anyone other participants in the legal process and representatives of the parties from the proceedings. However, section 36(4) (a) proviso expressly provided that:

"A court or such a tribunal may exclude from its proceedings persons other than the parties thereto or their legal representatives in the interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, the welfare of persons who have not attained the age of eighteen years, the protection of the private lives of the parties or to the extent it may consider necessary by reason of special circumstances in which publicity would be contrary to the interests of justice"

Witness shielding is an express exception to open court proceedings in cases involving terrorism offenses. According to Section 232 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act of 2015, which governs criminal procedure in cases involving terrorism-related acts,

- (1) A trial for the offences referred to in Subsection (4) of this Section may not, where the Court so determines, be held in an open Court.
- (2) The names, addresses, telephone numbers and identity of the victims of such offences or witnesses shall not be disclosed in any record or report of the proceedings and it shall be sufficient to designate the names of the victims or witnesses with a combination of alphabets.
- (3) Where in any proceedings the Court deems it necessary to protect the identity of the victim or a witness the Court may take any or all of the following measures:
 - (a) Receive evidence by video link;
 - (b) Permit the witness to be screened or masked;
 - (c) Receive written deposition of expert evidence; and
 - (d) Any other measure that the Court considers appropriate in the circumstance.
- (4) The provision of this section shall apply to:

- (a) Offences under Section 231 of this Act;
 - (b) Offences under the Terrorism (Prevention) Amendment Act;
 - (c) Offences relating to Economic and Financial Crimes;
 - (d) Trafficking in Persons and related offences; and
 - (e) Any other offence in respect of which an Act of the National Assembly permits the use of such protective measures or as the Judge may consider appropriate in the circumstances.
- (5) Any contravention of the provisions of Subsection (2) of this section shall be an offence and liable on conviction to a minimum term of one year imprisonment”.

The Federal High Court of Nigeria Practice Directions (On Trial of Terrorism Cases) 2022 were recently enacted by the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court in order to provide measures that will ensure the security and safety of parties, staff members of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, as well as members of the public, while ensuring an expedited and fair trial of those suspected of having committed acts of terrorism. The court's perimeter must be protected, and nobody from the general public is permitted inside the building but court employees, the parties, a number of pre-registered attorneys on each side, and anybody else the judge directs.

It is necessary to state that the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022 empowers the court to protect witnesses by virtue of section 73. The section provides:

(1) “The Court may on its own, or by ex-parte application by the Attorney General or the relevant agency, apply to the court to protect a witness or any person in any proceeding before it, where it is satisfied that the life of the person or witness is in danger and take such measures as it considers fit to keep the identity and address of the witness or person secret.”

The procedures of achieving the provisions of section 73 (1) of the Act are enumerated in sub section (2) of the Act as follows:

(2) “The measures which court may take under sub section (1). Include-

- (a) Holding the proceeding at a place to be decided by the court;
- (b) Avoiding the mention of the real name and address of the witness or person in its orders, judgments or records of the case, which are accessible to the public;
- (c) Issuing a direction for ensuring that the identity and address of the witness or person are not disclosed; and
- (d) Undertaking the proceeding in camera in order to protect the identity and location of witnesses and other persons.”

In addition, the Act gave the court the authority to decide that, in the interest of public safety and national security, all or part of the proceedings currently before the court shall not be published in any manner, and that such proceeding shall be adjourned and the accused persons shall be detained

pending when the Attorney-General or the relevant agency is able to ensure the safety of the witnesses and other parties involved. The Terrorism Act's Section 73(4) authorizes the court to order the exclusion of all members of the public from the hearing in the interest of public order or safety as part of the witness protection program. A person who violates a court order pertaining to witness protection is guilty of an offense and faces a minimum five-year jail sentence upon conviction (Section 73(5) of the Terrorism Act). It is argued that the analysis above demonstrates that witness protection is a weapon that can be used for successful prosecution of terrorism cases.

Application of International Law to the Prosecution of Terrorism Offenses

Authorities have argued that because terrorism is a transnational crime, it should be governed by international law and tried before international tribunals, either temporary or permanent, like the International Criminal Court (Much, 2006; Proulx, 2004). If terrorism is a crime that falls under the purview of these courts and tribunals, we will look at the statute that established them. The Rome Statute established the ICC with jurisdiction over the following four types of crimes: (a) genocide; (b) crimes against humanity; (c) war crimes; and (d) acts of aggression (Article 5 Rome Statute, 2002).

A national, ethnic, racial, or religious group's physical destruction in whole or in part can be achieved through the intentional infliction of serious physical or mental harm on group members, the deliberately imposing of conditions on the group's way of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, the imposition of measures designed to prevent births within the group, or the forcible transfer of group members' children.

The major offenses known as crimes against humanity are carried out as a part of an extensive assault on any civilian population. Crimes like murder, rape, imprisonment, forced disappearances, enslavement, notably of women and children, sexual slavery, torture, apartheid, and deportation are among the 15 types of crimes against humanity included in the Rome Statute (Article 7 Rome Statute).

The use of child soldiers, the murder or torture of civilians or prisoners of war, and the deliberate targeting of hospitals, historical sites, or structures used for educational, artistic, scientific, or charitable purposes are just a few examples of war crimes that constitute serious violations of the Geneva Conventions in the context of armed conflict (Article 8 Rome Statute).

The use of armed force by a State against the independence, integrity, or sovereignty of another State constitutes the crime of aggression.

At the first Rome Statute Review Conference, which was held in Kampala, Uganda, in 2010, the definition of this offense was accepted by altering the Rome Statute. According to Article 8(1), "crime of aggression" is defined as the planning, preparation, initiation, or execution of an act of aggression that, by its nature, gravity, and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the United Nations Charter by a person in a position to effectively exercise control over or direct the political, military action of a State. According to Article 8(1) of the Rome Statute, an "act of aggression" is defined as the use of a state's armed forces against another state's sovereignty, territorial integrity,

or political independence, as well as any other behavior that is incompatible with the United Nations Charter.

The ICC only prosecutes matters where States are truly reluctant or unable to do so; it is intended to complement, not to replace, national criminal systems (Article 17 Rome Statute). The court has authority over:

- (a) A situation in which one or more of such crimes appears to have been committed is referred to the Prosecutor by a State Party; or
- (b) A situation in which one or more of such crimes appears to have been committed is referred to the Prosecutor by the Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations; or
- (c) The Prosecutor has initiated an investigation in respect of such a crime Article 13 Rome Statute).

The provisions of Articles 6, 7, and 8 make it clear that terrorism is not listed as a crime over which the ICC will have jurisdiction. The question of whether the jurisdiction can be drawn from any of these Articles' provisions, however, is inevitable. Should the Rome statute be changed to explicitly include terrorism-related jurisdiction?

The ICC's statutory responsibilities to see if it can handle crimes related to terrorism in order to provide a response to the problems raised above. The fundamental rules for interpreting international treaties will be very important in this. The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties contains these in Articles 31 and 32.48 While Article 31 gives the treaty's text precedence, Article 32 expands the interpreter's instrument to also incorporate the treaty's negotiation background and preparatory work.

This means that when a treaty is being interpreted, the court must decide whether to apply the literal rule of interpretation, which is the common understanding of the treaty's terms, or to consider the goal the text was intended to accomplish and thus infuse new meanings into it as the situation changes and new challenges arise. The supplementary means of interpretation is the name given to this second method of understanding.

The application of Article 31 may leave the meaning ambiguous or obscured, or it may result in a result that is obviously absurd, unintended, or unreasonable, according to Article 32, which states that recourse may be had to additional means of interpretation, including the treaty's preparation work and the circumstances of its conclusion.

These five particular actions are listed as probable genocide crimes under Article 6 when they are undertaken with genocidal intent. They are to "kill its members in order to completely or partially destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group." Genocide has a component of group annihilation. Despite recent attacks on churches and clergy members, they will not fall under this category in the context of the Boko Haram terrorist organization.[Why is this underlined?] In contrast to the 1972 Munich Olympic Games massacre of Israeli athletes, which saw eight Palestinian terrorists from Black September taking hostages before killing eleven Israeli sportsmen,

this did not occur. They can be categorized as belonging to an ethnic or national group. The conclusion is that the Munich tragedy can fall under the ICC's purview, but Boko Haram's activities cannot. The current attack cannot be solely attributed to one faction or another. Even Muslims are impacted by the rebels of Boko Haram.

Article 7's definition of crimes against humanity includes offenses like murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation or forced population transfers, torture, rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, and other inhumane acts of a similar nature that intentionally cause great suffering or serious harm to the body, mental or physical health, among others. According to the description of terrorism included in laws like section 46 of the EFCC Act, it would appear that this is the best clause to which the Rome Statute may be changed or construed in order to try terrorism, especially domestic terrorism. This is due to the absence of any mention of group extermination, such as genocide, or acts done during a war, such as those described in Article 8. This point of view has some commentators' backing (Much, 2006). The concept of "crime against humanity" stipulates that the above acts must be performed as part of a widespread or systematic attack intended to target any civilian population, which is used to argue against this claim. Would the recent wave of bombings and kidnappings qualify as crimes against humanity? We think that the civilian population in Nigeria's northern States is the target of the insurgency offensive. It is also organized. The mens rea implies that they were aware that the attack would result in homicide, a suicide attack, etc. Therefore, we draw the conclusion that the ICC can exercise jurisdiction against the Boko Haram insurgents. They could face charges of crimes against humanity.

Whether Boko Haram's actions qualify as grave violations of the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, relating to the treatment of prisoners of war, would determine whether they qualify as war crimes under Article 8 that fall under the purview of the ICC. The attack must involve actions carried out in accordance with a plan or policy or as part of a widespread commission of crimes of this nature, such as willful murder, torture, or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments, willful infliction of great suffering or serious bodily harm, extensive property destruction and appropriation, carried out unlawfully and wantonly, etc. it is the opinion of this author, the term of terrorism cannot be included in Article 8 of the Rome Statute because war crimes are connected to armed conflict.

The "Crime of Aggression" definition was approved at the Review Conference in 2010. A manifest violation of the United Nations Charter is defined as the planning, preparation, initiation, or execution of an act of aggression by a person in a position to effectively exercise control over or direct the political or military action of a State (Article 8bis Rome Statute). It mostly entails hostile acts against other states. The people who planned, prepared, initiated, and carried out the crime will then be held accountable for it (Lichtenberg, 2006). Therefore, organizations like the Boko Haram sect cannot face charges of Crimes of Aggression before the ICC. The rebels' acts are not intended to harm another state (state actors).

In conclusion, the research above reveals that the scope and required purpose to commit the crime must be taken into consideration when trying to include terrorism within the parameters of the numerous crimes established by the Rome Act. Since the crime of terrorism strives to eliminate or

destroy members of a group in whole or in part, the crime of genocide cannot accommodate the crime of terrorism. This category of crime does not apply to the Boko Haram group's conduct.

The idea is put forth that terrorism can qualify as a crime against humanity. This is due to the fact that terrorism crimes can include numerous acts such as murder, torture, rape, imprisonment, or other grave physical liberty violations, as well as the forced disappearance of individuals. The legal definition of terrorism, whether domestic or international, would not allow for war crimes or crimes of aggression. This is due to the fact that acts of terrorism do not constitute war crimes under the Geneva Convention nor do they involve armed warfare. The recently created crime of aggression entails the employment of a state's armed forces. Non-state actors who perpetrate terrorist activities are not included in this. Therefore, it is quite improbable that it would allow for terrorism.

Legal Obstacle to Terrorism Cases in Nigeria

Prosecutors in Nigeria face a number of difficulties when trying cases involving terrorism. The lack of a definition of terrorism and the consolidation of meanings in multiple statutes, including the EFCC Act, the Criminal Law of Lagos State, and those of other States, present one of the biggest obstacles to the prosecution of terrorism cases.

There is no institutional framework for the defense of the criminal investigators in these cases. There are always invisible backers of terrorists. Attacks by terrorists or terrorist sympathizers are a possibility for prosecutors and their families. No retaliation should be taken against the accused individual, his family, or anybody else they care about while carrying out their duties as prosecuting counsel because doing so would be bad for the criminal justice system.

The lack of personnel in the investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases presents another difficulty. Due to the nature of terrorism, specialized prosecutors and investigators are needed. The Ministry of Justice's attorneys lack the necessary training to handle these matters.

The heads of the prosecuting authorities seem to sympathize with the terrorist, which is odd and one of the biggest obstacles. They appear to be having relationships with politicians and, as a result, receiving guidance on who and when to prosecute from the same politicians who appointed them. This has had a significant impact on Nigeria's efforts to prosecute terrorists.

Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the main pillars of the war on terrorism is the successful prosecution of terrorist suspects. The legislative framework, as well as the requisite manpower and political will, should be in place as mechanisms for this. Therefore, rather than the current scenario where several statutes attempt to establish contradictory definitions, there is a need for a uniform definition of terrorism.

The prosecutor and the investigative authorities will benefit enormously from this. The Attorney General of the State, such as Lagos State, where the Criminal Law establishes the offense of terrorism, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission under the EFCC Act, and the Attorney General of the Federation under the Terrorism (Prevention) Act are currently the bodies or agencies that have the authority to charge a suspect with terrorism in Nigeria. These organizations and the prosecution authorities ought to work in concert.

Additionally, there will be a shortage of judges or prosecutors, which will hinder successful prosecution. In order to familiarize them with global best practices in the criminal prosecution of terrorism-related offenses, prosecutors and judges must undergo ongoing training. To prevent the allure of corrupt enrichment, it is advised that the prosecutors be appropriately compensated.

As terrorism's tools evolve, funding for forensic investigations should be made available. In actuality, cyberterrorism exists now. The inquiry and prosecution will be unsuccessful without the required resources and expertise. Therefore, there should be an increase in the budgetary funding for these organizations.

To avoid being compromised, the leaders of these agencies should try to avoid getting too involved in politics or forming close relationships with elected officials. To encourage impartial decisions free from bias toward politics, ethnicity, or religion, deliberate efforts should be taken to keep the office of the Attorney General of the Federation/State from that of the Minister of Justice/Commissioner for Justice.

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Politics of the Sudanese Civil War: An Assessment of Intervention and Resolution

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Abstract

The Sudanese crisis has run into decades of political instability, ethnic tensions, and economic challenges, resulting in the emergence of armed conflicts and widespread violence. This paper examined the politics of civil war, intervention, and resolution in the context of the Sudanese crisis which led to the creation of South Sudan. The methodology adopted is content analysis. The paper adopted the theory of cooperative conflict resolution. The findings of this study reveal that while external interventions can contribute to a peaceful resolution, they can also exacerbate the conflict by fueling factionalism and perpetuating violence. The paper also highlighted the role of local actors in shaping the trajectory of the conflict and the importance of their inclusion in the resolution process. The paper concludes with the notion that a lasting resolution to the Sudanese crisis will require sustained efforts by all stakeholders, including the Sudanese government, rebel groups, regional actors, and the international community. It recommends that to effectively resolve the Sudanese crisis, the root cause of the conflict should be addressed. This may involve addressing historical injustices, addressing ethnic and religious tensions, improving economic opportunities, and promoting social inclusion.

Keywords: Politics, Civil war, Conflict, Sudanese crisis, Interventions, Resolution

INTRODUCTION

Civil wars are one of the most devastating forms of violence, leading to the loss of lives, displacement of communities, and destruction of social and economic infrastructure. The politics of civil war, intervention, and resolution is complex and multifaceted, involving domestic and international actors with divergent interests and agendas. Sudan has experienced protracted civil war since its independence in 1956. The conflicts have been fueled by ethnic and religious divisions, economic marginalization, and political exclusion. The most protracted and deadliest of these conflicts is the one in Darfur, which began in 2003 and has resulted in an estimated 300,000 deaths and displacement of millions of people (Reeves, 2010).

The Sudanese crisis has attracted significant international attention, with various actors intervening in different ways to resolve the conflict. The intervention strategies have included diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions, peacekeeping missions, and military interventions. However, despite these efforts, the conflict has persisted, highlighting the challenges of resolving civil war. Some scholars argue that external actors, particularly the Western powers, have exacerbated the Sudanese crisis by pursuing a narrow set of interests that prioritize their strategic and economic interests over

the well-being of the Sudanese people (Jok & Hutchinson, 2011). Others highlight the challenges of peacekeeping missions in complex civil war environments, where peacekeepers are often caught in the middle of competing interests and are forced to navigate complex local dynamics (Abdullah & Ahmad, 2017).

The Sudanese crisis is a complex case study of the politics of civil war, intervention, and resolution. The conflict has persisted despite significant international intervention, highlighting the challenges of resolving civil war. Scholars have analyzed the conflict from various perspectives, highlighting the importance of understanding the dynamics of civil war and the complexities of resolving them.

From the aforementioned, the paper seeks to examine the intervention and resolution of the civil war in Sudan. The paper is therefore segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discusses the subject matter, while the fifth section concludes the paper.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Politics

Politics refers to the activities, structures, and processes related to the governance of society and the distribution of power and resources. It encompasses the interactions among individuals and groups within a given society as they seek to influence decision-making and policy outcomes. One definition of politics comes from David Easton, who defines it as "the authoritative allocation of values." According to Easton, politics involves the process of determining how resources are distributed and how decisions are made within a society. He suggests that politics is a necessary aspect of any organized society and that it helps to ensure stability and order (Easton, 1957).

Harold Lasswell defined politics as "who gets what, when, and how." This definition emphasizes the distribution of power and resources within a society and highlights the importance of understanding the interests and motivations of different actors in the political process. Lasswell (1936) argues that different groups and individuals compete for access to resources and decision-making power. Robert Dahl views politics as "the process through which people try to influence the government in order to achieve their goals." According to Dahl, politics involves not only formal institutions like government, but also informal processes like lobbying, protest, and public opinion formation. He suggests that politics is an ongoing struggle between competing interests and that the ability to influence the government is key to achieving one's goals (Dahl, 1961).

Politics can be defined as the activities, structures, and processes concerned with the distribution of power and resources within a society, as well as the decision-making that occurs within and between political entities (Heywood, 2017). This definition highlights the importance of power, authority, and governance in political systems. According to Max Weber, politics is the "struggle for power" (Weber, 1978, p. 78). Weber emphasized the role of power and authority in shaping political systems and argued that politics was a key arena in which social conflict is expressed and resolved.

Conflict

Conflict is a term used to describe a wide range of interactions and situations involving disagreement, opposition, or hostility between individuals or groups. According to Deutsch (1973), conflict is "an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals." (p. 3). Coser (1959) defines conflict as "a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (p. 12).

Rahim (2023) is of the opinion that conflict is "an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (individuals, groups, organizations, or nations) that occurs when one or more of the parties perceive their needs, interests, or values are being frustrated or negatively affected by the other party." (p. 4). According to organizational theorist Mary Parker Follett, conflict is "the appearance of difference, difference of opinions, of interests" (Follett, 1941, p. 19). Follett emphasized the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives and interests in managing conflict.

Conflict scholar Johan Galtung defined conflict as "the presence of at least two parties (individuals or groups) with divergent interests or goals, who feel they are incompatible, and who, as a result, engage in a struggle over scarce resources, power, or values, and in the course of which they damage or harm each other to some degree" (Galtung, 1990, p. 17). Galtung's definition incorporates elements of both Coser's and Gurr's definitions, while also emphasizing the potential for harm or damage in conflicts.

Civil war

Civil war is a form of internal armed conflict that involves one or more organized groups seeking to take control of the government or territory within a state, often resulting in high levels of violence and large-scale human suffering. Civil war is characterized by several key features, including the use of violence to achieve political goals, the involvement of non-state actors, and the fragmentation of political authority within the state (Collier et al., 2003).

In their influential study, Collier et al. (2003) defined civil war as "a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the centre or in a region or to change government policies" (p. 1). The authors note that civil wars are distinct from other forms of armed conflicts, such as wars between states or colonial wars, in that they typically involve internal divisions over power and governance. Political scientist Barbara Walter defines civil war as "a violent conflict within a country fought by organized groups that aim to take power at the centre or in a region or to change government policies" (Walter, 2006, p. 2).

David Armitage (2017) defines civil war as "an intense, protracted, and large-scale armed conflict fought between groups within a single country or nation" (p. 3). Similarly, Stathis Kalyvas (2006) characterizes civil war as "a sustained and geographically concentrated armed conflict between two or more actors that seek to gain control of the government, the territory, or both" (p. 7). While there may be some variation in the precise definition of civil war across scholars, there is general agreement that civil wars involve internal armed conflict, the pursuit of political goals, and the involvement of non-state actors.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the study is a combination of content analysis and thematic approach. Data were gathered from journals, official websites, literary works, documentaries and newspapers. Every single piece of information gathered for this study is pertinent to it.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper adopts the theory of cooperative conflict resolution proposed by (Roger Fisher and William Ury 1981). This theory offers a framework for understanding and addressing political conflicts, particularly in the context of civil wars. The Sudanese crisis is a complex conflict that has been ongoing for decades, involving a range of actors and interests. One of the key principles of conflict resolution theory is the need for effective communication between conflicting parties (Avruch, 2001). Communication is essential in order to build trust and mutual understanding and to identify shared interests and potential areas for compromise. In the context of the Sudanese crisis, effective communication between the government, rebel groups, and international actors is essential for any progress towards resolution.

Another important principle of conflict resolution theory is the need for mediation and negotiation (Lederach, 2011). Mediation involves the use of a neutral third party to facilitate communication and negotiation between conflicting parties, while negotiation focuses on finding mutually acceptable solutions to the conflict. In the Sudanese crisis, the African Union has played a significant role in mediating between the government and rebel groups, while international actors such as the United Nations have been involved in negotiations aimed at achieving a peaceful resolution.

A third principle of conflict resolution theory is the importance of addressing underlying issues and grievances that fuel the conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). In the case of the Sudanese crisis, these underlying issues include marginalization and political exclusion of certain groups, as well as competition over resources such as oil. Addressing these underlying issues will be essential in achieving a sustainable and lasting resolution to the conflict. In addition to these principles, conflict resolution theory also highlights the importance of building peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004). This involves a range of activities, including the rebuilding of communities, the provision of justice and reparations for victims, and efforts to promote social cohesion and trust. In the context of the Sudanese crisis, these efforts will be crucial in ensuring that the country can move forward in a peaceful and stable manner.

One potential weakness of the cooperative conflict resolution is that it overemphasize negotiation and dialogue as the primary means of resolving conflicts. In some cases, negotiation may not be possible or may not be effective in resolving deeply entrenched conflicts. This is particularly relevant to the Sudanese crisis, which has been marked by a long-standing conflict that has resisted numerous attempts at negotiation (Galtung, 2013).

Conflict resolution theory provides a useful framework for understanding the politics of civil war, intervention, and resolution in the Sudanese crisis. Effective communication, mediation and negotiation, addressing underlying issues and grievances, and building peace and reconciliation are all key principles that can help to guide efforts towards a sustainable and lasting resolution to the conflict.

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE SUDANESE CIVIL WAR

The Sudanese Civil War was a conflict that raged for more than two decades, from 1983 to 2005, between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), which sought greater autonomy and ultimately independence for the southern regions of Sudan. The causes of the war were numerous and complex, involving issues of ethnicity, religion, economics, and politics.

One of the major causes of the Sudanese Civil War was the marginalization of southern Sudan by the northern-dominated government in Khartoum. The southern regions were largely neglected in terms of development, education, and infrastructure, leading to widespread poverty and underdevelopment (Musa, 2010). Additionally, the government's imposition of Islamic law in the predominantly Christian and animist south was seen as a form of cultural oppression (Prunier, 2005).

Another significant cause of the conflict was the exploitation of resources, particularly oil, by the Sudanese government, which controlled most of the country's oil reserves. The southern regions, which were oil-rich, received little benefit from the oil revenues, exacerbating economic disparities between the north and south (Johnson, 2003). Moreover, the government's use of oil revenues to fund its military campaign in the south further contributed to the conflict (Flint & de Waal, 2008).

Ethnic and religious differences also played a role in the Sudanese Civil War. The southern regions were home to a diverse range of ethnic and religious groups, which often experienced discrimination and persecution at the hands of the government and northern-dominated army (Johnson, 2003). The SPLA/M, which was predominantly made up of members of the Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups, fought for greater autonomy and representation for southern Sudanese people (Prunier, 2004).

Finally, political factors also contributed to the conflict, including the failure of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, which had ended the previous civil war, and the militarization of politics in Sudan. The government's refusal to negotiate with the SPLA/M and its use of force to suppress opposition further fueled the conflict (Musa, 2010)

CONSEQUENCES OF THE SUDANESE CIVIL WAR

Loss of life: The civil war resulted in the loss of an estimated 2 million lives, primarily from the South (U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2001.). The conflict was marked by brutal violence, including widespread massacres, forced displacement, and starvation, leading to high levels of mortality.

Economic devastation: The war had a severe impact on the Sudanese economy, which suffered from reduced agricultural productivity, disrupted trade, and damaged infrastructure. The conflict also led to the loss of significant foreign investment and humanitarian aid (The World Bank, 2023).

Displacement: The conflict forced millions of people to flee their homes, seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, such as Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, or in other parts of Sudan. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that more than 4 million people were internally displaced, with another 600,000 refugees seeking asylum in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 2023).

Human rights abuses: The war was characterized by widespread human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, rape, and torture. Both sides committed atrocities, but the Sudanese

government was accused of being responsible for the majority of abuses (Amnesty International, 2004).

The Sudanese Civil War had a profound impact on Sudan and its people, resulting in the loss of countless lives, widespread displacement, economic devastation, political instability, and human rights abuses. The war's legacy continues to shape the country, with ongoing challenges to achieving peace, stability, and prosperity.

INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN THE SUDANESE CONFLICT

The Sudanese conflict has been ongoing for decades and has resulted in significant loss of life, displacement of populations, and destruction of infrastructure. International intervention in the conflict has been complex, with various actors involved and different approaches taken. One of the earliest forms of international intervention in the Sudanese conflict was through the United Nations (UN) Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). UNMIS was established in 2005 to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The mission's mandate was to monitor the implementation of the agreement, facilitate the voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and promote human rights and good governance in Sudan (United Nations, 2005).

One major intervention was the deployment of a joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission (UNAMID) in Darfur in 2007. UNAMID was established with the aim of protecting civilians and supporting the implementation of peace agreements in Darfur (UNAMID, n.d.). However, the mission has faced challenges in implementing its mandate due to restrictions on its movement and operations by the Sudanese government, as well as ongoing violence in the region (Amnesty International, 2021).

Another intervention was the International Criminal Court's (ICC) investigation and prosecution of Sudanese officials for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in Darfur. The ICC issued arrest warrants for several high-ranking officials, including former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who was arrested in 2019 and is currently on trial (International Criminal Court, 2021). Some claim that the ICC's role in the Sudanese war has had little effect on the ground and that some international actors have used it as a political instrument because of its engagement in the conflict.

International sanctions have also been imposed on Sudan by various countries and organizations. These sanctions have targeted individuals and entities involved in the conflict, as well as the Sudanese government more broadly. Some argue that these sanctions have had a negative impact on the Sudanese population, particularly in terms of access to essential goods and services (Al Jazeera, 2017).

CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SUDAN

Conflict resolution in Sudan has been a difficult task due to the complexity of the conflicts and the involvement of multiple stakeholders. One of the most significant conflicts in Sudan is the Darfur conflict, which began in 2003. The conflict was fueled by a range of factors, including political marginalization, resource scarcity, and tribal divisions (De Waal, 2017). The conflict led to the displacement of millions of people and the loss of countless lives. The international community

intervened in the conflict, and several peace agreements were signed between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups. However, the implementation of these agreements has been slow, and the conflict has not yet been fully resolved (Mutasa, 2017).

To address the conflict, several conflict resolution mechanisms have been employed, including mediation, negotiation, and peacebuilding. The African Union and the United Nations have played significant roles in mediating the conflict and facilitating negotiations between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups. The African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was established in 2007 to support the peace process and promote stability in the region (Mutasa, 2017).

In addition to mediation and negotiation, peacebuilding has also been employed as a conflict resolution mechanism. One of the most significant peacebuilding efforts in Sudan is the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which was signed in 2005 between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The CPA was aimed at ending the long-standing conflict between the north and south of Sudan, which had been ongoing for over two decades (Arnold, 2013). The CPA paved the way for the creation of an autonomous southern Sudan, which later became the independent country of South Sudan in 2011. The African Union and the United Nations have played significant roles in mediating the conflict and facilitating negotiations between the Sudanese government and the rebel groups. Additionally, peacebuilding efforts such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement have been employed to address the conflict

FINDINGS

The politics of civil war, intervention, and resolution have played a significant role in shaping the crisis in Sudan. One of the critical findings related to the Sudanese crisis is the role of external intervention. According to De Waal (2007), the intervention of external actors has often made the situation in Darfur worse. The intervention of international actors such as the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) has been criticized for being ineffective and failing to address the root causes of the conflict. The inability of external actors to find a lasting solution to the crisis has been attributed to the lack of political will among key stakeholders, the failure to understand the complexity of the conflict, and the limited mandate of peacekeeping forces (De Waal, 2007). The politics of the Sudanese crisis also highlight the role of the state in perpetuating violence and conflict. According to Mamdani (2009), the Sudanese state has historically used violence as a means of maintaining power and suppressing dissent.

The government's use of militias and proxy forces in Darfur has exacerbated the conflict and resulted in significant human rights abuses. The resolution of the Sudanese crisis has been hampered by the lack of consensus among key stakeholders. The absence of a shared understanding of the root causes of the conflict and the lack of trust between the government and rebel groups has made it challenging to find a lasting solution to the crisis. The involvement of external actors has also complicated the resolution process, with different actors having different agendas and interests in the region (De Waal, 2007). The conflict's resolution will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including the government, rebel groups, and external actors, to address the root causes of the conflict and find a lasting solution that is acceptable to all parties involved.

CONCLUSION

The Sudanese crisis has been marked by long-standing political and economic grievances, which have resulted in a prolonged civil war between the Sudanese government and various rebel groups. The involvement of regional and international actors in the conflict has further complicated the situation, with different actors pursuing their interests and agendas. Efforts to resolve the conflict have included diplomatic negotiations, peace agreements, and international intervention, such as the deployment of peacekeeping forces. However, the success of these efforts has been limited, and the conflict has persisted, with occasional outbreaks of violence. A lasting resolution to the Sudanese crisis will require sustained efforts by all stakeholders, including the Sudanese government, rebel groups, regional actors, and the international community. This will require addressing the root causes of the conflict, promoting inclusive governance and economic development, and addressing the grievances of marginalized groups. Ultimately, a sustainable resolution to the Sudanese crisis will require a commitment to peace and reconciliation by all parties involved, and a willingness to work towards a shared vision of a peaceful and prosperous Sudan. Ultimately, a sustainable resolution to the Sudanese crisis will require a commitment to peace and reconciliation by all parties involved, and a willingness to work towards a shared vision of a peaceful and prosperous Sudan.

After considering several literatures and analysing the contents, the following suggestions are made by the paper to prevent conflict in the future:

Address root causes: To effectively resolve the Sudanese crisis, it is important to address the root causes of the conflict. This may involve addressing historical injustices, addressing ethnic and religious tensions, improving economic opportunities, and promoting social inclusion.

Engage in dialogue: Engaging in constructive dialogue between different factions in the conflict is important for finding a peaceful resolution. This may involve negotiations, mediated talks, or other forms of dialogue that help build trust and find common ground.

Encourage international involvement: International actors, such as the United Nations or regional organizations like the African Union, can play an important role in resolving civil war. International involvement can provide legitimacy, resources, and expertise to support efforts to resolve the crisis.

Promote accountability: Addressing issues of accountability for crimes committed during the conflict can be an important step towards reconciliation and preventing future violence. This may involve establishing truth and reconciliation commissions, holding perpetrators accountable through legal mechanisms, or offering amnesty to encourage peaceful reintegration into society.

Address humanitarian needs: It's important to address the humanitarian needs of those affected by the conflict, including access to basic services like healthcare and education, as well as support for refugees and displaced persons. Providing for basic needs can help reduce tensions and promote stability, which is key for resolving conflict.

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Youth Participation in Politics and Governance:

A Case of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria has the largest population of young people in the world. yet this demographic dividend has hardly translated into electoral representation for the youth. Successive governments since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999 have continued to detach the youth from the political space, claiming that they are politically immature. The power elite has continued to engage the youth to cause trouble during and after elections. However, the youth have become sensitive to their mandate as change agents as demonstrated in recent national protests (#EndSars protest year 2020). The paper highlights the activities of the youth in the area of participation in politics and governance of the Fourth Republic of Nigeria. The danger in youth not participating in politics portend to national development using the youth Bulge theory to underpin the study. The paper concludes with the recommendation that serious encouragement of the youth in participating positively and actively in political process should be established.

Keywords: Youths, Nigeria, Politics, Governance, Fourth Republic

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of youth participation in politics and governance has stirred intense debates among scholars over the past few decades. Young people's political participation has direct economic, social, and cultural implications. For a nation to experience remarkable economic, social and political growth, the government must give special attention to the youth. Youth political participation is the process of engaging young people in a societal decision-making process. According to Aniagoh (2016), youth political participation implies recognizing and nurturing the strengths, interests, and abilities of young people by providing them opportunities to become involved in the decision-making process. Youth participation is not about using young people as pawns for the electoral victory of older politicians, but allowing them to participate in the electoral process and win elections for themselves. Onyewuchi (2018) defines youth participation as the

involvement of youth in the decision-making processes on issues that affect them and entrusting them with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively and meaningfully participate in governance and nation-building.

There is no doubt that youth participation in formal institutions is an integral part of the democratic process as it can improve policy design and implementation and instill a sense of ownership in them. Young people can be vital stakeholders in conflict and can also be change agents, providing a foundation for rebuilding lives and communities, and contributing to a more just and peaceful society. The inclusion of young people in politics and governance is necessary to avoid societal costs that come with their exclusion such as apathy toward politics, violence, extremism, and crime. The international community stresses the importance of youth participation in political systems. For instance, the UNDP views youth as a positive force for transformative social change and is committed to helping enhance youth political participation (Falola, 2021).

Available statistics from the 2009 Nigerian National Baseline Youth Survey show that young people between the ages of 15 and 35 constitute a third of the population of Nigeria. The statistics indicate that the youth bulge is one of Nigeria's greatest assets, underscoring the importance of young people's representation or involvement in governance. Young people are needed to play a role in the Nigerian development process as they provide the labour force for the production of goods and services to take effect. Youth political participation can foster a sense of citizenship and make policy processes more transparent and accountable towards young people while also helping them build self-confidence, develop a sense of initiative and acquire relevant skills for the workplace. Youth participation can help strengthen their trust in political institutions and facilitate information exchange regarding local conditions. It can also enable the youth to influence governmental decisions in a representational manner.

Despite their seemingly large population and potential influence on national development, the Nigerian youth are not represented adequately in formal political institutions and processes such as parliaments, political parties and public administrations (Preye & Agnes, 2011). Successive Nigerian governments have ignored the capabilities and agency of the young people. Though the Nigerian constitution gives the youth ample opportunity to vie for any elective positions, the reality on the ground is different. It is needless to state that constant denial of youth participation may lead to a revolutionary change as witnessed in the Arab Spring not too long ago. The studies on youth political participation in Nigeria are still evolving and a few focused on youth involvement in electoral violence and political thuggery.

This paper highlights the extent of Nigerian youths' participation in politics and governance since the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1999, identify the barriers to participation, examine the consequences of non-participation and offer recommendations to boost participation. The paper utilizes the youth bulge theory to elucidate the relevance of youth political participation in contemporary Nigerian society.

CONCEPT OF YOUTH

According to Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement (YIAGA) Africa (2019b), the definition of 'youth' depends on the frame of different sociological perspectives and cultural

contexts. For instance, in some African settings, an individual would remain a youth until the age of marriage and has a paid job to meet personal and extended family responsibilities. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) views the youth as those between the ages of 15 and 35, as recognized in the African Youth Charter. The Commonwealth of Nations classifies youths as those aged between 15 and 29.

The United Nations (UN) defines youth as people between the age 15 and 24, but this definition varies from country to country based on demographic, economic, financial and socio-cultural backgrounds. In China and India, the youth are designated as those aged between 19 and 29. In Indonesia, youth are classified as people in the age group of 16 to 30 while in Malaysia, youth are viewed as those who are between 15 and 40. Furthermore, the South African youth policy sees the youth as "young people falling within the age group of 14 to 30", and for Kenya, they are "person resident in Kenya in the age bracket of 15 to 30." Coming nearer home in Nigeria, the National Youth Policy (2009) defines youth as those between 18 and 35 while Tanzania classifies its youth as those aged 15 to 35.

The words 'youth', 'young' and 'young person' are used interchangeably to refer to young men and women. In political participation, age-related exclusion typically reaches beyond 24 years. People below 35 years are not found in formal political leadership positions. In a third of countries, eligibility for the national parliament starts at 25 years or higher. It is common practice to refer to politicians as 'young' if they are below 35-40 years. Youth wings of political parties and young leaders' programmes often have an age limit of 35 years. Many international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in the democratic governance arena define youth as all individuals between 18 and 35.

According to Elaigwu (2005), youth connotes age, but age can be a biological terminology or a sociological category. A young man could occupy the apex of the socio-political pyramid. Scholars have argued that age-based definitions have not been consistent across cultures and that it is more accurate to focus on social processes in the transition to adult independence for defining youth (Tyyska, 2005). Thus, youth is the stage of constructing the *self-concept*. The self-concept of youth may be influenced by several factors such as peers, lifestyle, gender, and culture. Youth is the time one makes crucial choices which will affect one's future. This paper adopts the concept of youth as those between 18 and 35. The reason is that people in this age group can take political decisions without adults' control.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The current work is anchored on the theory of youth bulge. According to Aghedo and Eke (2013), the theory of youth bulge was propounded by Gunnar Heinsohn, a German social scientist but it was Gary Fuller and Jack Goldstone, two American political scientists who expanded on it. Youth bulge theory denotes a situation where a country hosts a large youth population who are marginalized and excluded from societal participation by the older adult population. The theory holds that such a large youthful population can constitute a high risk in the country if neglected. In other words, a heavy and unengaged youth population may lead to violence, rebellion, warfare, criminality and other aggressive behaviour.

The Arab Spring and Islamic revivalism in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Algeria about a decade ago resulted from a combination of youth bulge and limited economic opportunities. The theory is relevant to this current work in that the Nigerian youths who form the bulk of the country's population are persistently excluded from governance by the older power elite. A time may come when the youth will no longer accept the status quo, resulting in mass rebellion to enforce their rights as happened during the recent national protest (#EndSars protest year 2020).

Youth Participation in Politics: Trends in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

The Nigerian Fourth Republic emerged in 1999 after a series of failed attempts at democratic transitions in the preceding First, Second and Third Republics, spanning thirty-eight years. The Fourth Republic constitution was patterned after the ill-fated Second Republic in which Nigeria jettisoned the parliamentary system of government for an America-style presidential system. The Fourth Republic began following the unexpected demise of the late General SaniAbacha. In an election conducted in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo of the People Democratic Party (PDP) emerged as the winner to become the first elected leader in the Fourth Republic.

Unlike the pre-independence and immediate post-independence periods where young people actively participated in governance and positively influenced the course of events, the civilian regime of President Obasanjo that ushered in the Fourth Republic witnessed the complete political and economic exclusion of the Nigerian youth, and their degradation to the status of political vandals. According to Osumah (2016), the political class severely curtailed youth political engagement through anti-democratic measures. The situation was not different in President Obasanjo's second term. The late President Shehu Musa Yar'Adua who succeeded President Obasanjo in 2007 noticed the severe dearth of youth in the decision-making process and their exploitation as political thugs by the power elite. As a result, he attempted to remedy the situation on August 25th 2008 by setting up Nigeria Youth Parliament to encourage youth participation in government. He expected that youth participation will bring more depth to political institutions and positively impact the quality of democratic governance in the country. However, the representation of youth in the national parliament did not rise to any appreciable level. President Goodluck Jonathan who succeeded the late President Yar'Adua and ruled till 2015 did not fare any better.

Similarly, there is no equitable youth representation in President Buhari-led administration. Despite all the promises to involve the youth, President Buhari's appointment of ministers and Special Assistants did not see young people emerge. In May 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Age Reduction Act. Consequently, youth candidacy increased from 21 per cent in the 2015 general election to 34.2 per cent in the 2019 general election. However, youth candidacy dropped from 34.2 per cent in 2019 to 28.6 per cent for the current 2023 general election. Youth candidacy data analysis from 2015–2023 swing forward in 2019 and then backward in 2023. This situation was attributed to the high cost of the nomination forms, highly commercialized party primaries, and the substitution of candidates (Faruk, 2023). This means that electoral process in Nigeria has been commercialized excluding youth in the process, the youth demography of over 60 per cent of the entire population fails to translate into a democratic dividend in terms of youth candidacy and representation in elective offices.

The questions about the ideal approach to motivate and improve young people's political engagement are especially significant to the newer democratic setting in Nigeria (Tonge & Mycock, 2009). Since the youth are often the lowest age group in political engagement in Nigeria, some projects focused on improving engagement have been initiated by NGOs over recent years (Kingsley, 2013; Vite, 2018). However, these projects are implemented in a hierarchical structure and frequently demonstrated at the global level, thereby rendering them less accessible to the youth who are willingly engaging (Thiery, 2011). The youth can be a creative force championing innovation in politics and governance in society and they can equally lend their skills and energies to illicit acts, such as electoral brigandage and violence. Greater youth participation in the electoral process is indicative of the development of the country's democracy

Since the advent of independence in Nigeria, the youths within the political and governance space have had complex and contradictory roles that are both constructive and destructive. The frontline public roles of youths began to diminish during the Second Republic in 1979 when the era of sit-tight leaders, who rose to power in the First Republic as youth began. These leaders then conspired to relegate the youth to the "youth wings" of political parties (Amzat and Abdullahi, 2016). Nigerian youth have become a tool in the hands of the political elite who have been using them as thugs and enforcers during violent electoral campaigns, and as agents of destruction through political violence. Due to numerous failings of the state, the youth have been restless in areas such as the Niger Delta, North-East and the South-East. It is public knowledge that the deployment of youth as vectors of violence led to the termination of the First and Second Republics (Amzat and Abdullahi, 2016). Though the opportunities for youth to participate in political processes may depend on the political and cultural context, a democratic environment can be more favourable to participation in general. For the most part, promoting youth participation needs to be geared towards achieving levels relative to the rest of the population.(TongeandMycock, 2009) (Amzat and Abdullahi, 2016).

The Nigerian youths have positioned themselves as a durable bulwark against oppression, despite the numerous consequences they bore for this. Although young people form a sizeable voting bloc, their political representation is limited. They can be voters but cannot vie for elective positions. It should be noted that from the inception of the Fourth Republic until now, the older politicians who had previously served in government in one form or another have been in control.

It is a fact that some young people are engaged as political thugs during campaigns and election periods. They are also deployed as campaign agents for crowd mobilisation at rallies to chant political slogans and for successes at elections, after which they are forgotten. Young Nigerians have lost hope in institutions that do not serve their interests or reflect their preferences. Their low participation rates in electoral contests reflect disenchantment with the ruling elite and the systems of governance they oversee. Until the youth become fully involved in the decision-making process, particularly on issues that affect them, it will be difficult for them to contribute their quota to nation-building (Dike & Dike, 2017). Fortunately, the youth appear to be gradually coming to terms with the fact that they are a portent political force that must be carried along as shown in the recent #EndSARS protests across the country. The #EndSARS protests are a major pointer to the power of a focused, passionate and charged youth bloc. As a result of that singular action, many people

in contemporary Nigerian society believe that youth questions, if not fully addressed, may be a ticking time bomb ready to explode.

Obstacles to Political Participation

Nigerian youth face formidable obstacles to political participation. As Nigerian politics is expensive, running for elective positions is regarded as the exclusive preserve of the wealthier, more connected individuals, many of whom fall into the older age demographic. A number of the key factors hindering the political participation of youths have included poverty, resulting from the failure of the state to attend to the welfare of the people, which is the primary purpose of government. The lack of adequate social provisioning for education, health and decent housing has distracted the youth from political issues. With 45% of Nigerian youth living below the poverty line and another 23% at risk of doing so, one does not need to brainstorm why things are the way they are.

Politics in Nigeria is an elitist game that requires high income and sometimes high education (Omodia, 2010). As a result, many Nigerian youth shy away from participating since they lack the needed resources. The hegemonic hold of some influential people in society on electoral matters and elective positions has also placed a stranglehold on political interference and barred the youth from active political participation. Besides, some youth shun politics due to the culture of violence associated with the political system over the years. Similarly, the dominance of the ruling and recycled political class has continued to discourage youth political engagements in Nigeria. One main barrier to youth political participation in Nigeria is the high eligibility age to contest for elective positions. Another barrier is the cultural or social norm that inhibits them from participating. It is claimed in some quarters that the solution to include youth in political processes cannot lie in the capacities of individual youth alone. The youth have to blend with the socio-political environment and political organizations.

Many youths are not trained enough to have skills that make them employable while others are yet routinely offloaded from tertiary institutions into non-existent labour markets. This situation has served as the basis for political elite to consider youth as only suitable for roles as political enforcers, purveyors of violence and other nefarious purposes. Other obstacles are military involvement in governance which has destroyed democratic cultures and institutions, and the commercialization of politics which has turned it into an investment and money-spinning venture.

As people have little time, engagement with politics is more costly for those who have not yet sorted out their lives. Though young people gain more experience with the electoral and political process as they age, some specific steps of adulthood seem to have affected political participation behaviour adversely. These include, among others, settling down for marriage, graduating and getting a job. Some authors state that these results relate purely to the influence on voter turnout and that the influence of lifecycle effects on other forms of political participation can only explain minor differences (Quintelier, 2007).

Some scholars believe that because today's young people are less politically engaged than the existing elderly, they will never achieve the level of political sophistication of the elderly (Martikainen et al., 2005). According to Arnett (2014) and Tagliabue et al. (2014), one explanation

for this is that young individuals today have a harder time achieving the milestones of adulthood, which causes an irreversible delay in political engagement. Young adults continue to exhibit traits that set them apart from the older generations, according to studies, and this will cause them to be replaced by a younger generation of political participants who will be less active (Quintelier, 2007).

CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH NEGLECT

The Nigerian youth face poverty, displacement, barriers to education, multiple forms of discrimination and limited employment prospects all of which have constituted a clog in the wheels of growth and development of both their bodies and minds, thereby reducing them to a mere political tool in the hands of the ruling class. Niger Delta Militants in the South-south, Boko Haram in the North-east and IPOB in the South-east are some youth groups whose activities have proved harmful to the nation because of their non-engagement in state affairs.

Youth have generally been negatively mobilized by the political class because they tend to thrive in thuggery, violence and the like, apparently because of poverty, unemployment and the selfish motive of people who exploit them. A situation where politicians recruit youth as thugs, arm them with dangerous weapons, and reward them for harming people is greatly counter-productive.

As a result of their desperation to navigate the difficult path of life following their political deprivation, young people engage in aggressive and criminal behaviour, including armed banditry, kidnapping for ransom, bunkering, vandalism, and insurgency. For instance, the Boko Haram insurgency in Northeastern Nigeria is linked to scant political and economic opportunities and access (Aghedo&Osumah 2014). Unfavourable socioeconomic conditions, manifesting in youth unemployment and poverty, have been linked to the ethnoreligious conflicts in Nigeria (Jega 2007).

Omotola, (2002) states that the political class exploits the youth by using them to perpetrate electoral violence instead of engaging them meaningfully in governance. The youth have become instruments by the politicians to orchestrate trouble during political campaigns and elections, initiate intra and inter-party conflicts, and other politically motivated violence, such as kidnapping, hostage-taking and cult-related violence. The actions of the political elite who manipulate the youths to cause political violence have negatively affected the perception of youths regarding political participation. Even then, the youth hardly consider themselves worthy to participate politically; many of them have become parochial or at most spectator political participants.

Young people see electoral violence as a last resort to create their own spaces within the political arena in which they try to subvert authority, bypass the encumbrances created by the state, and fashion new ways of functioning and maneuvering on their own. Whatever the answer is, one fact is clear: leaving Nigerian youth out of political engagement is perilous to all sustainable development efforts. If the older politicians continue to ignore the youth, it will have an adverse effect in the future as youth restiveness will escalate, and the Nigerian society will continue to experience underdevelopment (Chikwe& Augustus-Daddiie, 2018)

CONCLUSION

Nigerian youth are indispensable parts of society and change agents to herald a new social order. They are the engine of the growth and development of the nation. However, since the inception of

the Fourth Republic in 1999, the Nigerian youth have been systematically ignored in the scheme of things and are, instead, used by the power elite to cause trouble during and after elections. It is disturbing that none of the regimes in the Fourth Republic from 1999 to 2023 have engaged the youths in any political positions.

The scenario has always been the same. During the electioneering periods, politicians will use the youth to campaign for them with a promise to appoint them to government positions or give them opportunities to vie for any elective positions. As soon as the elections are over, the youth become irrelevant. The cycle goes on and on. It is pleasing that today's youths are no longer content to remain on the sideline and are now more determined than ever to involve themselves in governance as exemplified by the #EndSARS protests of 2020 and the Not-Too-Young-To-Run campaign.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth participation in governance is essential for a nation's socio-political advancement. Young people need to participate in government activities to have a sense of belonging. In this connection, this paper recommends the following to engender effective youth participation in all aspects of society and development.

It is necessary to encourage the youth to participate positively and actively in political processes by building social structures and promoting individual talents, personality development and group survival. However, there is a need for capacity building to strengthen young people's understanding of the political processes and institutions. There is need to tailor public information and communication efforts to young people through increased uptake of opportunities to get involved and ultimately strengthen the legitimacy of political decisions.

Moreover, it is essential to ensure the active engagement of young men and women in advancing the open government agenda to mitigate the risks of non-inclusion in governance and to assume agency in shaping their lives, society and economy. Young people should be empowered and engaged within political parties and institutions by allowing them to run for elective positions.

Lastly, there is a need to address legislative or policy barriers that directly or indirectly prevent people under 30 years from running for leadership positions. In addition, it is necessary to groom young persons to become leaders.

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Micro Financing Factors and SMEs Growth during COVID-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

SMEs is generally believed to be the development wheel of a nation which must be adequately financed to achieve desired results. This study thus investigated the micro financing factors and SMEs growth during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study makes use of survey research design to gather primary data through a questionnaire. The population for the study was 1999 SMEs in Ondo State; and the sample size of 333 SMEs was determined through Taro Yamane formula and were purposively selected across the State. The data collected were analysed using mean and one-way-Anova method. The results showed a positive link between eligibility criterion ($p < 0.01$), savings ($p < 0.01$), loan structure ($p < 0.01$), and socio-economic characteristics of both SMEs and banks ($p < 0.01$) and therefore, concluded that there is a significant relationship between micro financing factors (eligibility criterion, savings, loan structuring, socio-economic characteristics) and SMEs growth during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study recommended that financial institutions need to relax loan eligibility criteria to accommodate more SMEs to accelerate economic growth.

Keywords: Small Businesses, Micro Financing Factors, Business growth, Covid-19, Financial Institutions

1.0. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the Covid-19 deadly virus and its effects on the global economy, policymakers and other world leaders have shifted their attention to the surging demand for the rapid growth and development of small and medium enterprises as one of the swiftest approaches for reviving the economy. This is one of the most effective strategies for resuscitating the economy. In a similar vein, the ease with which small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) may have access to financial

resources has been a topic of discussion among academics and policymakers all over the globe for several decades (Nwosu *et al.*, 2021). The issue of small and medium-sized enterprises' (SMEs) lack of access to financial resources has been the topic of a multitude of seminars and controversies in Nigeria. These events have been organised with the goals of enhancing the financial line for SMEs and explicitly integrating their impacts on the economy, particularly during the epidemics (Hashim, & Mohammad, 2021). This is due to the fact that finances play a crucial role in deciding the expansion and continued existence of SMEs (Olaoye *et al.*, 2018).

According to Muhammad, Olusegun, and Sonny (2018), having access to financial resources enables small enterprises throughout many Sub-Saharan African nations to make productive investments, which in turn contributes to the economic growth of the country and the reduction of poverty in such nations. During this crucial phase of COVID-19, access to adequate financing for small and medium companies (SMEs) is vital in order to stimulate new business creation. In addition, if they are unable to get financing from outside sources, small and medium-sized businesses are unlikely to be able to compete successfully in global markets, grow their operations, or develop commercial partnerships with larger companies (Akingunola, Olowofela, & Yunusa, 2018). Existing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and prospective entrepreneurs have identified limited access to capital as the most significant challenge to the growth of firms and new ventures (Olowookere & Hassan, 2021).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria are generally understood to be enterprises that have an annual revenue of less than 300 staff and less than one hundred million naira (Akingunola, Olowofela, & Yunusa, 2018). According to a survey conducted by Udo *et al.* (2019), around 96 percent of enterprises operating in Nigeria are classified as small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and these SMEs accounted for roughly 90 percent of the total number of firms operating in the industrial sector. Despite this, their contribution to the global GDP is less than 6%, compared to 40% in Asia and 50% in either the United States or Europe (Ariyo, 2021). Only five percent of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are funded by traditional banking institutions, which means that the remaining companies rely on alternative financing sources for both expansion and operating capital (Ariyo, 2021). Due to the many challenges involved in gaining access to bank funding, the vast majority of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) finance their enterprises using their own money, money from their families, and money from their friends (Gololo 2017).

Regardless of the fact that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria are widely considered as the cornerstone of employment generation and technical progress in the country, the segment has been neglected, which has had unfavourable repercussions on the economic development of Nigeria. According to the findings of a study that the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) carried out in 2004, just around ten percent (10%) of the businesses that are registered with MAN are fully functional. This demonstrates that almost ninety percent of these businesses are either in the process of declining or have completely disappeared. This truth portends plainly a major threat for the economic growth of developing countries, given that manufacturing enterprises are recognised to be supporters of true development and growth in any country (Nwosu, 2005).

The ability of businesses to obtain financial services such as credit, deposits, payments, insurance, as well as other underwriting is referred to as "access to credit." The term "unbanked" or "underbanked" is used to refer to individuals who do not willingly have any access to finance or have only restricted access to such services (Harris & Gabson, 2006). Access to financing is defined by

Rahman (2016) as the lack of price and quasi restrictions in the utilisation of financial products. Because of the rigorous benchmark criteria, financial institutions in many countries throughout the globe have not been able to successfully handle the many financial needs of the low income individuals despite the fact that there are many of these needs (Seles, 2019). As a consequence of this, the access to credit that are offered by Microcredit Establishments plays an essential role in the process of bridging the vacuum for financial products among those who earn a low income, particularly in this day and age of Covid-19.

It is a prevalent misconception that small and medium-sized businesses have relatively restricted access to loans, lines of credit, and other types of financial support services offered by traditional financial sector (Ndife, 2013). According to Mahmood *et al.* (2015), this is because small and medium-sized enterprises are unable to provide the essential collaterals that is required by formal institutions, and additionally, banks find it very hard to recover the high costs that are associated with working with small firms. In addition to this, the inherent risks involved in providing financing to small and medium-sized businesses make it unappealing for banks to work with small businesses (Johari & Komathy, 2019).

According to the statistics collected during the Covid-19 study, small businesses had a high failure rate due to the presence of some salient micro financing factors; these includes eligibility criterion, savings, loan structuring, socio-economic characteristics (Nwosu, 2021). This made it difficult for creditors to make an accurate evaluation of the profitability of the businesses they lent money to, as well as the capabilities of the entrepreneurs and the probability that they would be repaid (Hashim & Mohammad, 2021; Ikechi & Nwadiubu, 2021; Nwosu, 2021). As a result, this research investigated the micro financing factors and SMEs growth during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria. This paper is sectionalised into five main parts. This includes the introduction, literature review, methodology, results and discussion, and the conclusion.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptual Review

Small and Medium-scale Enterprises and Access to Financing

Collateral Requirements

The term "collateral" represents the amount of a borrower's resources that are pledged to a lending institution as surety for the repayment of a loan (Gitman, 2003). In the event of loan failure, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular are required to provide security in terms of assets (such as homes, companies, automobiles, and anything else that may really pay back the principle) (Garrett, 2009). Loan collateral has to be able to be sold under standard market circumstances, at a price that is commensurate with its worth in the market, and within a time frame that is acceptable to the lending institution.

Security requirements may help mitigate systemic risk by raising the bar for borrowing and perhaps penalising borrowers who don't perform up to par. The borrowers may utilise the loaned money for their own financial advantage. Furthermore, while in place, security restrictions might mitigate some of the fallout that would otherwise result from SMEs' misallocation of money. It's clear that most small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have trouble securing funding due to bias and

exclusion from financial institutions. This is due to the high level of risk involved and the lack of sufficient assets to serve as collateral (Kihimbo *et al.* 2012).

Small business support services

The small and medium enterprise (SME) sector has been the focus of several policy efforts and assistance programmes developed by governments across the globe. Mainly concerned with fostering the expansion of small businesses and lowering the rate of poverty, support initiatives for this sector are developed (Atmadja, Su, & Sharma, 2016). To help small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) weather the economic storm brought on by the Covid-19 Pandemic, the present government in Nigeria has developed a number of social intervention programmes.

Government plays an important role by providing incentives for, publicising, and backing private efforts that help small and medium-sized businesses access alternative sources of capital (Bosma, 2018). Moreover, the Institute for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (IPMSE) offers a variety of programmes to start and grow enterprises by offering comprehensive support for managers and company growth. As the rejection rate is greater, especially for bank-sponsored schemes, it seems that these programmes are not sufficient to meet the needs of small and medium-sized businesses in need of finance (Iloh, 2014).

Structure of financial Sector

The banking industry's prices for services and products benefit greatly from increased competition. The pricing of financial goods and the ease with which small firms may get financing are both affected by the amount of competition in the banking industry (Ayuba & Zubairu 2015). New and fledgling businesses may be hampered by the intense rivalry in the banking market. The health of the banking sector as a whole will suffer from a lack of competitive pressure (Olaoye *et al.*, 2018). In addition, prices may rise and new businesses may struggle to get off the ground (Muhammad *et al.*, 2018). The connection between banks' ownership structures, market dominance, and the cost of obtaining external funding is complex. Foreign banks could be more inclined to lend to obscure borrowers, while local banks are more likely to seek out more facts and stronger enforcement measures (Olowookere, 2021).

Awareness of funding opportunities

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and financial institutions (FIs) depend on a free flow of analysis of financial market (Nahamya *et al.* 2015). Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) need access to sufficient data in order to locate viable providers of financial services. Financial institutions need details on the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) seeking bank funding so that they may assess the inherent risks involved and get insight into the geographic area in which the SMEs will be active and the specific market categories in which they will compete (Nahamya *et al.*, 2015). The focus of this data is on raising SMEs' understanding of available finance options. In addition, significant information is not accessible and known by all participants in the financial market, a phenomenon known as "information asymmetry" (Nnabu *et al.*, 2017). Actually, the two actors on the financial market are the focus of information asymmetries. It's possible that the lenders don't know as much about the borrowers' businesses as the borrowers do. On the other side, it involves a lack of data that is timely, reliable, quality, volume, and full about loan applicants' capacity to repay loans and access banking organisations' financial products (Peprah, & Ayayi, 2016).

Access to Finance

There are two main types of external funding that are crucial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Equity finance, in the guise of venture funding, is the first option for startups and small enterprises (Deakins *et al.*, 2008). For this reason, small enterprises often seek loan funding from financial institutions like banks and non-banking organisations rather than equity financing from investors. It is true that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a hard time obtaining debt financing because of the stringent criteria lenders must meet in order to provide credit (Akingunola, 2018).

Micro Financing Factors

Eligibility Criterion

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) in Nigeria have been instrumental in providing financial services to small and micro-enterprises that are often excluded from traditional banking services (Gulolo, 2017). According to Gulolo (2017), the eligibility criteria for accessing microfinance vary across different institutions but generally require the borrower to have a viable business plan, collateral, and evidence of cash flow. However, these criteria may exclude many low-income households and small businesses that lack adequate collateral and financial history (Iloh, 2014).

The study of Harris and Gibson (2006) emphasized that one of the major challenge facing microfinance eligibility in Nigeria is the lack of financial literacy and record-keeping skills among potential borrowers. This makes it difficult for them to provide the necessary documentation and demonstrate financial capability to access microfinance services (Harris & Gibson, 2006). Moreover, some microfinance institutions charge high interest rates and hidden fees that can be burdensome for borrowers, especially those with limited income (Harris & Gibson, 2006).

Savings

Microfinance has become a popular means of providing financial services to individuals and small businesses in Nigeria. The microfinance industry in Nigeria has grown significantly in recent years, with many microfinance institutions (MFIs) emerging to offer various financial products and services, including savings accounts (Waari & Mwangi, 2015).

Microfinance savings in Nigeria have several benefits, especially for low-income earners who have limited access to traditional banking services (Peprah & Ayayi, 2016). Microfinance savings help to promote financial inclusion and improve financial literacy among individuals and small businesses, and boost economic growth by providing access to finance for entrepreneurs who can use the funds to start or expand their businesses (Peprah & Ayayi, 2016).

Loan Structuring

Microfinance loan structuring in Nigeria has been an important tool for promoting financial inclusion and poverty reduction in the country (Olowookere & Hassan, 2021). Microfinance institutions (MFIs) provide small loans to entrepreneurs and low-income individuals who may not have access to traditional bank loans (Ovat, 2020). However, the loan structuring practices of MFIs in Nigeria have been criticized for being exploitative and ineffective in addressing the needs of the target population (Akingunola *et al.*, 2018)

The major issue with microfinance loan structuring in Nigeria is the high interest rates charged by MFIs (Akingunola *et al.*, 2018). The interest rates are often above the market rates, making it difficult for borrowers to repay the loans (Akingunola *et al.*, 2018). The loan terms are also often short, which can lead to frequent repayments that are difficult to manage for borrowers with irregular income streams (Akingunola *et al.*, 2018). This can lead to loan default and increase the burden of debt for the borrower (Akingunola *et al.*, 2018).

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Microfinance is a type of financial service that aims to provide access to financial services to low-income individuals or those who have been traditionally excluded from formal banking services (Alfo & Trovato, 2006). Microfinance institutions (MFIs) have been playing a significant role in promoting socio-economic development in Nigeria (Atmadja *et al.*, 2016). The microfinance sector in Nigeria has grown rapidly over the years, and there are currently over 1,000 registered microfinance institutions in the country (Atmadja *et al.*, 2016).

The socio-economic characteristics of microfinance in Nigeria is that it has been instrumental in promoting financial inclusion, with a significant percentage of the Nigerian population being unbanked, microfinance has provided a means for them to access credit and savings services (Gulolo, 2017). This has helped to improve the standard of living of many low-income households, by providing them with access to finance for their businesses and other personal needs (Gulolo, 2017).

2.2. Theoretical Review

Information Asymmetry Theory In 1970, Akerlof's theory was presented to the public for the first time. Some forms of asymmetric information may also be employed in circumstances in which at least one party can enforce specific portions of an agreement or successfully punish for violations of the contract, while the other party or parties cannot do either of these things. Spence and Stiglitz (2001) proved that the market may fully collapse in the face of asymmetric knowledge and the three unique repercussions that might emerge as a result of this: adverse selection, moral hazard, and monitoring cost. It has been observed that there is a correlation between information asymmetry and increased transaction costs.

According to Waari and Mwangi (2015), the three effects of the asymmetric information syndrome on the financial market, or more specifically the credit market, are most clearly evident in the sourcing of external funding by SMEs. Studying their practical ramifications may be best shown by looking at the transactions that often occur between the borrowers and lenders. Majority of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) are ultimately forced to rely on outside sources of finance in order to achieve their goals. The use of the borrowed money is subject to several requirements, all of which must be satisfied by the entities involved in the transactions. Both of the parties involved in this financial transaction are required to communicate with one another and provide any pertinent information. The rationale for the choice of this theory is that the theory proved to be useful in gaining an understanding of the factors that controlled the availability of microloans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including eligibility requirements, loan structures, and other credit conditions.

Credit Rationing Theory

Stiglitz and Weiss (1981) proposed the Credit Rationing Theory to explain why small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) had difficulty gaining access to capital. The authors of this theory argued that agency problems and information asymmetries were to blame. They said that only the SMEs understood the true state of their finances, the true soundness of the investment proposal, and their true willingness to repay the loan (asymmetric information). So, the bank manager faced systemic risk, adverse selection risk, and limited knowledge while making judgments.

According to Stiglitz and Weiss's (1981) theory, asymmetric information may cause credit rationing by altering the risk-return distribution, which in turn causes financial institutions to withhold funds for investments and results in a discrepancy between the supply and demand for that capital (Alfo & Trovato, 2006). As a result of managers operating under circumstances of asymmetric knowledge, the restricted access to money resulting from financial institutions' credit rationing behaviour may not be efficient. There is a danger of adverse selection and moral hazard if less profitable ventures are backed while more lucrative ones are passed over. Since lenders do not know the precise bankruptcy chance for the businesses, but do know that this likelihood is positive, they opt to raise the cost of loans due to this asymmetry of information, which might explain the unequal of lending across enterprises with similar qualities.

Gichuki *et al.* (2014) argue that insecure environments provide unique challenges for some types of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including those run by young people or those located in economically depressed regions. Asymmetries might also stem from differences in geography and industry. The proprietors of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSEs) in rural areas, for instance, may have trouble securing bank financing. Rationing is more common for smaller businesses because of the perceived higher risk they pose. The banks will not boost the interest rate to reflect the increased risk, even if borrowers may be ready to pay more. The findings of this research corroborated the theory's ability to shed light on why certain small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with particular characteristics have difficulty in securing bank loans than others.

Pecking Order Theory

Myers (1984) and, Myers and Majluf (1990) developed this idea (1984). There was an assumption that "inside" management knew more about the company's actual worth than did "outside" investors. Potential investors saw equity as riskier than debt due to knowledge asymmetry, hence the cost of raising external capital was different for each. It was postulated by Myers and Majluf (1984) that corporations would prefer to finance investment projects using internal money in order to avoid the undervaluation issues that result from informational imbalances. When a company's internal equity reserves are depleted, it turns to debt financing before seeking funding from outside investors. Ibbotson, Sindelar and Ritter (2001) argue that the higher cost of external equity and the larger information asymmetries faced by SMEs make POT all the more important for this industry. Also, this is particularly important in the business sector as a whole since it was customary for business owners to want to keep their hands off the company and keep the management team apart from the board of directors (Jordan, Lowe, & Taylor, 1998).

Given the above, it seems MSE owners prioritise using their "own" money before turning to short-term loans, then to longer-term debt, and last to the entrance of new equity investors, which

constitutes the worst form of incursion. Most small businesses utilise either savings or loans from outside lenders to fund their daily operations and future expansion, with just a tiny fraction turning to external equity investors. In this environment, firms have a lower priority than generating external equity (Ou & Haynes, 2006). Howorth (2001) looked into the hierarchy and discovered that business owners often tap into their personal funds first, then their networks of friends and family, and last institutional lenders like banks. It's true that the money from loved ones may be crucial to unlocking help from banking firms.

2.3 Empirical Review

A study by Muhammad *et al.* (2018) compared and contrasted the several viable options for funding small and medium-sized enterprises in Nigeria. Using the net present value (NPV) method, the research compares the viability of traditional bank usury versus Islamic bank financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in terms of development and innovation. The net present value (NPV) of all loans received by an Islamic bank from 2000-2017 was more than the NPV of all loans receivable at usury interest rates, proving that Islamic banks are superior than usury financing for company growth and innovation.

From 1998 through 2017, Olaoye, Adedeji and Ayeni-Agbaje (2018) analysed commercial bank lending to small and medium-sized firms and the Nigerian economy. The research examined the effects of the typical commercial financial intermediation rate, commercial bank loans, and inflation rate on the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria, as well as the link between explanatory variables and GDP in Nigeria. The Statistical Bulletin of the Central Bank of Nigeria and the National Bureau of Statistics were used to collect secondary data for the research period. The data were examined using descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, ordinary least squares regression analysis, and Granger causality analysis. According to the statistics, commercial bank loans to SMBs had a negligible and negative impact on the gross domestic product ($p < 0.05$). The average lending rate of commercial banks to small enterprises had a negligible and negative impact on GDP ($p > 0.05$). The analysis revealed that the inflation rate had a modest positive effect on the gross domestic product ($p > 0.05$). The results also showed that there is no causative link between the GDP-measured Nigerian economy and exploratory parameters but that there is a cause - effect correlation between low commercial bank bank lending rate to SMEs and commercial bank loans to SMEs.

Basheer (2019) did a research on the impact of the Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) microfinance programme on the success of microenterprises in Sabah, Malaysia. Using a cross-sectional study approach, he discovered that microfinance has a positive and statistically significant link with the success of microenterprises. In their study on the business performance of SMEs in Kelantan, Mahmood and Rosli (2013) also emphasise the importance of microcredit to company success which was consistent with Mustapa, Mamun, Anuar, and Hayat (2019).

Ruslan *et al.* (2020) made a research on the influence of microcredit on the performance of businesses in Terengganu, Malaysia. According to the research, involvement in microcredit programmes may increase sales growth for small and medium-sized enterprises, but not employee growth. Hassan and Ibrahim (2015), who studied the impact of microcredit on small businesses in Penang, discovered that microcredit effectively increases the income of micro-entrepreneurs and has a favourable impact on their businesses.

Commercial bank loans in Nigeria were studied by Ikechi and Nwadiubu (2021) to determine their impact on the productivity of small and medium-sized businesses. The study used a retrospective research design, with relationships determined by a least squares regression analysis of time series data and spurious outliers eliminated through unit root tests. The results of the research showed that the number of commercial bank loans made accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria had a negative relationship with their production, however this relationship was not statistically significant. Furthermore, the research revealed that despite the growth in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the unemployment rate in Nigeria has not decreased since many SMEs have high rates of underemployment.

2.4 Gap in Literature

It is evident that Nigeria, like many other nations throughout the globe, places an emphasis on both the demand and supply sides of the small business finance market (Olaoye *et al.*, 2018). The demand side promotes banks to give financing to small firms via the use of guarantees, and also supports the provision of further financial assistance through the use of more reasonable costs of capital, micro-finance, and innovation funds. This emphasis is decreasing the informational asymmetries that exist between the two actors on the supply side. To make the situation better, the important information that should be shared between borrowers and lenders should be made available (Olowookere *et al.*, 2021). However, small and medium businesses still have a difficult time gaining access to financing. Therefore, this research empirically investigated the dynamics behind the sluggish SMEs growth during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Ondo State is home to one thousand, nine hundred ninety-nine (1999) small and medium-sized businesses, as reported by SMEDAN (2017). As a result, the population of the study included all of the SMEs in Ondo State, and the subjects of the population consisted of the managers of the SMEs. The research adopted multiple stage sampling technique. Firstly, a method of sampling that was completely random so that every small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) in the state would have an equal opportunity to take part in the research. In addition, the target respondents (managers) were chosen using the purposive sampling approach.

The 333 sample size was determined with the use of Taro Yamane formula, and the data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and one-way analysis of variance.

The full regression model used was:

$$SG = \beta_0 + \beta_1ELC + \beta_2SAG + \beta_3LST + \beta_4SEC + \varepsilon$$

Where:

β_0 = Estimation of the y-intercept

β = Slope of the regression line

SG = SMEs Growth

ELC = Eligibility Criterion

SAG = Savings

LST = Loan Structuring

SEC = Socio-Economic Characteristics

e = predictive error term

It is expected that all the independent variables will have a positive relationship with the dependent variable

4.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Micro Financing Factors

Source: Field survey (2022)

	(\bar{X})	$W(\bar{X})$	St. Dev.
Eligibility Criterion			
<i>Collateral Requirements:</i> The capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to fulfil collateral requirements has an influence on business investment returns.	3.420		.9555
<i>Excessive Paperwork:</i> The capacity of SMEs to get necessary paperwork has an influence on the timeliness with which loans are approved.	3.583	3.5338	1.0427
<i>Credit History:</i> The chance of getting selected for a loan is determined by the credit history of the applicant.	3.498		1.1237
<i>Guarantors:</i> Whether or not individuals are prepared to serve as guarantors has an influence on the ease with which credit/loans may be secured.	3.841		.9796
<i>Landed Property or Assets:</i> There is a negative effect on the development of SMEs when collateral assets are included in credit/loan application procedures.	3.327		1.2531
Savings			
The capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to save substantial quantities of money has an influence on their ability to get bigger amounts of microcredit.	3.922		.9505
The amount of savings influences the frequency of repayment and the amount of loss sustained as a result of default.	3.589	3.58725	1.0335
Saving has a greater impact on the confidence that banks have in a person or organisation, as well as the possibility of getting a bigger loan.	3.751		1.2349
When it comes to securing bigger loans, having funds in excess of my loans/credits limit might provide a person a competitive edge in the market when it comes to borrowing more money.	3.087		1.2569
Loan Structure			
Uninterrupted loan repayments are impacted by affordable interest rates/costs of debt repayment.	3.162	3.3482	1.0716
The quantity of money returned on loans or credit facilities is influenced by the length of time it takes to pay them back.	3.498		1.2650

The quantity of money that has been borrowed in the past has an influence on how the business's needs are met.	3.324		1.3160
The availability of different types of loans has an influence on the success of business operations.	3.508		1.4982
Transactional expenditures are determined by the fees charged by credit card companies for processing transactions.	3.249		1.2398
Socio-Economic Characteristics			
The size of a company's asset base has an impact on its ability to repay a loan	4.000		.7071
The number of years that a bank has been in operation has an impact on its preference for lending to enterprises.	3.333		1.1745
SMEs with high social capital are more likely to be chosen by banks when it comes to loaning money.	3.583	3.6848	1.1207
The level of knowledge and/or exposure of company owners have an impact on the quality of information and repayment options they provide.	3.757		1.0050
Because stronger collateral will be available as a result of strategic company partnership, the likelihood of obtaining a loan increases.	3.751		1.1672

From table 1, the entire eligibility criterion identified showed above average mean of $\bar{X} = 3.5338$. the capacity of SMEs ($\bar{X} = 3.420$) to access credit during Covid-19 is greatly influenced by collateral requirements. Likewise, the timeliness with which loans are approved are been influenced ($\bar{X} = 3.583$. Credit history also played ($\bar{X} = 3.498$)a great influence on the capacity of SMEs to access microcredits during Covid-19. The ability to produce a guarantor ($\bar{X} = 3.841$) and landed property or asset ($\bar{X} = 3.327$) to secure microcredit was negatively affected during Covid-19.

The capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to save substantial quantities of money was negatively affected by Covid-19, this consequently influenced their ability($\bar{X} = 3.922$) to get bigger amounts of microcredit. The amount of savings influences the frequency of repayment and the amount of loss ($\bar{X} = 3.589$) sustained as a result of default caused by the Covid-19. In the same direction, SMEs low savings negatively ($\bar{X} = 3.751$) affected banks confidence as well as their possibility of getting a bigger loan. On the overall, savings played ($\bar{X} = 3.587$) a vital role in securing microcredits during Covid-19.

The third identified antecedent is the loan structure which includes; the repayment plan, payback period etc. The repayment plan has ($\bar{X} = 3.162$), payback period($\bar{X} = 3.498$), the past loan data ($\bar{X} = 3.324$), different loan type available ($\bar{X} = 3.508$), and the transactional cost ($\bar{X} = 3.249$) have a great influence on the capacity of SMEs to access microcredits during Covid-19. The socio-economic characteristic of SMEs and banks is another identified antecedent to obtaining microcredit during Covid-19. The size of a company's asset base has an impact ($\bar{X} = 4$) on its ability to repay a loan. The number of years that a bank has been in operation has an impact ($\bar{X} = 3.333$) on its preference for lending to SMEs. SMEs with high social capital are more likely ($\bar{X} = 3.583$) to be chosen by banks when it comes to loaning money. The level of knowledge and/or exposure of company owners have an impact ($\bar{X} = 3.757$) on the quality of information and repayment options they provide. Lastly, the socio-economic characteristics have more than average effect ($\bar{X} = 3.6848$) on the capacity of SMEs to access microcredits during Covid-19 pandemic.

Table 2: Micro Financing Factors and SMEs Growth

ANOVA		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ELC	Between Groups	1628.173	6	271.362	107.165	.000
	Within Groups	825.491	326	2.532		
	Total	2453.664	332			
SAG	Between Groups	1009.689	6	168.281	30.078	.000
	Within Groups	1823.903	326	5.595		
	Total	2833.592	332			
LST	Between Groups	662.796	6	110.466	13.422	.000
	Within Groups	2682.994	326	8.230		
	Total	3345.790	332			
SEC	Between Groups	4199.843	6	699.974	419.891	.000
	Within Groups	543.455	326	1.667		
	Total	4743.297	332			

Source: Authors Computation (2022)

Table 2 showed the ANOVA manipulations of the relationships between the micro financing factors and SMEs growth during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria. The relationship between eligibility criterion and SMEs growth was predicted at $F = 107.165$, $P < 0.01$ which indicated that the precision level was almost 100%. This is also true for savings at $F = 30.078$, $P < 0.01$, loan structure at $F = 13.422$, $P < 0.01$, and socio-economic characteristics of both SMEs and banks at $F = 419.891$, $P < 0.01$. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between micro financing factors and SMEs growth during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Accessing credit is considered to be an important factor in increasing the growth of SMEs (Ariyo, 2021). It is thought that micro financing augment income levels, business expansion, competitiveness increase sales volume and thereby more profits (Gulolo, 2017). It is also believed that access to credit enables SMEs to overcome their liquidity constraints and undertake investments; this is evident in the current study where eligibility criteria, savings and others are found to have positive influence on the growth of SMEs. The socio economic characteristics, in line with the study of Veronica *et al*, (2014) goes a long way in influencing the credit worthiness and the ability of SMEs to easily navigate through the eligibility criterion and secure the much needed finance for growth and expansion especially, a well-managed SMEs.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study showed that micro financing factors played a very vital role in the growth of SMEs during Covid-19 in Ondo State, Nigeria. This study revealed that loan eligibility determined to a great extent, the growth of SMEs during Covid-19 as against Ruslan *et al*. (2020) whose study focused on the impact of microcredit on SMEs performance in Malaysia and concluded that in a time of abnormal economic situations, eligibility has nothing to do with loan accessing so far it is a legal business. This study showed that savings, loan structure, and socio-economic characteristics has a very high influence on SMEs growth as supported by Nwosu (2021), and Hashim and

Mohammad (2021) whose study focused on the effect of microcredit on the relationship between sustainability practices and business performance of microenterprises in Malaysia, that savings is a strong criteria in accessing loan by small businesses.

This study therefore concluded that the micro financing factors (eligibility criterion, savings, loan structuring, and socio-economic characteristics) do influence SMEs growth; and thus recommended that:

1. The financial institutions need to be directed by their respective regulatory bodies to relax loan eligibility criteria and other microcredit antecedents in order to accommodate more SMEs for quicker economic recovery.
2. SMEs situated in the same geographical location should form cooperatives and synergise their efforts and resources in order to qualify for bigger loan.
3. The policymaker's stakeholders and decision makers should review downward, the interest rate to encourage more borrowing for productive use.

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Environmental Accounting Information Disclosure and Profitability of Listed Manufacturing Firms in Nigeria (2011-2020)

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Abstract

Environmental accounting is the deliberate effort made by management at providing information regarding the environment in the financial statement to satisfy the information needs of various stakeholders. It aims at reducing the impact of externalities on the environment caused by production, achieving sustainability, and at the same time providing accurate information for decision making. There are divergent views among researchers, although some views are in consonance with the claim that there is a positive relationship between environmental accounting disclosure and firm profitability. Some others, however, disagree. It has been also observed that though researches exist on environmental accounting information disclosure, only very few exist that use EPS, DPS, net profit margin and ROCE as a measurable index for profitability. The aim of this research is to examine the impact of environmental accounting information disclosure on firm profitability using data obtained from the annual reports of thirty-six (36) manufacturing firms listed on the Nigerian Exchange Group between year 2011 and 2020. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tool of panel regression. Both Chow and Hausman tests were conducted. The result obtained showed a significant positive relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and Earnings per share (EPS), Dividend per share (DPS) and Net profit margin (NPM). It also revealed a positive but insignificant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and Return on Capital Employed (ROCE). The paper concludes that there is a significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and profitability of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. It is recommended that there should be more implementation and enforcement of environmental laws in Nigeria. Corporate bodies should not see environmental accounting as an act of philanthropy but a responsibility.

Keywords: Environmental accounting, earnings per share, dividend per share, net profit margin, sustainable development, return on capital employed

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, adverse issues relating to the environment have become a global phenomenon. Organizations now work to improve their reputation in the eyes of stakeholders by being more accountable in the quest to make the world safe and clean for future generations. The quest for a sustainable environment which the traditional accounting couldn't cater for has given rise to environmental accounting. Depletion of the ecosystem due to demand for renewable and nonrenewable resources for production and other reasons have plunged the planet into chaos and degradation (Srinivas, 2014).

The term "environmental accounting" is the process of informing stakeholders inside and outside about the environmental impact of the organization's operating activities. The goals of environmental accounting as currently understood are to attain sustainable development, good community relations, and the pursuit of effective and efficient environmental conservation measures (Nkwoji, 2021; Sengotuel, 2018). Environmental accounting information disclosure is categorized into mandatory disclosure and voluntary disclosure. Mandatory reporting is the minimum prescribed reporting requirements by regulatory bodies. Businesses have been seen to use sustainability reporting, satellite reporting, Global Reporting Initiative reporting and internet reporting as voluntary forms of environmental disclosure. According to Isenmann (2004) as cited by Daniel (2013), the future of scientific reporting would be environmental disclosure via the internet.

Many firms have advocated social and environmental reporting standards in order to serve the interests of diverse stakeholders and enhance corporate accountability. These standards are meant to give comparability and direction to information preparers and users. It is possible to gain knowledge about both the state of the art and the best practices in external environmental reporting by looking at these organizations and standards. An example of an environmental standard is the ISO 14000 series of standards published in 1996 to improve the environmental performance and environmental management (SMAC, 1998). Furthermore, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) is another development. The GRI was founded in 1997 with the help of several businesses, consulting firms, and non-governmental groups, and its goal is to create standards for corporate sustainability reports that can be used all over the world. Some businesses employ the GRI framework in their sustainability reports.

Domestic or local environmental laws are also established to mitigate the threatening environmental problems which emanate from human activities in the quest for economic growth and development (Hakeem & Joseph, 2014). For example, in Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in Section 20 states that 'the State shall protect and improve the environment and safeguard the water, air and land, forest and wildlife of Nigeria.'

Others are the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) Act 2007; Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act 2004 and Environmental Guidelines and Standards for Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN) 2002, published by the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) (Chiamogu & Okoye, 2020). In 2001, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) adopted the Nigerian Sustainable Finance Principles (NSFP) as

developed by the Financial Services Regulation Coordinating Committee (FSRCC), stating that; organizations contribute to efforts aimed at reducing global warming and other environmental footprints resulting from their activities and those of their stakeholders.

Nigeria has no laws mandatorily requiring public corporations to disclose information about the environment or society, and there are no large attempts to promote such disclosure (Aondoaka, 2015). In order to support this claim, British American Tobacco Nigeria (2010) notes that social reporting is not a common practice in Nigeria and that corporate social responsibility is frequently equated with philanthropy in its evaluation of the Nigerian situation. Secondly, companies are concentrating on short-term profits to match the expectations of shareholders, and are unwilling to engage in social and environmental changes because they may have prospective futuristic gains.

There are divergent views among researchers, although some views are in consonance with the claim that there is a positive relationship between environmental accounting disclosure and firm profitability. Some others, however, disagree. It has been also observed that though researches exist on environmental accounting information disclosure, only very few exist that use EPS, DPS, net profit margin and ROCE as a measurable index for profitability and analyzing data using both descriptive and inferential statistical tool of panel regression, conducting both the chow and Hausman test in manufacturing firms in Nigeria. This vacuum in literature is what this paper seeks to cover.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the influence of environmental accounting information disclosure on the profitability of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. This research specifically the study seeks to determine; (i) whether there is any significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and Return on Capital Employed (ROCE), (ii) whether there is a significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and Net Profit Margin (NPM), (iii) the impact of environmental accounting information disclosure on Dividend per share (DPS) and (iv) the influence of environmental accounting information disclosure and Earnings per Share (EPS). The following null hypotheses were tested accordingly:

H₁: There is no significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and return on capital employed.

H₂: There is no significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and dividend per share.

H₃: There is no significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and Net profit margin.

H₄: There is no significant relationship between environmental accounting information disclosure and Earning per share.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses literature relevant to the concepts and variables under investigation. Section 3 discusses the research methodology. Section four deals with results and discussion. Finally part five discusses conclusion and recommendations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmental Accounting

Environmental accounting is also known as green accounting aims at maintaining sustainable procedures. It is the integration of accounting practices that provide a business with the capacity to calculate the cost of protecting the environment during regular operation of business activities; to determine the benefits of such activities; to offer the appropriate method of quantitative measurement (in monetary terms or actual units) and to communicate such information to relevant stakeholders.

Why environmental accounting?

Accounting for the environment aids in the precise evaluation of the costs and advantages of business, environmental preservation initiatives (Schaltegger, 2000). In order to enhance managerial decision-making, control, and public disclosure, it offers businesses a uniform framework for identifying and accounting for past, present, and future environmental costs (KPMG & UNEP, 2006). Different organizations may have different cost elements in their cost content, as emission treatment, recycling, remediation, legal expenses, pollution control, capital and labour expenses (Sengottuvel, 2018). It is pertinent that all significant costs are incorporated for sound decision making purposes. A better approach to managing environmental expenses can lead to enhanced environmental performance, considerable improvements to human health, and commercial success.

Eco-efficiency is an aggressive approach to environmental protection which leads to reduced investment risk and a lower cost of capital. The availability of reliable information about firm environmental performance will lessen the perceived risk of investment in firms with good environmental performance or aggressive environmental strategies, resulting to better financial performance.

A thorough evaluation of social consequences enables businesses to more correctly and better manage their interactions with the community and their customers by analyzing stakeholder demands and anticipating responses, which in turn allows them to increase revenue.

Profitability

Apart from charity organizations, every other organization is out to make profit as future survival of such companies depends on the profit they are able to make. Highly profitable businesses have been found to be more efficient in handling and resolving environmental issues they counter as a result of their activities (Ying & Indra 2014). Shareholders, lenders are apt to support and reckon with companies making huge profit, as profit also help determine share values in the market place.

Manufacturing Sector in Nigeria

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the manufacturing sector contributed over 15% of Nigeria's GDP in 2021. The sector that contributed the most, accounting for about 5% of the GDP that year, was the food, beverage, and tobacco industry. Other major contributors in the manufacturing sector includes cement and textiles. Manufacturing companies are sensitive environmental firms that, since their operations, have a significant impact on the environment.

(Enarho, 2009). Some of the environmentally-sensitive firms are agriculture, chemical, extraction and mining, transportation, utilities, property building firms (Sharifah & Baktiar, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Legitimacy Theory

There are many theories relevant to this work such as the agency theory, stakeholders' theory, the legitimacy theory and signaling theory. But two theories would be considered here, legitimacy theory and the signaling theory would be used to underpin this work. Legitimacy theory has an advantage over other theories in that it provides disclosing strategies that organisations may adopts to legitimate their existence that may be euphorically tested Dowling and Pfeffer developed the legitimacy theory in 1975 (Guthrie & Ward, 2006). Legitimacy exists when an established value system is compatible with the larger social system, of which the establishment is a part, and aids in understanding how the organisation behaves while putting its social responsibility policies into practice, developing them, and communicating them. The fulfillment of the organization's social responsibility, which makes its goals recognizable, is the fundamental premise of the legitimacy theory. It suggests voluntary disclosures and providing the explanation of the disclosure of social, economic, and environmental information.

Signaling Theory

Signaling Theory is used to underpin this work, according to Brigham (2011). Signaling Theory is a practice used by management to provide investors with hints about how they perceive the company prospects. The signaling theory contends that management of a corporation must inform readers of financial statements of what has been done to carry out the owner's desires. Signals can include advertising or other material that implies the business is superior to rival businesses. Managers use signals to lessen the information asymmetry.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The research employed here is the longitudinal (panel) design being a suitable method in analyzing the variables which have both time and unit dimensions. The data for the research were manually collected from the annual reports of thirty-six (36) listed manufacturing firms between 2011 and 2020. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the 36 firms.

The data were analyzed with the descriptive and inferential statistical tool of panel regression. While descriptive statistics tools were used for preliminary analysis, the panel regression was used to investigate the extent to which environmental accounting disclosure influence the financial performance of the firms. The most appropriate panel regression models were selected using two different tests namely; Chow test to choose between fixed effect and pooled OLS. Hausman test between fixed and random effect. However, in some cases, feasible generalized least square panel regression was used in cases where pooled OLS, fixed effect and random effect models were inappropriate, especially when there was evidence of cross-sectional dependence or endogeneity.

Model Specifications

Following the path of previous empirical literature on the nexus between environmental accounting disclosures and firm performance, the models for the study for objective 1 to 4 are given as:

$$ROCE/EPS/DPS/NPTM = f(ENDI, FA, FLVA) \tag{1}$$

$$ROCE_{it} = \vartheta_0 + \vartheta_1 ENDI_{it} + \vartheta_2 FA_{it} + \vartheta_3 FLVA_{it} + \mu_{it} \tag{2}$$

$$EPS_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ENDI_{it} + \beta_2 FA_{it} + \beta_3 FLVA_{it} + \mu_{it} \tag{3}$$

$$DPS_{it} = \delta_0 + \delta_1 ENDI_{it} + \delta_2 FA_{it} + \delta_3 FLVA_{it} + \mu_{it} \tag{4}$$

$$NPTM_{it} = \vartheta_0 + \vartheta_0 ENDI_{it} + \vartheta_0 FA_{it} + \vartheta_0 FLVA_{it} + \mu_{it} \tag{5}$$

Where:

ROCE = Return on capital employed

EPS = Earnings per share

DPS = Dividend per share

NPTM = Net profit margin

FA = Firm age

FLVA = Financial leverage

Measurement of Variables

This study is made up of four dependent variables including ROCE, EPS, DPS and NPTM. One independent variable measured environmental disclosure index and two (2) control variables as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Summary Description of Variables

Variables	Proxy	Description	Source
Dependent			
Profitability	Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)	Profit after tax divided by the capital employed.	Daniel and Ambrose (2013)
	Earnings Per Share (EPS)	Profit after tax divided by average outstanding share	Daniel and Ambrose (2013)
	Dividend Per Share (DPS)	Cash Divided as a ratio of outstanding share	Daniel and Ambrose (2013)
	Net Profit Margin (NPTM)	Revenue minus cost divided by revenue	Daniel and Ambrose (2013)

Independent			
Environmental Accounting Disclosure	Environmental Disclosure (ENDI)	Index of global reporting initiative (GRI)	Swain (2017)
Control			
Firm age	Year of Listing (FA)	This is measured as the years of observation less the years of listing on the stock exchange	
Financial Leverage	Debt Ratio (FLVA)	The ratio of debt to equity of the firm	

Source: Authors'-Compilation, 2022

4. Results and Discussion

The results of summary statistics presented in Table 4.1 show that the mean earnings per share (EPS) of Nigerian quoted manufacturing firms over the period of study is found to be 2.391 naira with a standard deviation of 6.459. Also, the estimated average return on capital employed (ROCE) is found to be 5.034 per cent with a minimum and maximum of -35.209 and 53.959 per cent respectively, while the corresponding standard deviation of 11.211 revealed that there is very high variation in the ROCE of the Nigerian listed manufacturing firms. The results show that the average dividend per share (DPS) of Nigerian manufacturing firms is 1.633 with a minimum of 0 and maximum of 63.5 naira while the corresponding standard deviation of 5.708 implies a wide dispersion in the dividend per share of the sampled entities.

In addition, the net profit margin for the period averaged 3.267 per cent with a standard deviation of 21.405 which reveals wide variation in the net profit margin of sampled manufacturing firms. This equally revealed that the average index of environmental accounting disclosure for period covered in this study is 0.184 with a standard deviation of 0.214, a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 1. By implication, the extent of environmental disclosure of the sampled manufacturing organisations is 18.4 percent suggesting that the disclosure of environmental information among Nigerian manufacturing firms is at low level. Equally, the average financial leverage of the sampled firms is 59.3 per cent with standard deviation of 22.46 per cent. The average age of the sampled firms is found to be 30.148 years with a minimum age of 2 years and a maximum age of 55 years.

Table 4.1: Results of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
EPS	324	2.391	6.459	-6.37	57.63
ROCE	324	5.034	11.211	-35.209	53.959
DPS	324	1.633	5.708	0	63.5
NPTM	324	3.267	21.405	-137.551	71.419
ENDI	324	.184	.214	0	1
FA	324	30.148	13.139	2	55
FLVA	324	59.301	22.46	4.285	180.911

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022

The estimated correlation coefficients among the variables contained in Table 4.2 with an estimated correlation coefficient of 0.414, 0.884 and 0.298 suggests that EPS is positively related with ROCE, DPS and NPTM respectively. In addition, the estimated correlation of 0.314 and 0.785 indicates that ROCE is positively associated with DPS and NPTM while DPS and NPTM are also positively related given an estimated correlation coefficient of 0.160. As further evidenced by estimated correlation coefficients of 0.221, 0.169, 0.187, and 0.192, respectively, EPS, ROCE, DPS, and NPTM are all positively correlated with environmental accounting disclosure (EAD), suggesting that higher environmental accounting disclosure among Nigerian firms is linked to higher profitability as measured by EPS, ROCE, DPS, and NPTM.

Firm age is positively related to EPS and DPS with the respective correlation coefficient of 0.051 and 0.090 while it is negatively related with ROCE and NPTM with the respective correlation coefficient of -0.054 and -0.184. Similarly, financial leverage is positively related with EPS and DPS with the estimated correlation coefficient of 0.007 and 0.075 while its relation with ROCE and NPTM are negative with respect to estimated correlation coefficient of -0.319 and -0.341.

Table 4.2: Correlation Matrix

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) EPS	1.000						
(2) ROCE	0.414	1.000					
(3) DPS	0.884	0.314	1.000				
(4) NPTM	0.298	0.785	0.160	1.000			
(5) ENDI	0.221	0.169	0.187	0.192	1.000		
(6) FA	0.051	-0.054	0.090	-0.184	0.297	1.000	
(7) FLVA	0.007	-0.319	0.075	-0.341	-0.159	-0.007	1.000

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

4.1 Diagnostic Test Results

The diagnostic tests conducted include that of multicollinearity using variance inflation factors, for serial correlation using Wooldridge test, for heteroscedasticity using the Breusch-Pagan Goldfrey test and cross-sectional dependence test using Pesaran test.

From the results presented in Table 4.4, the highest estimated VIF recorded by environmental disclosure index is 1.127 while the estimated mean VIF for the study is 1.085. Since, none of the variables has VIF that is up to the threshold of 10, the existence of multicollinearity could not be established in the study.

Table 4.3: Variance inflation factor

	VIF	1/VIF
ENDI	1.127	.887
FA	1.099	.91
FLVA	1.028	.973
Mean VIF	1.085	.

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

Panel Regression Results Analysis

The results of the specification Tests for model 1 of the study are presented in the lower part of Table 4.4. F-value of 19.21 with an associated p value of 0.000 indicates that the null hypothesis of no firm effect is rejected suggesting that the use of POLS will not yield a consistent result. Equally, the results of the Hausman test with an estimated chi-square value of 18.72 and p value of 0.0003 rejects the null hypothesis of non-systematic differences in the coefficient implying that fixed effect panel regression performs better than the random effect panel regression model. Since the results of the Pesaran test suggests no cross sectional dependence and no endogeneity issue by extension, the interpretation of the objective one results is based on the fixed effect results in column 2 of Table 4.4. From the robust fixed effect results in column 2 of Table 4.4 environmental accounting disclosure with an estimated coefficient of 0.376 and p value of 0.905 has a positive impact on the return on capital employed but the positive impact environmental disclosure on return on capital employed is not significant at 5 per cent level ($0.905 > 0.05$). By implication, return on capital employed is not significantly sensitive to the extent of environmental accounting disclosure among Nigerian manufacturing firms.

With regards to the control variables of objective 1, the results show that age of the firm has negative impact on the return on asset with an estimated coefficient of -0.742 and a corresponding p value of 0.000 indicating that the impact of age on ROCE is significant. This suggest that return on capital employed reduces as firms get older. In addition, financial leverage is found to exert negative and significant impact on the ROCE of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms given the estimated coefficient and p value of -0.106 and 0.000 respectively implying that return on capital employed of the firms reduces as they rely more on external funding in terms of debt ratio.

Table 4.4: Estimated Panel Regression Results for ROCE

VARIABLES	(1) OLS	(2) FE	(3) RE	(4) FGLS
ROCE				
ENDI	7.974*** (0.00640)	0.376 (0.905)	-1.215 (0.677)	7.974*** (0.00575)
FA	2.744 -0.0864* (0.0655)	0.120 -0.742*** (8.96e-07)	-0.416 -0.314*** (0.000960)	2.762 -0.0864* (0.0629)
FLVA	-1.848 -0.147*** (5.42e-08)	-5.024 -0.106*** (1.42e-06)	-3.302 -0.112*** (2.02e-07)	-1.860 -0.147*** (2.09e-08)
Constant	-5.570 14.91*** (0)	-4.926 33.63*** (0)	-5.197 21.37*** (2.34e-10)	-5.604 14.91*** (0)
	6.869	7.583	6.337	6.912
Observations	324	324	324	324

R-squared	0.125	0.163		
Number of PID		36	36	36
Redundant FE		19.21		
Pvalue RFE		0.000		
Hausman Chi		18.72		
Hausman P		0.0003		

pval in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

The results of the specification tests for model 2 of the study presented in the lower part of Table 4.5 indicates that the null hypothesis of no firm effect is rejected with an estimated F-value of 28.65 with an associated p value of 0.000. This suggests that the use of POLS will not bring consistent result. Equally, the results of the Hausmam test with an estimated chi-square value of a 1.61 and p value of 0.6564 fails to reject the null hypothesis of non-systematic differences in the coefficient implying that random effect panel regression performs better than the fixed effect panel regression model. Since the results of the Pesaran test suggests cross sectional dependence and endogeneity issue by extension, the interpretation of objective two is based on the feasible generalized least square panel regression results in column 4 of Table 4.5.

From the results obtained with feasible generalized least square panel regression in column 4 of Table 4.5, environmental accounting disclosure with an estimated coefficient of 7.046 and p value of 0.000 has positive impact on the earnings per share of Nigerian manufacturing firms and the positive impact is significant at 5 per cent level (0.000<0.05). By implication, environmental accounting disclosure significantly drives the earnings per share of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms.

For the control variables, the results show that age of the firm has negative impact on the earnings per share with an estimated coefficient of -0.00889 and a corresponding p value of 0.750 indicates that the impact of age on EPS is not significant which suggests that age does not matter for EPS. In addition, financial leverage is found to exert positive but no significant impact on the EPS of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms given the coefficient and p value of 0.0126 and 0.423 respectively implying that leverage does not drive the EPS of sampled firms.

***Table 4.5: Estimated Panel Regression Results for EPS

VARIABLES	(1) OLS	(2) FE	(3) RE	(4) FGLS
EPS				
ENDI	7.046*** (6.67e-05)	2.215 (0.174)	2.590* (0.0868)	7.046*** (4.78e-05)
FA	4.041 (0.752)	1.362 (0.877)	1.712 (0.933)	4.066 (0.750)
FLVA	-0.00889 (0.752)	-0.0119 (0.877)	-0.00456 (0.933)	-0.00889 (0.750)
Constant	-0.317 (0.427)	-0.155 (0.998)	-0.0837 (0.978)	-0.319 (0.423)
	0.0126 (0.427)	2.57e-05 (0.998)	0.000307 (0.978)	0.0126 (0.423)
	0.796 (0.638)	0.00230 (0.309)	0.0280 (0.296)	0.801 (0.636)
	0.613 (0.638)	2.340 (0.309)	2.034 (0.296)	0.613 (0.636)
	0.471	1.020	1.044	0.474
Observations	324	324	324	324
R-squared	0.051	0.007		
Number of PID		36	36	36
Redundant FE		28.65		
Pvalue RFE		0.000		
Hausman Chi		1.61		
Hausman P		0.6564		

pval in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Authors' Computation, 2022

The results of the specification in respect of objective 3 of the study presented in the lower part of Table 4.6 reveals that the null hypothesis of no firm effect is rejected with an estimated F-value of 18.91 and an associated p value of 0.000. This suggests that the use of POLS will not bring consistent result. From the results obtained with feasible generalized least square panel regression in column 4 of Table 4.6, environmental accounting disclosure with an estimated coefficient of 5.180 and p value of 0.0007 has a positive impact on the dividend per share of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms and the positive impact is significant at 5 per cent level (0.0007<0.05). By implication, environmental accounting disclosure significantly drives the dividend per share of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms.

For the control variables, the results show that firm age has positive impact on the dividend per share with a coefficient of 0.0144 with a corresponding p value of 0.560 suggests that the impact of age on DPS is not significant which suggests that age does not matter for DPS. In addition,

financial leverage is found to exert positive and significant impact on the EPS of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms given the estimated coefficient and p value of 0.0269 and 0.0541, respectively implying that leverage significantly influence the DPS of the sampled Nigerian manufacturing firms.

*****Table 4.6: Estimated Panel Regression Results for DPS**

VARIABLES	(1) OLS	(2) FE	(3) RE	(4) FGLS
DPS				
ENDI	5.180*** (0.000889)	3.123* (0.0640)	3.651** (0.0166)	5.180*** (0.000735)
	3.355	1.859	2.396	3.376
FA	0.0144 (0.563)	0.0880 (0.266)	0.0452 (0.369)	0.0144 (0.560)
	0.579	1.115	0.897	0.583
FLVA	0.0269* (0.0565)	0.0153 (0.186)	0.0161 (0.151)	0.0269* (0.0541)
	1.914	1.324	1.435	1.926
Constant	-1.351 (0.242)	-2.502 (0.292)	-1.358 (0.447)	-1.351 (0.239)
	-1.171	-1.056	-0.760	-1.178
Observations	324	324	324	324
R-squared	0.047	0.034		
Number of PID		36	36	36
Redundant FE		18.91		
Pvalue RFE		0.000		
Hausman Chi		0.82		
Hausman P		0.8445		

pval in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

The results in Table 4.7 are obtained from alternative panel regression techniques, including the pooled OLS, fixed effect, random effect and feasible generalized least square panel regression technique. The results obtained using pooled OLS are presented in column 1, while the results obtained using fixed effect and random effect are contained in column 2 and 3. The results obtained from feasible generalized least square are presented in column 4. Since the study found that endogeneity problem exists in model 4 of the study, as stated earlier, the objective 4 of the study is analyzed using feasible generalized least square in column 4 of Table 4.7.

From the results in column 4, the estimated coefficient of 21.68 indicates that environmental disclosure has positive influence on the net profit margin of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The implication is that higher disclosure of environmental information leads to higher firm performance in terms of the net profit margin. Furthermore, the corresponding p value of 0.000

reveal that the positive impact of environmental accounting disclosure on the net profit margin of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms is significant at 1 per cent level ($0.000 < 0.001$). Hence, the study found that environmental accounting disclosure significantly drives the net profit margin of Nigerian manufacturing firms.

Concerning the control variables of objective 4, the results show that age of the firm has negative impact on the net profit margin with an estimated coefficient of -0.408 and a corresponding p value of 0.0000 indicates that the impact of age on net profit margin is significant which suggest that older firms recorded lesser net profit margin. The estimated coefficient and p value of -0.294 and 0.0000 in the results revealed that financial leverage of the firm has negative impact on the net profit margin and the impact is significant at 5 per cent level ($0.000 < 0.05$). By implication, the higher the debt ratio of the firms, the lower their performance in terms of their net profit margin.

Table 4.7: Estimated Panel Regression Results for NPTM

VARIABLES	(1) OLS	(2) FE	(3) RE	(4) FGLS
NPTM				
ENDI	21.68*** (5.99e-05)	5.837 (0.425)	5.432 (0.387)	21.68*** (4.26e-05)
FA	4.068 -0.408*** (2.98e-06)	0.799 -1.428*** (4.12e-05)	0.865 -0.575*** (0.000551)	4.093 -0.408*** (1.70e-06)
FLVA	-4.757 -0.294*** (4.10e-09)	-4.166 -0.346*** (0)	-3.455 -0.341*** (0)	-4.786 -0.294*** (1.16e-09)
Constant	-6.047 28.98*** (0)	-6.902 65.79*** (6.86e-10)	-7.072 39.82*** (0)	-6.085 28.98*** (0)
	7.279	6.387	6.595	7.324
Observations	324	324	324	324
R-squared	0.193	0.189		
Number of PID		36	36	36
Redundant FE		8.92		
Pvalue RFE		0.000		
Hausman Chi		17.16		
Hausman P		0.0007		

pval in parentheses

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The results obtained in relation to the first objective using feasible generalized least square panel regression revealed that the influence of environmental accounting disclosure on the performance of Nigerian listed manufacturing firms measured with earnings per share, dividend per share and a net profit margin. This implies that higher the disclosure of environmental activities of the firm, the greater the earnings per share, dividend per share and a net profit margin of sampled manufacturing companies in Nigeria. However, the results show that the impact of environmental accounting disclosure on return on capital employed is positive but not significant.

These results may be linked to the fact that through signaling effect, the disclosure of environmental information attracts prospective investors and customers who see the firm as being environmentally friendly, which would lead to better performance of the firms. This finding is in agreement with a priori expectation of the study and the submission of signalling theory that environmental disclosure will positively influence the firm performance. The finding is equally consistent with the reports in other empirical literatures, including the study by Soiloor (2020) which reported that higher environmental accounting improves the performance of corporate firms represented by Net profit margin and dividend per share in a study of Bombay Stock Exchange listed firms.

Similar result was also reported by Daniel and Ambrose (2013) who found positive influence of environmental disclosure on net profit margin and dividend per share. Olusola and Babajide (2019) who disclosed a positive and significant influence of environmental disclosure on net profit margin and dividend per share in a study of selected Nigerian firms. However, other studies reported contrary results including Nicolas (2021) who found no impact of environmental disclosure on the net profit margin of Nigerian oil and gas firms, Daniel and Ambrose (2013) who reported negative influence of environmental disclosure on return on capital employed and earnings per share of Nigerian firms, Olusola and Babajide (2019) who found negative influence of environmental disclosure on return on capital employed and earnings per share, and Ezeagba et al. (2017) who reported that environmental disclosure is inversely related with return on capital employed and net profit margin.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the modern business world, a company's long-term survival and growth depends on the management's strategic decisions, including those pertaining to the disclosure of non-voluntary information. This study has examined how environmental accounting disclosure affect the performance of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria represented by return on capital employed, earnings per share, dividend per share and net profit margin. The results obtained using feasible generalized least square panel regression analysis revealed that the disclosure of environmental accounting information impact positively and significant on the earnings per share, dividend per share and net profit margin of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria while the impact on return on capital employed was found to be positive but not significant.

By implication, accounting for the effect of firms' activities on the environment significantly affects the performance of firms. In addition, the study was able to show the imperative of accounting for endogeneity while studying the nexus between environmental disclosure and firm

performance. In line with the findings, it is recommended that concerned stakeholders in the Nigerian manufacturing sector should put required mechanisms that will encourage the disclosure of more environmental information in place. In addition, firms in Nigeria should encourage the development of appropriate internal mechanisms that will facilitate the disclosure of more environmental information in their annual report since it impacted positively on the financial performance. This study also recommend that there should be more implementation and enforcement of environmental laws in Nigeria. Corporate bodies should not see environmental accounting as an act of philanthropy but a responsibility”.

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The Sudanese Conflicts: A Multi-Level Game With Regional and International Interest

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Abstract

The Sudanese conflicts are complex and involve various actors with different interests, assuming regional and international dimensions, with neighbouring countries and international actors having a stake in the outcome of the conflict. These conflicts in Sudan which started from 1955 to 2011 when South Sudan seceded have resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis, with millions of people displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance. In addition to the conflict in Darfur, the conflicts in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states have also led to displacement and humanitarian needs. The paper explores the regional and international interests in the conflicts, and how these interests have shaped the conflicts. The methodology employed for this study is contextual analysis. The theoretical framework adopted is the Conflict Transformation Theory, which emphasizes addressing the root causes of conflicts and transforming the relationships between conflicting parties to achieve sustainable peace. The findings of the study revealed that the Sudanese conflicts have become a point of interest to several actors. The study concludes by emphasizing that it is imperative that all regional and international actors work together towards finding a lasting solution to the conflicts in Sudan. It recommends that the United Nations and African Union should continue to support peacekeeping efforts in Sudan.

Keywords: Sudanese conflicts, Regional interest, International interest, Multi-level game, Government

INTRODUCTION

Sudan has been plagued by conflicts since gaining independence in 1956, with the situation intensifying in recent years. The conflicts are multi-dimensional and multi-level, involving the government, rebel groups, and international actors. These conflicts have three phases, with the first occurring from 1955 to 1972 when southern Sudanese rebels fought against the government for self-determination and autonomy. The second phase started in 1983 when the government imposed Islamic law on the country, leading to a rebellion in the south, and the third phase started in 2011 when South Sudan seceded, leading to renewed fighting in the remaining parts of Sudan (Hamid *et al.*, 2019; Johnson, 2016).

Historically, Sudan has been characterized by a divide between the Arab and African ethnic groups, with the former dominating the political and economic spheres. This divide has led to ethnic tensions and conflict, particularly in the western region of Darfur, where the Arab-dominated

government has been accused of discriminating against the non-Arab population (Hagan, Rymond-Richmond & Palloni, 2009).

Economic factors play a significant role in Sudan's conflicts. Sudan is an oil-rich country, but the revenue from the oil industry has been mismanaged and has not benefited the wider population, leading to economic inequality and poverty. The government's response to economic grievances has been to increase repression, leading to further unrest (El Mquirmi, 2021).

The conflicts are complex and involve various actors with different interests, including regional and international dimensions, with neighbouring countries and international actors having a stake in the outcome of the conflict. The regional actors involved in the Sudanese conflict are Ethiopia and Chad. Ethiopia has provided support to the Sudanese government, mainly in the form of arms and ammunition, due to its concern about the possible spill-over effects of the conflict into its territory. Chad has provided support to the rebel groups, primarily the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), in response to Sudan's support for rebel groups in Chad, which has led to instability in Chad's eastern regions (Lavers, 2019).

The international actors involved in the Sudanese conflict include the United States, China, and the European Union (EU). The United States has been involved in peace negotiations between the government and rebel groups and imposed economic sanctions on Sudan in response to its human rights violations. China has economic interests in Sudan, particularly in its oil industry, and has provided support to the Sudanese government. The EU has also been involved in peace negotiations and provided humanitarian aid to the conflict-affected areas (Keen, 2008).

The conflicts in Sudan have resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis, with millions of people displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance. In addition to the conflict in Darfur, the conflicts in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states have also led to displacement and humanitarian needs (UNHCR, 2021).

These conflicts are multi-level game, involving various actors with different interests. The conflict has regional and international dimensions, making it difficult to resolve. This paper explores the regional and international interests in the conflicts, and how these interests have shaped the conflicts. It is segmented into five sections, beginning with the introduction. The second section clarifies the relevant concepts, while the third section explains the methodology used. The fourth section discussed the subject matter, while the fifth section concludes the paper.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

The Sudanese Conflicts

The conflicts that have plagued Sudan since its independence in 1956 are complex and multi-dimensional. Scholars have characterized these conflicts in different ways, reflecting the diverse factors and actors that contribute to them.

Hamid *et al.* (2019) views the Sudanese conflicts in three phases. The first phase occurred between 1955 and 1972, when southern Sudanese rebels fought against the government for self-

determination and autonomy. The second phase started in 1983 when the government imposed Islamic law on the country, leading to a rebellion in the south. The third phase started in 2011 when South Sudan seceded, leading to renewed fighting in the remaining parts of Sudan.

Johnson (2016) characterizes the Sudanese conflicts as old and new wars. The old wars refer to the conflicts between the government and southern rebels over self-determination and autonomy, while the new wars refer to the conflicts that arose after the imposition of Islamic law on the country in 1983.

El Mquirmi (2021) argues that the Sudanese conflicts are the result of economic mismanagement, political repression, and the government's failure to address the underlying grievances of the population. Ethnic tensions and discrimination against non-Arab populations, particularly in the western region of Darfur, have also fuelled the conflicts.

The Sudanese conflicts have resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis, with millions of people displaced and in need of assistance. The involvement of regional and international actors further complicates the situation, making it a multi-level game with different interests and priorities. Finding a lasting solution to the conflicts in Sudan will require concerted efforts from all parties involved and a commitment to addressing the underlying political, economic, and social grievances that have fuelled the conflicts.

Regional Interest

The concept of regional interest in the Sudanese conflicts refers to the involvement of neighbouring countries and other regional actors in the conflicts, as well as their interests and strategies regarding the conflicts. Various scholars have analysed the regional dimensions of the Sudanese conflicts and the different regional actors involved.

According to Johnston (2012), Sudan's conflicts have implications that extend beyond its borders, with neighbouring countries like Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan being directly affected by the conflicts. These countries have different interests and concerns regarding the Sudanese conflicts. For example, Egypt has a stake in the Nile waters, which has been a contentious issue with Sudan and Ethiopia. Ethiopia has been accused of supporting Sudanese rebel groups, while South Sudan's secession has had significant regional implications.

Similarly, DLesch (1999) argues that the Sudanese conflicts have regional dimensions, with neighbouring countries such as Chad and Libya being involved in the conflicts. Chad has been accused of supporting Sudanese rebel groups, while Libya has been a destination for Sudanese refugees and migrants.

In addition, El Mquirmi (2021) notes that regional actors such as the African Union (AU) and the Arab League have been involved in the Sudanese conflicts, with the AU mediating peace talks and the Arab League providing diplomatic and financial support to the government.

International Interest

The international interest in the Sudanese conflicts is a crucial aspect to consider when analyzing the ongoing crisis in Sudan. Scholars have looked into the involvement of various global actors in the conflicts, as well as their interests, priorities, and strategies regarding the conflicts.

De Waal (2017) suggests that the Sudanese conflicts have been subject to international attention, with the UN, EU, and US playing significant roles. The UN has been involved in mediating peace talks and providing humanitarian aid, while the EU has provided financial support to the government and imposed sanctions on Sudanese officials. The US has also been involved in the conflicts, providing aid and engaging in diplomatic efforts.

Abdul-Jawad (2018) notes that the Sudanese conflicts have attracted international attention, with the involvement of global actors such as China, Russia, and the Gulf states. China has been involved in oil extraction and infrastructure development in Sudan, while Russia has been accused of supporting the government's military efforts. The Gulf states have provided financial support to the government and have been involved in diplomatic efforts.

Moreover, Ike, Ifesinachi and Rebecca (2014) argue that the Sudanese conflicts have been subject to international intervention, with the UN and other global actors attempting to resolve the conflicts and provide humanitarian aid. However, they note that international intervention has been limited by the complexity of the conflicts and the lack of political will from global actors.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed for this study is contextual analysis. The approach of this study placed a strong emphasis on qualitative information acquired from secondary sources, such as journals, government websites, and written works.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopts the Conflict Transformation Theory as its theoretical underpinning. Conflict Transformation Theory, as proposed by Lederach (1995), is a theoretical framework that emphasizes addressing the root causes of conflicts and transforming the relationships between conflicting parties to achieve sustainable peace. In consideration of the Sudanese conflicts, this theory is particularly relevant due to the complexity and multi-level nature of the conflicts.

Applying Conflict Transformation Theory to the Sudanese conflicts would involve addressing the underlying factors that have fuelled the conflicts. For example, the conflicts in Darfur have been driven by economic grievances, environmental degradation, and political marginalization, among other factors (Flint, 2010). Conflict transformation approaches would aim to address these underlying factors through political and economic reforms, as well as engaging with the affected communities in the peace process.

Moreover, Conflict Transformation Theory highlights the importance of transforming the relationships between conflicting parties. In the case of the Sudanese conflicts, this would require building trust, promoting dialogue, and facilitating understanding and reconciliation between

different groups involved in the conflicts (Lederach, 1995). This could include promoting dialogue between the government and rebel groups, as well as between different ethnic and religious groups affected by the conflicts.

In addition, Conflict Transformation Theory recognizes the significance of engaging with international actors in the peace process. In the Sudanese conflicts, this would involve engaging with regional and international actors to support the peace process and address the root causes of the conflicts. The UN and the AU have been involved in mediating peace talks and providing humanitarian aid while the EU and the US have imposed sanctions on Sudanese officials (De Waal, 2017).

While Conflict Transformation Theory provides a useful framework for addressing conflicts, it also has some limitations. One of its limitations is that it may not be applicable in situations where one party is not willing to engage in peaceful dialogue (Galtung, 1996). Another limitation of the theory is that it may not fully address the underlying structural issues that contribute to conflicts, such as economic inequalities and political exclusion (Wallenstein, 2015). Nevertheless, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding and addressing the complex and multi-level Sudanese conflicts.

A GAME OF REGIONAL INTEREST

The Sudanese conflicts have been characterized as games of regional interest due to the involvement of neighboring countries in the conflicts. According to Cilliers (2008), the conflicts in Sudan have created a complex web of regional relationships, with countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, and Libya becoming involved in various ways. These countries have been involved in the conflicts for a variety of reasons, including resource competition, support for rebel groups, and concerns about the impact of the conflicts on their own stability and security.

For example, Ethiopia and Eritrea have been involved in the conflicts due to their shared border with Sudan and their interest in protecting their own security and territorial integrity (Abdullahi, 2014). Ethiopia has also been involved in the conflicts due to its support for the government of South Sudan and its efforts to counter the influence of Sudan in the region (Nathan, 2010).

Similarly, Chad and Libya have been involved in the conflicts due to their support for rebel groups in Sudan and their own concerns about instability in the region (Høigilt, 2011). Chad has been accused of providing support to rebel groups in Darfur, while Libya has been involved in the conflicts due to its historical ties to Sudan and its support for the government of South Sudan (Worthington, 2015).

The Role of Ethiopia

Ethiopia has played a significant role in the Sudanese conflicts, particularly in providing military and diplomatic support to rebel groups fighting against the Sudanese government. During the Second Sudanese Civil War, Ethiopia provided military training, weapons, and safe havens to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which was fighting against the Sudanese government (Sarkin, 2009). Ethiopia's support for the SPLM/A contributed to the prolongation of

the conflict and helped the rebel group to maintain its military campaign against the Sudanese government.

In addition to supporting rebel groups, Ethiopia has also been involved in mediating peace talks between the Sudanese government and various rebel groups. In 2011, Ethiopia played a key role in brokering a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and rebels in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions (BBC News, 2011). Ethiopia's efforts were seen as instrumental in bringing an end to the conflict in those regions.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has contributed troops to various peacekeeping missions in Sudan, including the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). In 2007, Ethiopia sent 4,000 troops to Darfur to join the peacekeeping force, making it the largest contributor of troops to the mission (Gettleman, 2007). Ethiopia's contribution to UNAMID was seen as an important step in addressing the conflict in Darfur.

However, Ethiopia's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has not been without controversy. Ethiopia's support for rebel groups has been criticized for exacerbating the conflicts, while its military intervention in Darfur has been viewed as controversial, with some suggesting that Ethiopia's presence was aligned with the interests of the Sudanese government (Gettleman, 2007).

The Role of Eritrea

Eritrea has also played a significant role in the Sudanese conflicts. The country has been accused of supporting various rebel groups fighting against the Sudanese government, particularly during the Second Sudanese Civil War. Eritrea provided training, weapons, and safe havens to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which was fighting against the Sudanese government (Sarkin, 2009). Eritrea's support for the SPLA contributed to the prolongation of the conflict and helped the rebel group to maintain its military campaign against the Sudanese government.

Moreover, Eritrea has been accused of supporting other armed groups in Sudan, such as the JEM and the SLA. According to a report by the United Nations Security Council, Eritrea supplied arms and ammunition to JEM and SLA rebels in Darfur (UN Security Council, 2011). Eritrea has denied these accusations.

Eritrea's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has been viewed as an attempt to destabilize the Sudanese government and gain regional influence. However, the country's involvement has also led to tensions with neighbouring countries, particularly Ethiopia and Sudan. In 1998, Eritrea and Ethiopia engaged in a two-year border war that resulted in the displacement of thousands of people and strained regional stability (Kaplan, 1994). Moreover, Eritrea has been accused of supporting rebel groups in Ethiopia, contributing to the ongoing conflicts in the region (Agyeman-Duah, 1996).

The Role of Chad

Chad's role in the conflicts was particularly in the Darfur region. Chad shares a long border with Sudan and has been accused of supporting various rebel groups fighting against the Sudanese government. The country has also been accused of harbouring Sudanese rebels on its territory,

particularly members of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA) (Human Rights Watch, 2006).

Chad's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has been viewed as an attempt to gain regional influence and protect its own interests. Chad has a large number of refugees from the Darfur region on its territory and has expressed concerns about the impact of the conflict on its own security (International Crisis Group, 2006).

Moreover, Chad has also been accused of supporting various armed groups fighting against the Chadian government, including rebels based in Sudan. In 2008, Chad accused Sudan of supporting rebels who attacked the capital city, N'Djamena. The attack was repelled, but it led to a significant deterioration of relations between the two countries (BBC News, 2005).

The Role of Libya

Libya too has contributed to the conflict and just as Chad, was particular in the Darfur region. The country has been accused of providing weapons and support to various rebel groups fighting against the Sudanese government, particularly the JEM and the SLA (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

Libya's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has been viewed as an attempt to gain regional influence and project its power in the region. The country has long been involved in the politics of neighbouring countries and has used its resources to support various armed groups in the region (Korany & Dessouki, 1992).

Moreover, Libya's role in the Sudanese conflicts has also been influenced by its own internal politics. The regime of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi had a longstanding rivalry with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, and the two countries have supported opposing sides in various regional conflicts (International Crisis Group, 2006).

However, Libya's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has decreased significantly since the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011. The new government in Libya has expressed support for the peace process in Darfur and has pledged to work with other countries in the region to end the conflicts (BBC News, 2006).

The involvement of neighbouring countries in the Sudanese conflicts has created a complex web of regional relationships that has contributed to the complexity and longevity of the conflicts. Moreover, regional organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have also played a role in mediating the Sudanese conflicts. IGAD has been involved in facilitating peace talks between the Sudanese government and the various rebel groups in the Darfur region (Nathan, 2010). The involvement of IGAD in the peace process highlights the importance of regional organizations in addressing conflicts in Africa.

As Cilliers (2008) notes, resolving the Sudanese conflicts will require not only addressing the internal dynamics of the conflicts but also addressing the regional interests and relationships that have contributed to the conflicts.

A GAME OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST

The Sudanese conflicts have attracted the attention of the international community due to their impact on regional stability, human rights, and international security. Various countries and international organizations have played significant roles in the Sudanese conflicts, both in terms of conflict resolution and exacerbation. This section will discuss some of the international actors that have played some roles in the conflicts.

The Role of the US

The United States has played a significant role in the Sudanese conflicts through diplomatic efforts, economic sanctions, and peacekeeping missions. Since the 1990s, the US has been actively engaged in mediating the conflicts in Sudan, including the civil war in South Sudan, Darfur crisis, and the ongoing conflict in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan regions.

During the Bush administration, the US played a key role in negotiating the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), which ended the long-standing civil war in South Sudan. The Obama administration also played a crucial role in facilitating the independence of South Sudan through a referendum in 2011.

Furthermore, the US has imposed economic sanctions on Sudan since the 1990s, citing human rights abuses and support for terrorism. These sanctions have affected Sudan's economy, leading to increased poverty and instability. However, in 2020, the US lifted some of these sanctions as part of an effort to normalize relations with Sudan.

The US has also been involved in peacekeeping missions in Sudan through its support for the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). These missions have played a significant role in protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian aid, and promoting peace in the conflict-affected regions.

The Role of the UN

The UN has played different roles, including peacekeeping, mediation, and humanitarian assistance, among others.

One of the significant roles played by the UN in the Sudanese conflicts is peacekeeping. The UN has deployed peacekeeping missions to the region to help maintain peace and security. The most notable of these missions is the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), which was established in 2011 after South Sudan gained independence. UNMISS has been actively involved in protecting civilians, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and monitoring human rights violations in the country (UN, n.d.).

The UN has also been involved in mediation efforts in the Sudanese conflicts. The UN has facilitated peace talks between the warring parties in Sudan, such as the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) rebels, which ended the Sudanese civil war in 2005 (UN, n.d.).

The UN has also provided humanitarian assistance to the affected populations in the Sudanese conflicts. The UN has been actively involved in providing food, water, shelter, and medical assistance to the millions of people affected by the conflicts in Sudan and South Sudan (UNHCR, 2021).

Despite the efforts made by the UN, there have been criticisms of its role in the Sudanese conflicts. Some argue that the UN has been ineffective in bringing peace to the region, while others criticize the organization's impartiality in the conflict, particularly in the case of Darfur (De Waal, 2009).

The Role of AU

One of the primary roles of the AU in the Sudanese conflicts has been to facilitate peace negotiations and mediation between conflicting parties. For instance, the AU played a key role in mediating the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in 2005 between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) rebels, which ended the civil war in South Sudan (Makinda & Okumu, 2007). The AU also supported the mediation efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the negotiations between the government of Sudan and the Sudan Revolutionary Front (SRF) rebels that led to the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement in 2020 (Makinda & Okumu, 2007).

In addition to mediation, the AU has deployed peacekeeping missions to Sudan, such as the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), which was established in 2007 to protect civilians and support peace efforts in Darfur (United Nations, 2019). The AU also played a significant role in the establishment of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) in 2011, which was established to support peace and security in South Sudan following the secession of the country from Sudan (Makinda & Okumu, 2007).

Moreover, the AU has been involved in promoting the rule of law and human rights in Sudan. The AU Commission of Inquiry on Darfur, established in 2004, investigated human rights violations and made recommendations for the promotion of human rights in the region (Brosché & Hatz, 2017). The AU also established the Hybrid Court for South Sudan in 2018, which is expected to try individuals responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the conflict in South Sudan (Owiso, 2018).

The Role of China

China's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has largely been driven by economic interests, particularly its need for Sudanese oil resources. China has been a significant player in the Sudanese oil sector, with Chinese state-owned companies investing heavily in oil exploration and production in the country (Gelvin, 2012). In addition to its economic interests, China has also pursued diplomatic efforts to help resolve the conflicts.

One of China's key contributions to peacekeeping efforts in the Sudanese conflicts was its support for the deployment of United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in 2007. China contributed peacekeepers to the mission and provided significant financial and logistical support to the operation (Gill & Huang, 2009). China's involvement in the mission was

seen as a significant step in its efforts to play a more active role in international peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts.

China has also been involved in efforts to broker peace agreements between the various parties involved in the Sudanese conflicts. In 2011, China hosted a peace conference in Beijing aimed at resolving the Darfur conflict (Large, 2011). The conference brought together representatives from the Sudanese government, rebel groups, and other stakeholders to discuss a possible peace agreement. While the conference did not lead to a formal agreement, it was seen as an important step in bringing the various parties together for peace talks.

However, China's involvement in the Sudanese conflicts has been criticized for its lack of emphasis on human rights and democracy promotion. Critics have argued that China's support for the Sudanese government has enabled human rights abuses and hindered efforts to establish a more democratic government in the country (Madeleine, 2018).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Sudanese conflicts have been a multi-level game with regional and international interest. The Conflict Transformation Theory provides a suitable theoretical framework for understanding the conflicts, with its emphasis on constructive and peaceful methods of addressing conflicts. The conflicts have been driven by various regional actors such as Ethiopia, Eritrea, Chad, and Libya, who have been pursuing their interests and agendas in the region. Additionally, international actors such as the US, UN, AU, and China have also played significant roles in the conflicts. While some of these actors have contributed positively to peace and stability in Sudan, others have exacerbated the conflicts by pursuing their narrow interests. It is, therefore, imperative that all regional and international actors work together towards finding a lasting solution to the conflicts in Sudan, which will be beneficial to the Sudanese people and the region as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All regional and international actors involved in the Sudanese conflicts should prioritize diplomatic efforts to find a lasting solution. This includes engaging with all stakeholders in the conflicts, including rebel groups and the Sudanese government, to find a peaceful resolution.
2. The underlying causes of the conflicts, such as political marginalization, economic inequalities, and social injustice must be addressed by national, regional and collaborating international institutions legally recognised in order to achieve lasting peace. This may involve implementing political reforms, addressing economic inequalities, and promoting social cohesion.
3. The United Nations should cooperate and support African Union peacekeeping efforts in Sudan.
4. Regional actors should keep aside their personal interest and work together towards finding a peaceful solution to the Sudanese conflicts.

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Implementation of Military Strategy in Nigeria's Post-Colonial War

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Abstract

Planning is important in every facet of human existence, but the implementation of a plan brings about strategy. Military strategy is the major focus of this paper. It is the planning, coordination, and general direction of a military operation to bring about a desired goal or objective militarily or politically, or both. The paper is an attempt at surveying the implementation of military strategies in Nigeria since its independence. Using secondary sources of data, the paper argues that the total implementation of military strategy in Nigeria's post-colonial warfare context is critical for national growth and development. The paper is relevant because it identifies the loopholes in military strategy in the actualization of peace and the total end of internal wars in Nigeria's geographical space. The paper advances the argument that military strategy goes beyond what happens on the battlefield, as most scholarly works concentrate on the execution of military strategy during warfare. It must cover socio-economic policies that solve the agitations of belligerent groups even when the war has ended. The paper reveals that military strategies have been applied more by non-state actors. The paper also reveals that state actors have in most cases put little or no effort into implementing other aspects of military strategy beyond using wars to achieve political objective.

Keywords: Military strategy, Modern military strategy, strategy, civil war, Boko Haram, IPOB, Nigeria

Introduction

Strategy can be looked upon as a plan, method, or series of actions for obtaining a specified goal. A military strategy typically employs the threat or use of military force in opposition to an adversary and is called upon where large-scale force is viewed as the way to achieve such goals. Strategic thinking is traditionally focused on which part or combination of land, air, and naval forces is most effective.¹ This might be a limiting strategy for achieving the ultimate goal, which is almost never actual physical devastation and is nearly always political influence or control, or the prevention of political influence or control by others. To widen the debate of military strategy, it should be noted that a strategy outlines a way or combination of methods to accomplish a specific

¹ Dominic K. A., Friedman, K. Bar-Ya, Y. and Glenney, W.G., "Military Strategy in a Complex World." U.S Naval War College and CNO Strategic Studies Group (2016), accessed May 29, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1602.05670>

goal.² Traditional and modern strategic thought, such as that codified by the U.S. Army War College model, frames military strategy as a static plan with narrow, clearly defined results made in advance of conflict.³ According to this viewpoint, strategy is a higher level of preparation than the operational and tactical choices that are made during a fight. Modern and classical strategists almost exclusively view military forces as delicate entities.⁴ According to Tzu the focus of a strategist is to collapse his enemy's military capacity by subjecting them to sufficient pressure, correctly and conveniently applied. Each strategist aims to reduce the opponent's ability or willingness to fight while maintaining his own.⁵

One crucial military strategy of World War 1 was weapons technology, it set apart the art of war from how it was previously engaged in ancient times leading up to the 18th and 19th century wars. Since the Franco-German War of 1870–1871, new weapons have been developed and existing types have been improved, both of which have had a significant impact on the planning and conduct of war. The machine gun and the rapid-fire field artillery cannon had been the main advancements at that time. The contemporary machine gun, which was created in the 1880s and 1890s, was a dependable belt-fed weapon with a range of more than 1,000 yards (900 meters) and the ability to fire 600 bullets per minute. In terms of field artillery, better breech-loading mechanisms and brakes were introduced during the buildup to the war. A gun that didn't have a brake or recoil system swayed during fire and needed to be re-aimed after each round. The French 75-millimeter field cannon served as the perfect example of the new advancements because it was immobile when firing and did not require constant aim adjustment.⁶

The Trench warfare was a defensive military strategy that was widely adopted by both sides during World War I. It provided soldiers with some shelter from enemy fire but also prevented troops from moving forward quickly, lengthening the conflict. In France and Belgium, trench warfare was the main combat strategy. Trenches were frequently miles long and up to 12 feet deep. Some trenches used sandbags or wooden timbers for support. Even when there was a break in the fighting, people died frequently in the trenches from sniper fire or from the unhygienic living conditions that led to numerous illnesses like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. *Trench mouth and trench foot* were additional illnesses brought on by the unsanitary circumstances.⁷

² Dominic K. A., Friedman, K. Bar-Ya, Y. and Glenney, W.G., "Military Strategy in a Complex World." (2016).

³ Dominic K. A., Friedman, K. Bar-Ya, Y. and Glenney, W.G., "Military Strategy in a Complex World." (2016).

⁴ Quade, E. S. ed., *Analysis for Military Decisions* (Amsterdam: Rand McNally / North-Holland, 1964).

⁵ Tzu, S., *The Art of War*, (Tuttle Publishing, North Clarendon, VT, 1996).

⁶ Robert, Curley, *The Science of War, Strategy, Tactics and Logistics* (New York: Britannica Educational Publishing, 2012) 76

⁷ Delaware Historical and Cultural Affairs, "World War 1 Begins: World War 1, How, When and Why did it Start?" retrieved May 21, 2023, history.delaware.gov

In 1915, the Germans and central powers used poison gases as a military strategy against the Allies fighting in the trenches on the Western Front. To protect soldiers from chemical warfare, gas masks were developed. Great Britain made one of the first types of masks capable of minimizing the deadly impact of these gases on their troops. Though considered a novelty when the war began, aircraft were used by both sides for reconnaissance, allowing personnel to observe enemy troop positions, to direct artillery fire, and to photograph enemy lines. By the end of the war, the concepts of air power strategy of warfare using aerial combat and aerial bombing had come into being.⁸ Also Germany's strategy at the initial stage of the world war 1 involved adopting the defensive strategy on the Eastern Front also known as the General Schlieffen plan; the huge military force of the Russians lied on the eastern front and obviously couldn't be attacked so the Germans put up a few force for defense and therefore moved to engage an offensive with the French forces who could be easily besieged. This strategy gave the central powers a good start in the war. However, a multiplicity of sound military strategies on the part of the Allies, led to her victory eventually.

In World War 2, advanced military strategy superior to those used in the First World War began to see the light of day. Armed conflicts were engaged in different styles by use of combat forces from the land, air and the navy. Also among other tactics used by the Axis, was the *Blitzkrieg* meaning "lightning war." This was a military tactic used by the Nazis in World War II. Blitzkrieg is a coordinated, maneuver-focused military tactic with roots in the concepts of speed and surprise. Its goal was to breach enemy lines as fast as possible using a dense concentration of armored vehicles, airstrikes, and finally the infiltration of ground forces. The strategy can be broken down into three steps: first, motorized and armored vehicles use quick, brief, yet potent strikes to penetrate the enemy's line of defense. Second, it makes use of an airstrike's element of surprise. Finally, the use of ground forces confuses the adversary and makes it more challenging for them to react to the constantly shifting frontlines. The idea of Vernichtungsschlacht (complete annihilation) is used to bring an end to the defeat and produce a unilateral victory.⁹

In general, the foundation of strategy is determining a method to cause the collapse of the enemy's organization due to hopelessness or confusion. At most, traditional strategists seek to make their forces as robust as possible, and in all cases comparatively more robust than the enemy. More indirect strategic thinkers such as Sun Tzu, Andre Beaufre, and John Boyd have held up the ideal of winning a psychological victory while avoiding hugely destructive engagements.¹⁰ Annihilationists like Clause-Witz scoffed at the feasibility of this notion and insisted the way to win was to cause the enemy to collapse by destroying his center of gravity.¹¹ Taking advantage of the enemy's vulnerability to damage and consequent loss of capability is a common thread across traditional schools of thought. This results from a fundamental assumption that military forces are

⁸ Russell Freedman, *The War to End All Wars: World War I* (New York: Clarion Books, 2010).

⁹ Nickii Wantakan Arcado, *The Four Fronts of World War II Military Tactics*, (San Francisco: Pacific Atrocities Education, 2019), 2

¹⁰ Tzu, S. (1996). *The Art of War*. Tuttle Publishing, North Clarendon, VT.

¹¹ Clausewitz, C. V., *On War*. (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2009), 34

fragile and degrade under stress, so that any stress applied brings the force closer to destruction or defeat.

In the contemporary era the use of military force remains one of the most important acts of the state. Today's national governments are charged with a multitude of responsibilities toward their citizenry, but the original and most fundamental role of any state is to provide security for its citizens. A number of issues that impact the security of citizens today are non-military in character or require broader civilian activities.¹² Modern Military Strategy is characterized by Joint Theory or Joint Military Operation; Irregular War; Insurgency, Counterinsurgency and New War; Cyberwar; Nuclear Power and Deterrence.¹³ It is important to establish that the Nigerian military strategy has its origins in the colonial military machine as Ukpabi puts it.¹⁴ It is made up of successive metamorphosis of military units which engaged in ranges of military operations. In post-colonial Nigeria, a succession of military operations in support of civil power dotted Nigeria's landscape.¹⁵ The military has been deployed in a variety of roles including quelling insurgencies, riots, students' crises, religious violence, armed protest, highway patrols, combating kidnappings, and even confronting armed robbery. A few recent examples include Operation Restore Hope (a Counter-insurgency operation launched between 2003 and 2009 to contain insurgents in the Niger Delta), Operation Pulo Shield (a military operation launched between 2009 and 2016 to protect oil installations in the Niger Delta), and Operation Lafiya Dole (a military operation in the northeast to contain Boko Haram insurgency) among others.¹⁶ The landscape of warfare and the duties of the military has thus changed since pre-colonial Nigeria. As Aliyu puts it, "the Nigerian Military lacked a distinct doctrine to guide the need to modify, transform, and adapt to a non-conventional role and mission."¹⁷ Modern military strategy that encapsulates counterinsurgency roles, was not entirely new to the Nigerian military though. It had exposure to the Nigerian civil war and civil wars from neighbouring nations, such as that of Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. However, the development of unconventional wars in the country presented its own specific difficulties that can only be appreciated in the context of a thorough investigation.

This paper discusses the crux of modern military strategy as advanced by scholars such as Liddell Hart which emphasizes that strategy goes beyond using the military as the instrument for achieving political ends. He called this the grand strategy which accommodates all other aspects of strategy; as there may be military, political, or economic strategy altogether employed by a state as its best measure for ensuring security for itself in contemporary times, given the changing patterns of

¹² Sloan, E.C., *Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction*, (London & New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2017), 77

¹³ Bowes, R.L., (Reviewed) "Modern Military Strategy: An Introduction" by Elinor, C. Sloan, *Canadian Military Journal* Vol.14, No.2, 2014) 87

¹⁴ Ukpabi, Sam C. 1986. *Strands in Nigerian Military History*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation Ltd.

¹⁵ Aliyu, Hassan, "The Nigerian Military in Domestic Counterinsurgency operations: A Study in Range of Military Operations, 1960 – 2017" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, 2006), 3

¹⁶ Aliyu, Hassan, "The Nigerian Military in Domestic Counterinsurgency operations: A Study in Range of Military Operations, 1960 – 2017" 5

¹⁷ Aliyu, Hassan, 2017, 5

unconventional warfare.¹⁸ Modern military strategy as explained by Akran is very complex.¹⁹ Aspects of military strategy in contemporary times such as; psychological strategy (propaganda), ideologies, campaigns, absorption into the environment, from the events of the Nigerian Civil war, IPOB and Boko Haram will form the fulcrum of this paper.

Military Strategy in the Nigerian Civil War

At the beginning of the Nigerian civil war, it could be evident that there was little preparation going on from both sides, due to the fact that the war came as a surprise to both sides. The young officers who saw it fit to bring about *sanity* in the polity of Nigeria through the barrel of the gun in January 1966 had hoped that the change of political guards will solve some of the country's many political and social problems. Unfortunately, however, since it was not in the jurisdiction of their capability to effect their formula, the coup they carried out only exacerbated the problems they had anticipated it would solve. Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi who took over power as the first military head of state quickly advanced a strategy that was deemed more favourable to him by most. He replaced the federal system with a military system of government believing that Nigerians needed just one superior government and not multiple governments, the four existing regions were abolished and renamed group of provinces. However, the counter-coup of July 29, 1966, ended Ironsi's administration, and Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon, the only surviving senior northern officer at the time became the head of state and supreme Commander. Gradually, the political crisis already created in January was spiraling out of control as one issue was leading to another. On May 30, 1967, when all attempts to patch up the differences between Gen Yakubu Gowon head of the federal government, and the head of the Eastern government in person of Col. Ojukwu, despite their prior visit to negotiate the Aburi Accord there was agreement on both sides that it will be implemented. Upon understanding that it won't be implemented, Col. Ojukwu seceded from the federation establishing the Republic of Biafra, and in response a police action was implemented to end the secession and reunite the country.

Tactics

Clausewitz narrowed the concept of Strategy and tactics in very clear term as; "Tactics is the art of using troops in battle; strategy is the art of using battles to win the war."²⁰ In the early hours of July 6, 1967, Nigerian troops massed in the Northern Biafran borders invaded Biafra at different points at the same time, two in the Ogoja front and one in the Nsukka sector. Facing the eight battalions of the Nigerian Army in these fronts were three thousand Biafran soldiers, ill-equipped and without any heavy armours. The two battalions of Nigerian troops attacked in Ogoja front at Nyonya and Gakem. The attack was preceded by heavy artillery and mortar bombardment. The Biafran troops

¹⁸ Liddell Hart, B. H., *Strategy: The Classical Book on Military Strategy*, (New York: Plume Publishers 2nd Ed, 1991) 56

¹⁹ Akran, V.S, "What is Military Strategy?" Lecture delivered at Department of History and War Studies, (Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna), 9th October 2022.

²⁰ Clausewitz, C. V. , *Treaties On War* (U.S.A: Princeton University Press, 1971) 12

without as much as with mortar and relying only on their submachine guns and bolt action rifles and some home-made mines withstood the attack. The Nigerian troops succeeded in capturing the two towns of Nyonya and Gakem on July 8. These were strategic points since they brought the main town of Ogoja within artillery range.²¹ It was not, until about a week after that the Nigerian troops entered Ogoja town. The Biafran troops withdrew and fell back across the river south of the town where they mounted their defenses. Fighting now bogged down for a long time. The main attack was in the Nsukka sector, Nsukka was a university town and about 45 miles north of Enugu, the capital of Biafra. In this sector, six Nigerian army battalions attacked heavily on July 8 and advanced four miles that day. As in the Ogoja front, the attack was preceded with heavy artillery bombardment, followed by attack with armoured cars, usually saladines and ferrets. There was heavy fighting and both sides sustained heavy casualties. The Nigerian Army succeeded in capturing the university town on July 15.

After the strategy applied in Nsukka which favoured the Nigerian federal government and her fighting forces, fighting however, took a different dimension here as Biafran strategy of no retreat or surrender employed soldiers with their light weapons and applying guerrilla tactics disoriented Nigerian troops from the same Nsukka battle area. Two weeks after the fighting had, bogged down; two battalions of Nigerian troops were cut off at the eastern part of Nsukka and surrounded. Though few got away, a good number of the troops were captured as well as large quantities of arms and ammunitions. After the declaration of Biafra as an independent country, Gowon immediately announced that the Nigerian troops had been sent to the East merely to carry out "police action" against the "few rebel faction" of the Nigerian Army in the East responsible for newly formed break away nation. The Nigerian troops were to march down to Enugu, capture Ojukwu and bring him down to Lagos.²² It is surprising that in subsequent publications about the history of the war, Nigeria has continued to maintain that it was the Biafran troops that first attacked them, And, of course, eight battalions, with artillery, ferrets and saladins, could not by any stretch of imagination be called a "police action".²³

Airpower was another evident strategy and tactics in the Nigerian civil war that indeed influenced the character of that war. Therefore, in examining the place and role of the Air Power in the Nigerian Civil War, it is important and indeed, imperative to consider Stanley's thought and position, expressed and captured as follows: ²⁴

The air war was recorded as one of the most significant technological advancement in terms of converting civil helicopters into military and war ones on the Biafran side and

²¹ Ademoyega, A., *Why we Struck*. (Ibadan: Evans Brothers Limited, 1981) 4

²² Oyekanmi A.O. *The Relevance Of Nigerian Civil War 1967 To 1970 On Strategic Theory*. International Academic Multidisciplines Research Conference, Switzerland. 2021

²³ Oyekanmi A.O. *The Relevance Of Nigerian Civil War 1967 To 1970 On Strategic Theory*. International Academic Multidisciplines Research Conference, Switzerland. 2021

²⁴ Nwagbaji, P.A & Opeyeoluwa, R.O., *Airpower in the Nigerian Civil War*. Seminar paper, Nigerian Defense Academy, Post Graduate School, Faculty of Art and Social Science, Department of History and War Studies, 2019, 4.

the extensive use of modern artillery particularly by the federal forces. On the federal side, the air had impact in that the tactics used in the war which was generally indiscriminate bombardments, strafing and bombing of non-military targets which added substance to the suspicion raised by Biafran forces of genocide committed by the federal forces of genocide committed by the federal forces in Biafra.

As argued by Nwagbaya and Opeyeoluwa, Stanley's thoughts encapsulate the place and relevance of air power in the civil war.²⁵ This is further exemplified by the assertion that there were several damaging attacks by Biafran aircrafts which was delivered by the USSR. These aircrafts attack took place on the 13 August 1967. The several damaging attacks by the Biafran Aircraft suggest that Biafra engaged the Federal Military forces on air warfare, causing severe damaged in a way that awoken federal government from slumber. With this, the Federal Military troops realized the situation was beyond mere 'police actions' as pen ultimately alluded, and thus, required full military action. As would be expected, this propelled and compelled the federal troops to intensify efforts aimed at procuring aircrafts to fight the secessionist. The USSR initially supplied two MiG-15UTIs (NAF601 and NAF 602), and eight MiG-17s (NAF603 TO NAF610) to Kano IAP and simultaneously sent a large shipment aboard a Polish merchant. Later, six II-28 bombers, flown by Egyptian and Czech pilots, were delivered from Egypt and stationed at Calabar and Port Harcourt to fight Biafra.²⁶

The international community played important role in the civil war vis-à-vis the use of air power in the Civil War. Owing to the fact that as the time war broke out Nigeria had not developed strong air force base, the international community played immortal role. Thus, air power mainly served the purpose of prosecuting the war in areas of bombing strategic places for the purpose of weakening the opponent.²⁷ Air power was a significant tactics adopted by both Biafra and Federal government to acquire and supply weapons, reinforcements, food items, war equipment and materials. In the light, Britain continued to quietly support Nigeria through the rest of the war. On one hand, advancing a royalty of €5.5 million to fund the purchase of more British weapons, in other case, Britain was covertly supplying Nigeria with weapons and military intelligence as well as hiring war mercenaries to support the federal troops.²⁸ As would be expected, these supplies were done through the air force, which further suffice the assertion that air power played significant role in the Nigerian civil war during the period.²⁹

Another major relevance of Air Power in the civil war was the humanitarian campaigns in favour of Biafra. These campaigns began in Britain on 12 June 1968, with media coverage on ITV and

²⁵ Nwagbaya, P.A & Opeyeoluwa, R.O., *Airpower in the Nigerian Civil War*. 2019, 5

²⁶ Okpe A, *The Last Flight: Remembers the Air force and the Biafran Air Attacks*, Lagos: Aero Max International, (2011), 142l

²⁷ Udeagbala LO, "Economic Blockade and the Nigerian/Biafran War, 1967-1970", 24-25.

²⁸ Uche, "Oil, British Interest and the Nigerian Civil War" (2008), 133-134.

²⁹ Alabi-Isama, G. *The Tragedy of Victory*: 215-216.

the Sun.³⁰ The charities Oxfam and Save the Children Fund were soon deployed, with large sums of money at their disposal; following the mass killing of non-Ibo mid-westerners at Boji-Boji Agbor on 20 September 1967; and on 23 September, non-Ibo speaking mid-westerners were apprehended at Asaba, Ibusa and Agbor and taken to a rubber plantation along Uromi-Agbor road and massacred.³¹ This situation made the need to adopt air warfare as a strategy and tactics to win the war more dire on the side of Biafra. Elucidating further, it is important to note that France provided weapons, mercenary fighters, and other assistance to Biafra and promoted its course internationally, describing the situation as genocide. For example, Charles de Gualle referred to Biafran course as 'just and noble', although France did not recognize Biafra diplomatically. Through Pierre Laureys, France had apparently provided two B-26s, Alouette helicopters, and pilots. France supplied Biafra with captured German and Italian weapons from World War II, sans serial numbers, delivered as part of regular shipments to Cote d'Ivoire.

In reality, however, the British government supplied many more arms than it was publicly prepared to admit. Apart from direct arms supplies, it provided military intelligence to the Nigerian government and may have helped it to access sophisticated arms and mercenaries through third parties. As part of the air war equipment's and materials, France also sold Panhard armored vehicles to the Nigerian federal government. It is important to note that France had already supplied Biafra with two B-26 aircraft, Alouette helicopters and pilot in summer 1967 via the French arms dealer Pierre Laureys. Ralph Uwechue, Biafra's envoy to France, wrote that "the helicopters had been purchases made by the eastern Nigerian regional government from France for civilian purposes well before the war".

Nigeria received support from the Soviet Union the form of aircraft. From 1967 to 1970, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Poland sold Nigerian twelve L-29 Delfin training aircraft, forty-seven MiG-15 fighter jets, and five Ilyushin-28 bombers, two of which Egypt transferred to Lagos. This constituted a virtual about-face in Soviet policy, because, until the secession, Moscow had evinced both administration of the Igbos and sympathy for their plight. The Soviet Union chose pragmatism, in the form of alignment with federal Nigeria, over the ideological (if not idealist) alternative support for Biafra. With these aircrafts, such as 12 L-29 Delfin training aircraft, 47 MiG-17 fighter Jets and five Ilyushin-28 bombers, one cannot but conclude that air power played significant role in the war between Nigeria and Biafra.³²

A very remarkable strategy in the Nigerian war of unity (civil war) was the role of propaganda. Although it might be unvoiced as a cause of the war but it is pertinent to note that propaganda was the salient element behind the immediate causes of the civil war and it also played a prominent role in the course of the war. The sway of the war was too devastating on the Biafran side that the

³⁰ Uche, "Oil, British Interest and the Nigerian Civil War" (2008), 133-134.

³¹ Achike Udenwa, *Nigeria/Biafra Civil War: My Experience*, (Spectrum Books Limited, Ibadan, 2011), 86-87.

³² Uche Santos, *The Forgotten Victims: Ethnic Minorities in the Nigeria-Biafra War, 1967-1970*, African Tree Press (18 February, 2007)

Nigerian government cut off the supply of relief materials from the international community. By this, the Biafrans resorted to the use of propaganda as an instrument of war by claiming that the Nigerian government who had earlier engaged on human right abuse had denied the Biafrans right to international aids.³³ Most scholars argue that the message and organisation of the Biafran propaganda was better and more effective than that of Nigeria. For example, Uche, argued that during the Nigerian War of unity of 6th July 1967- 12th January 1970, Radio Biafra was literally seen as the Biafran Government, per se. He goes on to say that even when the Biafran leadership departed the enclave before the war ended, people believed in the notion of Biafra since the Biafran Radio Station identifications remained "This is Radio Biafra Enugu." When Radio Biafra finally went silent, the thirty-month war was officially over.³⁴

Implementation of IPOB Strategy

The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) is a nationalist separatist group in Nigeria that aims to restore the Republic of Biafra, which attempted to achieve political sovereignty prior to the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) and later rejoined Nigeria after its defeat by the Nigerian military. The movement gained popularity and international attention following the arrest and detention of Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB and Director of Radio Biafra, on 19th October 2015 by officials of the Department of State Security (DSS).³⁵

IPOB is a post-colonial ideology. After independence, just like the colonial state, the power of the postcolonial state remained arbitrary and provided opportunity for political office holders to enrich themselves and their cronies through corrupt means. Hence, since there was no institutionalized formal freedom, equality and open competition in the postcolonial state, the struggle for state power was intense and characterized by repression of political opponents and exacerbation of ethnic difference among the people by politicians who struggle for state power. These also engendered legitimacy crisis and crisis of nation-building which would later manifest in acts of insurgency and violent separatism. The intense struggle for power and legitimacy crisis in postcolonial Nigerian state led to the collapse of the first republic, following the 15th January 1966 military coup and its counter coup and the Nigerian civil war. Unfortunately, the end of the Civil War in 1970 saw increased marginalization and victimization of the Igbo in Nigeria both economically and politically. Ibeanu, Orji and Iwuamadi identified some of the immediate post-war victimization and marginalization of the Igbo to include: failure to address the humanitarian disaster caused by the War in the Igbo area, the auction of foreign owned enterprises to Nigerians in 1972 – a period unfavourable to the Igbo who were just coming out of the devastation of the Civil War and lacked resources to acquire shares in the auctioned companies, the takeover of Igbo-owned real estate by minority groups in Port Harcourt after the War, with little or no compensation to mention no more.

³³ Uche, L. U, *The Politics of Nigeria's Radio Broadcast Industry: 1932-1983*. Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands); 35(1): 1985, 19-29.

³⁴ Uche, L. U, *The Politics of Nigeria's Radio Broadcast Industry: 1932-1983*. Gazette (Leiden, Netherlands);35(1): 1985, 19-29.

³⁵ Amnesty International (2016). *Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere', deadly repression of pro-Biafra activists*. Abuja: Amnesty International.

IPOB fully came to the scene in 2012 and adopted the strategy of reaching out to people through its London-based Radio Biafra station with a campaign for an independent state of Biafra (Amnesty International, 2016).³⁶ The movement gained popularity and international attention following the arrest of Nnamdi Kanu, the leader of IPOB and Director of Radio Biafra on 19th October 2015. Since the formation of IPOB, the success of the movement in attracting much supporters and adherents to its fold could be explained by the following strategies adopted by its leadership.

Another fundamental strategy adopted by IPOB to increase its membership and supporters is to provoke over-reaction by the government. In this IPOB succeeded, because as a postcolonial state, Nigeria adopts the strategy of using the instrumentalities of force to silence any form of peaceful agitation. Nnamdi Kanu has continued to make incendiary remarks since the foundation of IPOB, particularly via Radio Biafra, in an effort to elicit a response from the government. For example, in addition to referring to President Buhari as “Hitler of Nigeria”, in one of his speeches in March 2014, Nnamdi Kanu threatened: “Our promise is very simple. If they fail to give us Biafra, Somalia will look like a paradise, compared to what happened there. It is a promise, it is a threat and also a pledge... we have had enough of this nonsense...” (Amnesty International, 2016, p. 12).³⁷

Boko Haram Military Strategy

It is said that the northern elite tend to benefit more from the centralized Nigerian State which allows them to appropriate state resources, the majority of the masses in the North still wallow in abject poverty. More so, some of the northern religious extremists believe that the Nigerian state should be governed according to Islamic religious principles irrespective of the fact that Nigeria is a conglomeration of various religious groups.³⁸ Boko Haram strategizes on filling a critical gap in the economy, capitalizing on the prevalence of poverty in the nation. The poverty of the masses created the fertile ground for Boko Haram to easily recruit the masses to wage war against the Nigerian State. Given the widespread illiteracy amongst youths in northern Nigeria, their means of survival in the economy is to resort to the informal sector which is a small-scale business, and as is a common challenge with such endeavour is the inability to secure capital, provide collateral and also lack of skills to provide a business plan required by formal institutions. Boko Haram strategizes on promising its members and supporters of better livelihood, and assistance in business.

Also the separatist sect has a strategy of spurring over-reaction by the government they are opposed to so as to pitch the masses or international community against such government for their over-reaction. In the case of Boko Haram, the Nigerian government over-reacted by embarking on mass arrest, arbitrary detention, torture and even extra-judicial executions in the North-east. In addition to the execution of the then leader of Boko Haram, Mohammed Yusuf while in custody of the

³⁶ Amnesty International (2016). *Nigeria: 'Bullets were raining everywhere', deadly repression of pro-Biafra activists*. Abuja: Amnesty International.

³⁷ R.C. Okoli, “Strategies of Boko Haram and IPOB in Nigeria's Postcolonial Context: A Critique.” *Journal of Conflict Transformation and Nation Building*. Vol. 1 No. 1 (2018). 131

³⁸ R.C. Okoli, “Strategies of Boko Haram and IPOB in Nigeria's Postcolonial Context: A Critique. 134

police, the Nigerian government through the military, police and Civilian Joint Taskforce (CJTF) carried out various other extrajudicial executions of boys and men in suspected to be Boko Haram members North-east, Nigeria.³⁹

Conclusion

A strategy plays out in the context of interactions between actors with different objectives and capabilities. A strategy being the broad explanation of the concepts of planning, preparation, and series of actions for obtaining a specific long-term objective cannot be over-emphasized as it pertains to the political, diplomatic, and military sphere of human engagements. A military strategy typically employs the threat or use of military force in opposition to an adversary and is called upon where large-scale force is viewed as the way to achieve such goals. Strategic thinking is traditionally focused on which part or combination of land, air, and naval forces is most effective. In order to prevent a static narrow approach to accomplishing the ultimate end in contemporary times, military strategy has in itself other approaches that make up the all-encompassing nature of its phenomenon such as; tactics, which are maneuvers carried out in specific military operations, psychological warfare (propaganda), ideologies, which are measures used to carry out a desired military or political end without necessarily engaging in campaigns, amnesty and absorption into the environment which are measures for addressing the non-conventional nature of modern armed conflicts.

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³⁹ R.C. Okoli, 136

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An Examination of the Challenges of COVID-19 in Nigeria's Public Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the capacity and effectiveness of public institutions in managing National emergency and their level of preparation for the future in Nigeria. In the process, it examines the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria as a national public emergency. It utilises available secondary data and adopts descriptive method to analyse various responses of the government and relevant institutions to assess the effectiveness of the responses in the educational institutions. The paper reveals the shortcomings of the responses and the need to be more creative in managing the spread of such pandemic in the Nigeria's education sector, which is one of the sectors strongly affected by the pandemic in the future. This paper is of the view that the pandemic mutate and future outbreak cannot be completely ruled out in Nigeria. With its occasional resurgence in European and Asian countries and the possibility of new outbreak of any of the others public health emergencies of international concern (PHEIC), like Marburg virus disease as experienced in Equatorial Guinea and United Republic of Tanzania, Ebola (West Africa), Zika (Brazil), Hantavirus, Avian influenza, and Polio; there is the need for the public sector in general and education sector in particular, to be more proactive and prepare to creatively manage the outbreak of such anticipated pandemic in the future. Therefore, the suggestions to strengthen the impact of the interventions in the Education sector include, more funding of education and health sectors, improvement of sanitation in schools, and innovative approach in sensitization.

Keywords: Covid-19, Education Sector, Lockdown, Pandemic, Public Institutions

1. INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of Covid-19 affected greatly the lives of individuals and institutions globally. More specifically, it impacted on capacity of public institutions and exposes their operational challenges around the world. Efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19 through non-medical interventions and preventive measures such as social-distancing and self-isolation have prompted the widespread closure of primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling in over 100 countries (Aljazeera, 2020). By November 5th, 2020 almost 1.812 billion students across the world, were affected by sudden lockdown of schools, (Yang et al, 2020).

According to UNESCO (2020), 191 countries have implemented nationwide closures, while 5 have implemented local closures, impacting about 98.4 percent of the world students' population. On 4th

March 2020, the British Council released a statement announcing the cancellation of The IELTS examinations, Cambridge O Level, Cambridge International AS & A Level, Cambridge AICE Diploma, and Cambridge Pre-U examinations for the May/June 2020 series across all countries. International Baccalaureate exam was cancelled, while the WAEC exam that was recently concluded in West Africa was also postponed. Nigeria as a country ensured that schools and personnel complied with the stay at home order to prevent further spreading among students and school personnel since it is highly contagious. In fact, many unified examinations had to be suspended. Although, most countries have lifted the lockdown, some are still managing the lockdown due to the second wave.

Following the gradual ease of lockdown in Nigeria, and the opening of schools on 21st October, 2020, a number of guidelines for the management of Covid-19 were handed out to all public institutions including schools. Most of the Africa's 54 countries recorded significant death due to COVID-19, including the death of the former Ghana President J.J. Rawlings. However, a number of countries opened their borders, international flights and local flight because of declining international trade. According to Wondwosen & Damtew (2020), research on Africa economic forecasts revealed that Africa could experience economy loss of between US\$ 90 billion and US\$200 billion in 2020, with the GDP shrinking by three to eight points. The closures as a result of the pandemic did not only affect the educational sector, it also led to the suspension of all public gathering; closure of major markets, religious organizations were restricted from worshipping together and many other gatherings' activities were on hold during the trying period.

Consequently, schools and other public institutions across Nigeria later reopened, with strict instructions on the compliance with the covid-19 prevention protocols, although, it would be difficult to measure the specific impact of school closures, because it varied from place to place, persons to persons (Taibat, 2020). The guidelines on the management of Covid-19 came with a lot of challenges, for instance, complying with the social distancing protocols is difficult because of limited classroom and office spaces. Although majority of the public institutions and schools are able to provide photosensitive thermometer, hand washing equipment and face masks, the level at which the members of the public comply with the use of face mask is not encouraging. Therefore, the focus of this research is to examine the challenges associated with the management of covid-19 by public institutions, with special focus on Nigerian education sector. The structure of the rest of the paper include; conceptual explanation of covid-19, global responses, Nigeria's government responses, effects on Nigeria's education sector, management of the effects, constraints, recommendations.

2. CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATION OF COVID-19

The Covid-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which was first identified in December, 2019 in Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern in January 2020 and a pandemic in March, 2020. As at 15 November, 2020 more than 53.9 million cases have been confirmed, with more than 1.31 million deaths attributed to Covid-19 (Chan et al, 2020).

Covid-19 mainly spreads through the air when people are closer to each other, primarily via small droplets or aerosols, as an infected person breath, coughs, sneezes, sings, or speaks. Transmission via fomites (contaminated surfaces) has not been conclusively demonstrated. It can spread as early as two days before infected persons show symptoms (presymptomatic), or from asymptomatic (no symptoms) individuals. People remain infectious for up to ten days in moderate cases, and two weeks in severe cases (WHO, 2020).

Common symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, breathing difficulties, and loss of smell and taste. Complications may include pneumonia and acute respiratory distress syndrome. The incubation period is typically around five days but may range from one to 14 days. There are several ongoing efforts to develop vaccine, although none have completed clinical trials. There is no known specific antiviral medication, so primary treatment is currently symptomatic (WHO, 2020).

3. GLOBAL RESPONSES

The diagnosis of COVID-19 entails combination of epidemiologic information (e.g. a history of travel to or residence in affected region prior to symptom onset), clinical symptoms, CT imaging findings, and laboratory tests (e.g., reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction [RT-PCR] tests on respiratory tract specimens) according to standards of either the WHO (2020) or the National Health Commission of China (2020). It should be mentioned that a single negative RT-PCR test result from suspected patients does not exclude infection. Clinically, patients with an epidemiologic history, COVID-19–related symptoms, or positive CT imaging results should be monitored. The results from randomized controlled trials did not show any need to recommend anti-nCoV treatment. Hence, the management of COVID-19 has been largely supportive (WHO, 2020).

Another measure was to control the source of infection by using infection prevention and control measures to lower the risk of transmission and providing early diagnosis, isolation, and supportive care for affected patients, while a series of clinical trials were being carried out to investigate interventions that are potentially more effective (e.g., lopinavir, remdesivir; Del Rio and Malani 2020).

However, attempt to treat the virus was initiated on December 31, 2020, when WHO announced that the Comirnaty Covid-19 mRNA vaccine could be administered for emergency use, making the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine the first to receive emergency validation from the health body since the outbreak of the virus in December 2019 (WHO, 2020d). Nigeria received its first batch of the covid-19 vaccine on March 2, 2021 courtesy the COVAX Facility, a partnership between CEPI, Gavi, UNICEF and WHO (UNICEF, 2021). The arrival of the vaccine aided health workers and government in the battle against the deadly virus.

4. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES THROUGH VARIOUS PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

In Nigeria, federal and state governments took proactive steps, some of which are still being enforced, to curtail the spread of coronavirus throughout the country. As the country experienced a steady increase in the number of confirmed cases; movement restrictions, lockdowns and other

situational responses were instituted to adequately respond to the pandemic (Thelma & Adedeji, 2020).

Covid Protocols: Recommended preventive measures include hand washing, covering one's mouth when sneezing or coughing, social distancing, wearing a face mask in public, ventilation and air-filtering, disinfecting surfaces, and monitoring and self-isolation for people exposed or symptomatic. Nigerian government supports worldwide responses by implementing travel restrictions, lockdowns, workplace hazard controls, and facility closures. Many places have also initiated effort to increase testing capacity and tracing contacts of the infected.

Lockdown: On 29 March 2020, the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, addressed the nation on the Federal Government's efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19 within the country. In his address, he directed a cessation of all movements in Lagos State, Ogun State and the Federal Capital Territory for an initial period of fourteen (14) days. Although, the cessation of movement in Ogun State was postponed until Friday, 3 April 2020, lockdown in Lagos and Abuja was ordered to commence on Monday, 30 March 2020. This lockdown was to enable the government to track the spread of COVID-19 within these areas. Citizens in these states were directed to stay at home during the lockdown. Inter-state travels were restricted and all businesses and offices within these states were fully closed during the period. The president also constituted the Presidential Task Force on covid-19 headed by the secretary to the federal government, Boss Mustapha.

Certain businesses were exempted from the lockdown restrictions particularly those providing health related and essential services, including hospitals and related medical establishments, organizations in healthcare related manufacturing and distribution, as well as commercial establishments involved in food processing and distribution, petroleum distribution and retail entities, power generation, transmission and distribution companies and private security companies. Workers in telecommunication companies, broadcasters, print and electronic media that were unable to work from home were also exempted. Seaports in Lagos state were exempted as well as vehicles and drivers conveying essential cargoes from the seaports to other parts of the country, which were screened before departure by the Ports Health Authority. Critical staff members of the CBN, deposit money banks, the Nigeria Interbank Settlement System (NIBSS), mobile money operators and payment solution providers were also exempted from the lockdown.

On Monday, 30th March 2020, the President signed the Federal Government's COVID-19 Regulations of 2020 which declared COVID-19 a dangerous infectious disease and granted a legal basis to the directives stated in the President's address. The Federal Government also directed the security agencies to implement the restriction of movement order.

Relieve on Loan Repayment: The Regulations further instituted a moratorium on loan transactions through Bank of Industry, Bank of Agriculture and the Nigeria Export Import Bank. Financial and money markets were exempted from the lockdown to run skeletal services to allow Nigerians access online banking services.

The Economic Stimulus Bill 2020: The House of Representatives passed the Emergency Economic Stimulus Bill 2020 on March 24 to provide support to businesses and individuals in Nigeria. The proposed law aimed to provide 50 percent tax rebates to businesses that are registered under the

Companies and Allied Matters Act to assist them in retaining their employees. However, while the bill focused on providing relief to formal sector businesses, 65 percent of Nigeria's total GDP comes from the informal sector, which also employs more than 90 percent of the workforce, and these workers need support to survive. Many businesses in the informal sector are unregistered, so it was difficult for them to get these benefits. For the government to help these businesses, it is essential to give out small interest-free loans or small grants to these enterprises through microfinance facilities and other community-based channels.

Cash Transfers: On April 1, 2020, the government announced cash transfers of 20,000 Naira (\$52) to poor and vulnerable households registered in the National Social Register (NSR). Currently, the NSR has only 2.6 million households (about 11 million people) registered on its platform, but government hope to increase this to 3.6 million households during the COVID-19 crisis. However, 87 million Nigerians live on less than \$1.90 a day. Therefore, the cash payments by the federal government only managed to reach a fraction of the poor. Besides, Nigeria does not have a robust national information management system, making electronic payments difficult; however, government can provide prepaid debit cards to the poor as an alternative. This can be done at the community or ward level to reach the target, before embracing more effective measures like direct bank transfers.

Central Bank of Nigeria Stimulus Package: The CBN's stimulus package offered a credit of 3 million Naira to poor families affected by COVID-19. However, the loan required collateral and was not interest-free. This hinders accessibility by poor households. The loans should be available at a low interest rate, with long moratorium for repayment period. Moreover, awareness should be created as many poor households and businesses in the informal sector are ignorant of available economic packages and policies implemented by the government.

Food Assistance: As a result of lockdown in Lagos, FCT, and Ogun states, on April 1, 2020, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs Disaster Management and Social Development introduced provision of food rations to vulnerable households in these states to cushion the effects, though the distribution system was marred by irregularities and public criticism. The government has to improve transparency and accountability in the food ration distribution system, by avoiding middlemen, adopting house tagging for identification, involving Local Councils Ward Development Committees, and introducing technology to plug leakages, track rations, and reduce corruption.

5. EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Schools: schooling is the most recognized available public policy tool to develop skills and potentials. Therefore, Covid 19 interruption negatively affected learning and skills acquisition, with consequences on school time tables and schedules, while facilities in schools damaged due to unused for long period of time.

According to UNESCO, about 35.9 million primary and secondary school were at home. About 25.6 million students were in primary, of which about 87percent (23.5 million) are students enrolled in public schools, and about 10.3 million were secondary school students of which about 81 percent (8.4 million) of them are public school students. There is the possibility that some may

not return after resumption due to the impacts. There is need for government intervening measures for this category of students.

Educational Finance: The sudden interruption of the educational system in Nigeria as a result of the pandemic impacts negatively on education finances. Hence, government, parents, ministries of education at various levels and other stakeholders have to change their plans and strategies to finance the education of their children and the education system as a whole. Reasons for this include; extension of school calendar, extra payments in schools, unbudgeted procurement of laptops, android phones, television cables and other means of ICT for new normal innovative online classes at various levels designed for students. Most of the smaller private schools found it difficult to pay monthly wages of their staff, while government keeps paying employees without work and services. The implication is that it impacts on the commitment of governments towards the education system due to other competing demands from the healthcare, security and other sectors serving the vulnerable.

Terminal Classes: The pandemic would affect careers of graduating and recent graduates of universities and other tertiary institutions. Graduating students experienced delay and interruptions in their assessments for the final part of their studies, while the recent graduates experienced economic meltdown. This would likely create unemployment, job loss, low pay job and unpaid or delayed payment. Finding has shown that graduates from programmes with high predicted earnings can compensate for their poor starting point through both 'within- and across-firm earnings gains', but graduates from other programmes have been found to experience permanent earnings losses from graduating in a recession (Oreopoulos et al. 2020).

Students' Welfare: School feeding programme introduced as a welfare package by the federal government was also affected greatly with consequences on both parents and students (Thelma & Adedeji; 2020). In 2019, World Food Programme estimates daily access to Nigeria's Homegrown Schools Feeding Initiative to over 9million children in over 40,000 public schools. The objective includes motivating enrollment in schools and learning, improving health through anti-worm treatments and immunizations for learners in public schools across 17 states, and providing social protection for indigents. All these were denied by the pandemic.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE EFFECTS ON NIGERIA'S EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Nigerian Center for Disease Control NCDC provided a number of guidelines on the management of Covid-19 in the Nigeria education sector (UNICEF, 2020). It includes measure on physical distancing and hygienic practices as follows:

Safe Distancing: In schools and other learning facilities, learners are expected to stay two meters apart. However, there are exceptions where the two-meter rule cannot be reasonably applied; other risk mitigation strategies may be adopted. Example includes early years, younger primary school children, and those with additional needs. In these circumstances, risk assessments must be undertaken as it affects the learners, teachers, and other education stakeholders.

However, the implementation of the safety and hygiene measures as contained in the document depend on the observance by the adults' staff involved in management of the measures.

Online Learning: Most schools are advised to switch to online learning. This would facilitate learning from home and at the same time reducing students' physical interaction.

Outdoor Learning: This can limit transmission and also allows for safe distancing between the learners and teachers. The use of outdoors shelter is necessary for the protection and safety of learners and teachers, although, safety and security measures are required in each location.

Staggered Attendance: The time schedule for arriving and departing by different categories of students varies to avoid overcrowding and schools may reopen gradually (e.g., starting with particular grade levels).

Alternate Attendance: Schools may alternate attendance days per week, with learners at the secondary level (or equivalent) and above having fewer in-person classes, since these learners can manage independent learning better (e.g., junior secondary school learners on Tuesdays and Thursdays, while primary school learners attend classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays).

Platooning: Classes may be divided into morning and afternoon shifts.

Decreased Interaction: Learners may remain in one location with teachers coming to them.

Flexible Schedule: Lessons may be structured in a way that reduces the need for learners and staff to move between different areas of the premise.

Hygienic practices: Each school is expected to provide materials for hands washing and hands sanitizer at a central place for students. In addition, each student must wear face or nose mask.

Sensitization: This includes posters, boldly written instruction in central places and instructions to students concerning the protocols.

7. CONSTRAINTS AGAINST THE MEASURES

Electricity: Access to affordable electricity is a basic requirement for the development of any learning that is not classroom based. Many parts of Nigeria, particularly rural areas, do not have access to sustainable and affordable electricity. It is certainly a prerequisite for universal access to distance learning. Without access to electricity, there could be no access to television, radio or any other form of ICT capable of sustaining a technology-based distance learning programme.

Technology Infrastructure: eLearning by definition requires not only electricity, but also access to both data connectivity and to devices through which the eLearning materials can be accessed. All these are either not available or inadequate in many parts of Nigeria.

Competent Personnel: a number of school officials and teachers do not have the required competence to operate the devices meant for online learning. Adequate ICT knowledge is required to operate computers, its applications and the accessories that will make remote learning possible.

Non-conducive Home Learning Environment: a number of home in both urban and rural areas are not conducive for learning, either for the purpose of reading or online learning. This may be due to noise or other forms of distraction that will make learning almost impossible.

Poor Hygiene: up till now a number of schools do not have access to basic infrastructure such as pipe borne water or running water that is needed for hand washing as a way of preventing Covid-19. Many public schools are not adequately financed by government to provide resources as simple as soap for hand washing. Obviously, inadequate provision of sanitation and hygiene facilities in public institutions and schools are challenges in the management of covid-19 in the Nigerian education system.

Uncooperative Attitude: A number of Nigerian citizens did not comply with the guidelines for the prevention of covid-19. Many neglected the use of facemask or refused to abide by safe distancing protocol. A lot of persons either believed that the government is lying about the number of cases, or that covid-19 does not exist, and in some cases due to cultural implications.

Overcrowding: Overcrowding in most public schools hinder measures provided for physical distancing. This was caused by inadequate structures and facilities that can cope with over enrollments.

Lack of Political Will: Government has been very partisan in the distribution of the palliatives to cushion the effect of covid-19 on the members of the public and institutions. Many states hoarded the palliatives while some only focused on their political party members alone.

8. CONCLUSION

The outbreak of corona virus interrupted the educational sector and it is a setback to the development of Nigeria education system and should be properly managed by the government and stakeholders in the future. A number of studies have shown that transmission of an outbreak may be curtailed by reducing social gathering and contacts. However, effectiveness of this decision largely depends on the compliance to the protocols by the students when they are outside of their schools. Although the closure of schools helped a lot when it was introduced at an early stage, but the continued lockdown of schools has been considered a major setback for the education system. This was the reason for the reopening of schools, because educational sector remains the driver of development of any country. Therefore, where the gains are not properly managed, the reopening of schools after closure may worsen infection rates (Lu et al, 2020). The constraints indicate that there is much to be done by the government to enhance the capacity of the public institutions to effectively manage emergencies in the future.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are necessary to creatively manage the effect of any Public Health Emergency of International Concern on the education sector in the future:

Adequate Funding of Health and Education sectors: adequate funding of hospital is necessary to enhance its management. Provision of basic equipment and adequate remuneration of staffs will promote better health outcomes during the management of this pandemic. Similarly, it is important to provide basic equipment, technology and the required training for schools and its personnel to ensure healthy and safe environment for learning.

Creative Delivery: Different learning approaches must be designed for various lessons and learning environments, most especially in-person learning (indoor, outdoor) and media for distance learning (printed materials, online, TV, and radio). There may be differential time allocation for learning in each of these environments.

Sensitization: Sustained campaigns, advocacy and sensitization, especially in rural and remote areas, and adopting child friendly messaging (using animations, infographics and cartoons in local languages) on the pandemic, public health and adopted safety measures, to facilitate necessary behavioral changes to new normal.

Safety and Hygiene: Schools are supposed to engage in the disinfection and fumigation of facilities, including hostel accommodation, temporary isolation and treatment centers. They should also establish a School COVID-19 Referral System, including protocols and procedures to cater for learners, teachers, administrators, and other education personnel that may require medical attention. Compliance to NCDC guideline is essential. Schools are to develop detailed protocols and provide facilities to establish and maintain prescribed hygiene standards and sanitary facilities.

Social Protection: schools are to develop appropriate mental health and psychosocial support services to address stigmatization and discrimination. They should assist learners, teachers, administrators, and other education personnel and their families in coping with the psycho-social effects of COVID-19.

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Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Affective Commitment to Policing Among Nigerian Police Officers

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Abstract

Policing is a highly stressful occupation characterized by exposure to violence, dangerous situations and the task of making split-second decisions. These stressors have negative impacts on the physical and mental well-being of police officers. Occupational stress, job satisfaction and affective commitment tend to influence the performance and well-being of police officers. This paper, thus, explores the occupational stress, job satisfaction and affective commitment among Nigerian Police Officers. It adopts a content analysis as its methodology. Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model was adopted as its theoretical framework. The study found that in order to enhance the willingness to remain in the Nigerian policing profession, it is crucial for the Nigerian police force to prioritize the provision of organizational support. The paper concludes that a supportive work environment, fair policies, and transparent communication contribute to lower levels of occupational stress and higher job satisfaction among police officers. It recommends that the Nigerian police force should make adequate provision of articulate health insurance scheme, regular physical fitness workout/exercise and seminars/training on emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Police officers, Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Affective commitment, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment are important factors that influence the performance and well-being of police officers. These factors are particularly significant in Nigeria, where police officers face numerous challenges, including low pay, inadequate training, and poor working conditions.

Occupational stress refers to the psychological and physiological responses that individuals experience when they perceive a discrepancy between the demands of their job and their ability to cope with those demands (Leka & Houdmont, 2010). Policing is a highly stressful occupation characterized by exposure to violence, dealing with difficult and dangerous situations, long working hours, and the need to make split-second decisions (Hassell & Archbold, 2010). These stressors can have negative impacts on the physical and mental well-being of police officers, leading to burnout, job dissatisfaction, and even psychological disorders (Violanti, Burchfiel, Hartley, Mnatsakanova, Fekedulegn, Andrew & Charles, 2006).

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their work (Locke, 1976). It is influenced by various factors such as pay, working conditions, job autonomy, opportunities for career advancement, and the perceived fairness of the organization (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2001). Job satisfaction is particularly relevant for police officers as it affects their motivation, commitment, and overall job performance (Gomes, Faria & Caetano, 2015). High job satisfaction among police officers is often associated with lower levels of occupational stress and better physical and mental health outcomes (Zapf, Dormann & Frese, 2001; Violanti *et al.*, 2006).

Affective commitment refers to an individual's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with an organization (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 1993). It represents an individual's willingness to exert effort and contribute to the goals and values of the organization (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). It reflects a police officer's emotional attachment and dedication to their profession, organization, and the goals of law enforcement (Brown & Lambert, 2011). Affective commitment has been found to be positively associated with job satisfaction and negatively associated with occupational stress (Dollard, Winefield & Winefield, 2007). It plays a crucial role in determining police officers' organizational citizenship behaviours, job performance, and intention to stay in the profession (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

While there is a considerable body of research on occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment among police officers, limited attention has been given to these factors specifically within the Nigerian police context. Nigeria has unique challenges in its policing system, including corruption, inadequate resources, and political interference (Egonmwan & Esegbe, 2018). These challenges can significantly impact the levels of stress experienced by Nigerian police officers and their overall job satisfaction and commitment. This paper explores the occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment to policing among Nigerian Police Officers. The paper is structured into five sections, with each section serving a specific purpose. Section 1, which has already been provided, serves as the introduction. Section 2 focuses on outlining the methodology employed in the study. Section 3 is dedicated to clarifying concepts and establishing the theoretical framework. In Section 4, the findings of the study are thoroughly discussed. Finally, Section 5 encompasses the conclusion drawn from the findings and provides recommendations based on the study's results.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study utilizes a content analysis methodology, which incorporates conceptual evaluation, theme analysis, and theoretical presentation. This approach emphasizes the qualitative information gathered from secondary sources, including journals, government websites, and written works. All the data collected for this study is deemed relevant and contributes to its overall analysis.

3. CONCEPTUAL DISCUSS

Occupational Stress

Occupational stress is defined by scholars as the psychological and physiological responses that individuals experience when they perceive a discrepancy between the demands of their job and

their ability to cope with those demands. Leka and Houdmont (2010) provide a comprehensive definition, stating that occupational stress is the "adverse psychological and physical reactions that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker." It is the result of the interaction between job demands and the individual's ability to cope with those demands.

This definition is consistent with the understanding that occupational stress is a multi-dimensional construct involving various stressors such as work overload, time pressure, role ambiguity, interpersonal conflict, and lack of control over work (Leka & Houdmont, 2010; Karasek & Theorell, 1990). Occupational stress can have detrimental effects on individuals' well-being, leading to physical and mental health problems, burnout, decreased job satisfaction, and reduced organizational commitment (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014; Spector, 2008).

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as an individual's subjective evaluation and emotional response towards their job or work environment. It reflects the extent to which individuals feel positively or negatively about their work and the various facets associated with it (Judge *et al.*, 2001; Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction is influenced by multiple factors, including the work itself, work conditions, relationships with co-workers and supervisors, compensation, and opportunities for growth and advancement.

Locke (1976) provides a widely cited definition of job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences." This definition emphasizes the evaluative and affective nature of job satisfaction, indicating that it is influenced by an individual's perception and appraisal of their work circumstances.

Similarly, Judge *et al.* (2001) further elaborate on the multidimensional nature of job satisfaction, emphasizing that it comprises cognitive evaluations, affective reactions, and overall subjective feelings towards one's job. Their definition highlights the importance of considering different aspects of work and their impact on an individual's satisfaction.

Understanding job satisfaction is essential as it has implications for individuals' motivation, engagement, and overall well-being at work (Judge *et al.*, 2001; Warr, 1999). Satisfied employees tend to experience higher levels of job performance, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviours (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2009).

Affective Commitment

Affective commitment, as defined by scholars, refers to an individual's emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with an organization. It represents a deep emotional connection and dedication to the organization's goals, values, and objectives (Meyer *et al.*, 1993). Affective commitment is characterized by a strong sense of loyalty, passion, and a desire to maintain membership within the organization (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) describe affective commitment as "an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization." This definition emphasizes the emotional

aspect of commitment and highlights the individual's sense of belongingness and connection to the organization. Affective commitment is driven by positive feelings, a sense of pride, and a belief in the organization's mission and values.

Affective commitment is considered one of the three components of organizational commitment, alongside continuance commitment (based on the costs associated with leaving the organization) and normative commitment (based on perceived obligations or social norms) (Meyer *et al.*, 1993). Affective commitment has been found to be a strong predictor of positive workplace outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviour, and intention to stay with the organization (Meyer *et al.*, 2002).

Understanding affective commitment is crucial as it reflects the depth of an individual's commitment and their emotional investment in the organization. It can influence employees' motivation, engagement, and willingness to go above and beyond in their job roles (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Rhoades *et al.*, 2001).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A suitable theoretical framework for the study is Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. The JD-R model was proposed by Arnold B. Bakker and Evangelia Demerouti. It was first introduced in their seminal publication in 2001 titled "The Job Demands-Resources Model: State of the Art." Since then, the model has gained significant recognition and has been widely applied in the field of occupational psychology to understand the relationship between job demands, job resources, and employee well-being and performance. The JD-R model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the interaction between job demands, job resources, and employee outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

One of the major strengths of the theory is that it recognizes that job demands and resources can change over time and affect employees differently. It acknowledges the dynamic nature of work and emphasizes the interaction between individuals and their work environment, providing insights into how these factors evolve and impact employee well-being and performance. According to the JD-R model, job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort and can potentially lead to strain or stress. In the context of Nigerian police officers, job demands may include high workload, exposure to traumatic events, role ambiguity, and organizational constraints (Egonmwan & Eseigbe, 2018; Violanti *et al.*, 2006).

Job resources, on the other hand, are the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that help individuals achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and stimulate personal growth and development. Examples of job resources for Nigerian police officers may include supportive leadership, training and development opportunities, social support from colleagues, and adequate equipment and resources (Egonmwan & Eseigbe, 2018; Gomes *et al.*, 2015).

The JD-R model proposes that job demands and job resources have distinct effects on employee outcomes. High job demands can lead to increased occupational stress, while job resources can contribute to job satisfaction and affective commitment. Occupational stress can mediate the

relationship between job demands and job satisfaction, and in turn, affective commitment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Applying the JD-R model to the study of Nigerian police officers would allow researchers to examine how specific job demands and job resources within the policing context influence occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment. It provides a theoretical foundation for understanding the complex dynamics between these variables and can guide the development of research hypotheses and the selection of appropriate measurement instruments.

The JD-R model has however been criticised for primarily focusing on the relationships between job demands, job resources, and employee outcomes without explicitly specifying the causal direction. While it suggests that job demands lead to occupational stress and that job resources contribute to job satisfaction and commitment, the model does not provide clear guidance on the direction of causality (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). This is, of course, a weakness of the model.

Nevertheless, it is suitable for the study as it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay between job demands, job resources, and employee outcomes. It considers both negative (demands) and positive (resources) aspects of the work environment, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Impact of Work Environment on Occupational Stress and Job Satisfaction

The work environment of Nigerian police officers is characterized by unique challenges and stressors that can have a significant impact on their well-being and job satisfaction. One such challenge is the high workload that police officers often face. Nigerian police officers are frequently confronted with heavy workloads, long working hours, and demanding job responsibilities (Esiobu & Esiobu, 2013). These factors can contribute to increased levels of occupational stress as officers struggle to manage their workload effectively.

Another significant aspect of the work environment that influences occupational stress and job satisfaction among Nigerian police officers is the exposure to traumatic events and violence. Policing inherently involves dealing with crime, violence, and emergencies, which can be psychologically and emotionally distressing (Okechukwu & Nwankwo, 2016). Witnessing or experiencing traumatic incidents can lead to post-traumatic stress symptoms and significantly impact job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Moreover, the work environment's impact on job satisfaction among Nigerian police officers is closely linked to the level of social support available to them. The presence of social support, including support from supervisors, colleagues, and the organization, has been found to be crucial in buffering the negative effects of occupational stress and enhancing job satisfaction (Esiobu & Esiobu, 2013; Ughulu & Iyamu, 2020). Supportive relationships and a sense of belonging within the work environment can contribute to increased job satisfaction and reduced feelings of stress and burnout.

However, the work environment of Nigerian police officers is not solely characterized by negative aspects. Positive work environment factors, such as recognition for good work, opportunities for skill development and advancement, and a fair and transparent organizational structure, can enhance job satisfaction (Okechukwu & Nwankwo, 2016). These factors contribute to a sense of fulfillment, engagement, and commitment to the job.

It is important to note that addressing the work environment factors goes beyond the individual level. Systemic changes and organizational support are essential for creating a conducive work environment that promotes occupational well-being and job satisfaction among Nigerian police officers. This includes providing adequate resources, implementing policies and practices that support work-life balance, fostering a supportive and inclusive organizational culture, and addressing issues of corruption and ethical concerns within the police force.

Coping Mechanisms for Occupational Stress

Nigerian police officers employ various coping strategies to manage and cope with occupational stress. A study conducted by Esiobu and Esiobu (2013) examined the coping strategies employed by Nigerian police personnel. The findings revealed that both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies were utilized.

Problem-focused coping strategies involve actively addressing the stressor itself. Nigerian police officers commonly used problem-solving techniques, such as seeking social support from colleagues and supervisors, seeking professional advice, and engaging in team collaboration to manage their occupational stress (Esiobu & Esiobu, 2013).

Emotion-focused coping strategies, on the other hand, involve managing the emotional distress associated with occupational stress. Nigerian police officers reported using strategies such as positive reappraisal, seeking social support for emotional comfort, and engaging in leisure activities as a means of coping with their stress (Esiobu & Esiobu, 2013).

Furthermore, religious coping was identified as a significant coping strategy utilized by Nigerian police officers. Religion plays a central role in the lives of many officers, and engaging in religious practices, such as prayer and seeking spiritual guidance, was found to be a common coping mechanism to manage occupational stress (Esiobu & Esiobu, 2013).

Coping mechanisms, meanwhile, play a crucial role in managing occupational stress and can impact job satisfaction and affective commitment among employees. Several studies have explored the effectiveness of different coping mechanisms and their relationship with these outcomes. A study conducted by Huang and colleagues (2018) examined the effectiveness of different coping strategies and their relationship with job satisfaction and affective commitment among employees in a Chinese context. The study found that problem-focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support, problem-solving, and positive reframing, were positively associated with job satisfaction and affective commitment. These strategies involve actively addressing stressors and finding ways to resolve or manage them effectively.

In contrast, emotion-focused coping strategies, such as seeking emotional support and engaging in avoidance or wishful thinking, showed mixed results. While seeking emotional support was

positively associated with job satisfaction and affective commitment, avoidance and wishful thinking were negatively related to these outcomes. Emotion-focused coping strategies primarily aim to manage the emotional distress associated with stressors rather than directly addressing the stressors themselves.

Furthermore, a study by Aziri (2015) examined the relationship between coping strategies, job satisfaction, and affective commitment among healthcare professionals in Macedonia. The study found that problem-focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support, active coping, and planning, were positively associated with job satisfaction and affective commitment. These strategies were effective in helping employees manage stressors and maintain positive work attitudes.

In contrast, emotion-focused coping strategies, such as venting, denial, and behavioural disengagement, showed negative relationships with job satisfaction and affective commitment. These strategies were less effective in dealing with stressors and were associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and affective commitment. The effectiveness of coping mechanisms in relation to job satisfaction and affective commitment depends on the specific strategies used. Problem-focused coping strategies, which involve actively addressing stressors, seeking support, and finding solutions, are generally more effective and positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment. Emotion-focused coping strategies, particularly those involving avoidance or disengagement, may be less effective and negatively related to these outcomes.

One coping mechanism that has shown effectiveness in enhancing job satisfaction and affective commitment among police officers is seeking social support. Studies conducted with police officers in different contexts have consistently found a positive relationship between social support and job satisfaction (Hirschfeld *et al.*, 2013; Karasek *et al.*, 2014). Social support can come from colleagues, supervisors, and the organization as a whole, providing emotional, instrumental, and informational support, which helps officers manage stressors and foster positive work attitudes.

Active coping, which involves taking direct action to address stressors, has also been associated with higher job satisfaction and affective commitment among police officers. Active coping strategies include problem-solving, seeking solutions, and engaging in proactive behaviours (Gershon *et al.*, 2014; Nishida & Johnson, 2016). By actively addressing stressors, police officers feel more in control of their work environment, leading to greater satisfaction and commitment.

Furthermore, positive reframing, a cognitive coping strategy that involves finding positive meaning or interpretation in stressful situations, has been linked to increased job satisfaction and affective commitment among police officers. This coping strategy helps officers maintain a positive mindset and view challenges as opportunities for growth (Hirschfeld *et al.*, 2013).

On the other hand, emotion-focused coping strategies such as avoidance or disengagement have generally shown less effectiveness in relation to job satisfaction and affective commitment among police officers. These strategies involve attempting to manage emotional distress without directly addressing the underlying stressors. Research suggests that reliance on avoidance coping can lead to decreased job satisfaction and affective commitment (Gershon *et al.*, 2014).

It is important to note that the effectiveness of coping mechanisms can be influenced by various factors, including individual differences, the specific stressors experienced by Nigerian police officers, and the organizational context. More research is needed to understand the unique coping mechanisms utilized by Nigerian police officers and their specific relationship with job satisfaction and affective commitment in this context.

Organizational Support and Affective Commitment

Organizational support refers to the perception of support and assistance provided by the organization to its employees. It encompasses various forms of support, such as instrumental support, emotional support, and career development opportunities. The role of organizational support in shaping affective commitment, which refers to an employee's emotional attachment and identification with the organization, has been widely studied in organizational research.

Akkermans and Tims (2017) examined the relationship between organizational support and affective commitment among employees in the public sector. The findings revealed a positive association between organizational support and affective commitment. Employees who perceived higher levels of organizational support were more likely to develop a stronger emotional attachment and commitment to their organization.

For Nigerian police officers, organizational support is crucial in shaping affective commitment. Police officers face unique challenges and stressors in their work environment, and the perception of support from their organization can significantly influence their commitment levels. When police officers perceive higher levels of support from their organization, such as fair treatment, respectful communication, and opportunities for professional growth, they are more likely to develop a stronger emotional connection and commitment to their work and organization.

Alarcon *et al.* (2009) found that higher levels of organizational support were associated with greater job satisfaction and lower levels of occupational stress. Employees who perceived adequate support from their organization experienced higher job satisfaction and lower levels of stress.

Organizational support for Nigerian police officers can be expected to have a similar impact. When police officers perceive higher levels of support from their organization, such as fair treatment, recognition of their efforts, and access to resources, they are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction and reduced occupational stress levels.

Moreover, a study by Hassan *et al.* (2018) examined the influence of organizational support on the willingness to remain in the nursing profession. They found that organizational support and the intention to stay in the profession are closely related. Nurses who perceived higher levels of organizational support were more likely to express a willingness to remain in their profession. It can be inferred that organizational support may also influence the willingness of police officers to remain in the policing profession. When officers perceive higher levels of support from their organization, they are more likely to feel valued, engaged, and committed to their profession, increasing their willingness to continue their careers in policing.

To promote job satisfaction, reduce occupational stress, and enhance the willingness to remain in the Nigerian policing profession, it is crucial for the Nigerian police force to prioritize the provision

of organizational support. This can be achieved through initiatives such as promoting a supportive work environment, providing training and development opportunities, recognizing and rewarding employees' contributions, and ensuring fair and transparent policies and procedures.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact of work environment, organizational support, and coping mechanisms on occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment among Nigerian police officers is a complex and multifaceted issue. Through examining various studies and research, it becomes evident that these factors play crucial roles in shaping the well-being, job satisfaction, and commitment levels of police officers in Nigeria. The work environment, including the physical work environment, organizational culture, and leadership styles, significantly influences the occupational stress levels and job satisfaction of Nigerian police officers. A supportive work environment, fair policies, and transparent communication contribute to lower levels of occupational stress and higher job satisfaction among police officers.

Organizational support is a key determinant of affective commitment among Nigerian police officers. When police officers perceive higher levels of support from their organization, they develop stronger emotional attachment and commitment to their work and organization. This perception of support is positively associated with affective commitment. The effectiveness of coping mechanisms utilized by Nigerian police officers in managing occupational stress is crucial. Effective coping strategies, such as seeking social support, engaging in problem-solving, and utilizing positive reinterpretation, can mitigate the negative effects of stress and enhance job satisfaction and affective commitment among police officers.

The following recommendations are provided and should be given considerations. The Nigerian police force should prioritize the provision of organizational support to its officers. This includes implementing fair and transparent policies, recognizing and rewarding officers' contributions, and providing opportunities for career development. Efforts should be made to improve the physical work environment, organizational culture, and leadership styles within the Nigerian police force. The Nigerian police force should invest in stress management and resilience training programs for its officers. Nigerian police force should regularly assess the levels of occupational stress, job satisfaction, and affective commitment among its officers. Surveys, focus groups, and feedback mechanisms can provide valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by officers and the effectiveness of organizational interventions.

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Public Trust and Acceptability of Third Party Auto Insurance Policy in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The focus of this paper is to identify variables that are affecting the growth of the insurance sector in Nigeria. Therefore, it examines the effect of public trust on the acceptability (sales and customer retention) of one of the insurance policies: Compulsory third party motor insurance policy in Lagos State. The study design is Survey design using primary data collection instrument; questionnaire and 45 commercial drivers within Lagos Island local government of Lagos State as sample. Chi-square statistical tool was used for the analysis of the results of the hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed that public trust affects the acceptability of motor insurance policies in Lagos State. The recommendations to improve the situation include: improved transparency of insurance company, quick and efficient claims-handling services, and the sensitization of customers on the benefits of motor insurance policies.

Keywords: Acceptability, Insurance, Public Trust, Risk, Third Party Motor Insurance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Insurance is very important to every aspect of human life because risk would always be involved. In Nigeria, because of the level of poverty, underdevelopment and weak economy, there will always be a need for an arrangement to manage the risk to avoid losses that can impact negatively on individuals. This study therefore investigates the effect that public trust, as one of the variables affecting the acceptability of motor insurance policies, has on the acceptability of Third Party motor insurance policies in Lagos State. The objectives of the study are:

- i. To identify the factors that determines public trust in insurance policies.
- ii. To determine the public trust and acceptability of motor insurance policies in Lagos State.

The two variables underlining the research are as follows;

- i. Independent variable- Public Trust (Customers' trust)
- ii. Dependent variable- Acceptability of motor insurance policies (Compulsory Third Party)

The outline of the study are: Introduction, Conceptual Clarification, Indicators/Determinants of public trust in insurance, Motor insurance policy, Types of motor insurance policy, Compulsory motor insurance policy, Objectives of the Study, Research Variable, Methodology, Hypothesis Testing, Results, Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 PUBLIC TRUST IN INSURANCE

There are various literatures that explains the place of public trust in the acceptability and patronage of insurance policies and how it affects motor insurance business performance. Outreville (1998) defines insurance as a mechanism (or a service) for the transfer of certain risks of financial loss in exchange of the payment of an agreed fixed amount (premium) to someone called the insurer (insurance company). Insurance is a way to manage your risk because when you buy insurance, you purchase protection against unexpected financial losses in which the insurance company pays you or someone you choose if something bad happens to you. The insurance industry safeguards the assets of its policyholders by transferring risk from an individual or business to an insurance company.

An insurance policy is a legal contract whereby one party, the insurer/Insurance Company, undertakes, for a premium or an assessment, to make a payment to another party, the policyholder or a third party, if an event that is the object of a risk occurs (Mutua, 2014). It is often defined as a contract of indemnity. The insured is not to make any profit out of the insurance but should only be compensated to the extent of the financial loss. It should however be noted that the policyholder is not necessarily the insured. An individual or company may get an insurance policy (making them the policyholder) that protects another person or entity (who is the insured). Thus, insurance companies act as financial intermediaries in that they invest the premiums they collect for providing this service (Insurance Information Institute, 2010).

Insurance policies are often in place for a specific period of time (i.e. a policy term). At the end of that term, the policyholders need to renew the policy or buy a new one. When policyholder buy an insurance policy, part of the responsibility includes paying a fee called a premium. Premiums can be paid monthly, like health insurance, or annually or bi-annually like motor or homeowners insurance. The cost of the premium generally depends on how much of a risk the policyholder is to the insurance company. The most common types of insurance include: Auto Insurance, Homeowners Insurance, Business Insurance, Life Insurance, Annuities, Long-Term Care Insurance, and Disability Insurance.

However, there is no uniform perspective as to what constitutes trust, however, some elements common to most definitions include: reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc. of a person or thing; the confident expectation of something; and the obligation or responsibility imposed on a person in whom confidence or authority is placed (Chartered Insurance Institute, n.d). Luhman (1979) likens trust to the lubricant of the society as it encompasses the willingness of parties, regardless of the relationship, to be vulnerable to one another. Hence, for businesses and organizations, public trust entails the willingness by the consumers, public or society at large to be vulnerable to the actions of an institution (Pirson & Malhotra, 2011). Trust as described by Rachel

Botsman (2018) refers to the confident relationship with the unknown who constitutes the foundation of every action, relationship and transaction.

Public trust is essential to the sustained organizational success of a business. The presence of trust between an organization and its stakeholders enhances commitment and innovations, which further accelerates business transactions. Also, strengthening public trust further legitimizes a business, because without trust within an organization and between the organization and its stakeholders, the business would be unproductive (Pirson et al, 2016).

There are various opinions on the link between public trust and performance of insurance business. Public trust refers to the degree to which the public—society at large—believes in the insurance industry. The dwindling trust of customers in insurers is not a new phenomenon; however the situation seems to be affecting the customer retention of insurers, and ultimately their productive capacity. Insurance experts agree that many consumers and small businesses don't trust the insurance industry. The Chartered Insurance Institute attributes this problem to "Payment Protection Insurance, dual pricing, product bundling, commoditization, lack of transparency... and ineffective communication as insurance customers: found language confusing, had difficulty comparing policies and the different elements of cover, and often had poor understanding of products" (Chartered Insurance Institute).

In the same vein, Ksenia (2019) argues that despite the efforts put in place by the government and insurance sector to increase transparency and increase standards, the relationship between insurers and their customers still remains as rocky as ever due to the lack of trust and understanding. Insurance companies are often seen as part of a financial services industry that takes huge premium payments and offers comparatively little in return to its average customer. In instances where insurance brokers get paid on commission, there is the perception that the broker will put their earnings ahead of the customer's best interests.

2.2 INDICATORS/DETERMINANTS OF PUBLIC TRUST IN INSURANCE POLICY

There are several indicators/determinants that influence the level of public trust in accepting and purchasing of insurance policies of different organizations.

One of it is communications. The wordings of insurance contracts are often so complex and so long that clients are not given much of a chance to really understand the cover in place. Thus, most customers don't actually read their policies as they don't understand the terms stated therein. This results to a misalignment between what the policy says and what the customer expects right from the outset (Ksenia, 2019).

Professionalism and Credibility of Brokers is another determinant. Claims are a critical area in the industry as it provides rich insight into the customer's perception of insurance. An excellent and expedient claims-handling service by insurance companies and the problem-solving ability of their agents is considered a significant differentiator that distinguishes insurance companies from their competitors (Oshinloye, 2009). Thus, efficient handling of claims boosts the confidence and trust of policyholders in their insurance agents.

Furthermore, transparency with customers constitutes a huge determinant of customers' trust in their insurer. Pricing of insurance products remains a process that often baffles clients and a major source of competitive advantage in the industry. Lack of transparency is one of the main causes of friction and issues between policyholders and insurers as customers are often kept in the dark when it comes to increase in pricing (Shrikant et al, 2018).

The past experiences that policyholders have had with insurance companies are a significant factor that determines and influences the level of trust an insured has in the insurer. The negative effects of a bad experience are more pronounced than the positive effect of a good experience (Courbage & Nicolas, 2020). Hence, customers who have had more bad experiences more than good are less likely to trust in the insurance industry, thereby reducing their willingness to purchase insurance policies or renew expired contracts.

2.3 MOTOR INSURANCE POLICY

Motor Insurance Policy, also known as Auto Insurance Policy or Vehicle Insurance Policy, is a contract between the policyholder and the insurance company with the aim to protect against financial loss in the event of an accident. Like other non-life insurance products, motor insurance policies seek to covers the insured (driver) against future cover(s) through the exchange of consideration known as premium in order to indemnify the motorist in the event of the contingency insured against as defined in the policy (Abass et al, 2018). Most auto policies are for six months to a year.

Auto insurance provides property, liability and medical coverage. Property coverage pays for damage to, or theft of, the car; Liability coverage pays for the policyholder's legal responsibility to others for bodily injury or property damage; Medical coverage pays for the cost of treating injuries, rehabilitation and sometimes lost wages and funeral expenses (Insurance Information Institute, 2010). Thus, auto insurance covers several contingencies including: accidental collision, fire, external explosion, lightning or burglary, theft, injury to third party, medical expenses and solicitor's fees.

Motor insurance policies can be categorized according to the contingencies they cover and the risks insured against. The four types of motor insurance cover, which are available in the insurance market are: The act only car insurance policy; the third party only policy; Third party, fire, and theft cover; and the comprehensive insurance.

The Third Party Only Policy is a form of compulsory insurance and only caters for third-party damages that were caused by the negligence of the policyholder. It covers both collision and non-collision damages caused by the insured party but will not cover any of this for the insured person's car or property. The benefit of this cover is that all the advantages of this policy are reaped by the third party for damage, loss, death, and disability for which the insured is liable (Soye and Momoh, 2021).

The coverage of the Third Party Liability (TPL) motor insurance is limited when compared with the third party liability, fire & theft and comprehensive coverage. Notwithstanding this limitation, most vehicle owners seem to still prefer the third party liability motor insurance policy because it

is cheap and its purchase will not mainly hinder the attainment of other major needs and responsibilities (Dansu et al, 2018).

Another type is Third Party, Fire and Theft Cover as its name implies this insurance policy covers contingencies relating to any grievances caused to the third party by the insured, including the burning and theft of the policyholder's vehicle (Abass et al, 2018).

Furthermore, The Act Only Cover form of insurance seeks to indemnify the insured against any form of bodily injury or even death caused to a third party. However, this insurance policy is often critiqued as a mere academic because it is rarely bought in practice (Edosa, 2014).

On the other hand the comprehensive insurance policy is an all-cover insurance package for all motor vehicle risks. Comprehensive motor insurance policy offers the widest coverage as it indemnifies the policy holder against risks such as theft, damage, fire, vandalism, and injuries to occupants of both the comprehensive insured car and any third party involved (Nwafor, 2015). This policy has the highest premiums compared to the other three forms of vehicle insurance policy (Dadson 2012).

However, Nigeria adopted compulsory motor insurance scheme for all functional vehicles.

Most countries require drivers to have auto liability insurance before they can legally drive a car, and Nigeria is no different. Section 68 (1) of the Act for Motor Third Party Insurance states that: Nobody shall use, or cause, or give permission to any other person to use a motor vehicle on a road, unless he or she insured with an underwriter licensed under this act, a liability which he or she may thereby incur as a result of causing damage to the third parties' property. Furthermore, The Federal Roads Safety Corps (FRSC) Act in Nigeria requires a vehicle on Nigerian roads to have at least a third party motor insurance cover or comprehensive insurance policy of 10% of the value of the vehicle (Soye and Momoh, 2021).

Third party liability insurance is a compulsory form of insurance which aims to prevent any grievance that third parties could face, due to the insolvency of the first party who caused bodily injury or property damage subsequent to any event related to automobile accident for which driver and/or owner of the vehicle were responsible is covered (Dahlstedt, 1994). In third party liability, guaranteed funds are created to compensate persons who suffer injury caused by auto accidents and to pay claims for property damage caused by uninsured motorists (Gonulal, 2009).

The general apathy of Nigerians towards insurance products made the purchase of third party liability insurance imperative as all vehicle owners pose potential hazards to other road users. The compulsory third party insurance ensures that the interests of third parties in motor accidents are protected in terms of injuries and losses that might be incurred from other vehicle users on the roads (Nwafor, 2015). Hence, this motor insurance has the potential to be a powerful tool in managing the liability caused by motorists to other road users (Soye and Momoh, 2021).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is Survey Design, while data collection is primary data using Structured Questionnaire as the instrument. The population of the study is commercial vehicle

operators in Lagos Island Local Government, Lagos State, and the sample is 45 commercial drivers that returned the questionnaires out of the 50 questionnaires distributed. Data analysis is quantitative, using Inferential Statistical tool, Chi-square.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

SN	SA	A	UN	SD	D	TOTAL
1	18	9	3	9	6	45
2	21	15	0	3	6	45
3	12	24	0	6	3	45
4	9	15	9	9	3	45
5	18	6	0	9	12	45
6	18	12	0	3	12	45
7	3	24	3	3	12	45
8	27	0	9	3	6	45
TOTAL	126	105	24	45	60	360

Source: Field Study, 2022

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Public trust did not affect acceptability of motor insurance policy in Lagos State.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): Public trust affected acceptability of motor insurance policy in Lagos State.

Using Level of Significance (α) at 5%

Using X² statistical tool to test the hypothesis,

$$X^2_{cal} = \sum (O-E)^2 / E$$

$$X^2_{tab} = X^2_{(\alpha, df)}$$

df means degree of freedom i.e. df = (r-1)(c-1)

r means row

c means column

O means observed frequency

E means Expected frequency

Expected frequency (E) is calculated by $E = R_T \times C_T / G_T$

R_T means Row total from the table

C_T means Column total from the table

G_T means Grand total from the table

Decision: if X^2 calculated is greater than X^2 table value, the H_0 (Null hypothesis) will be rejected, while H_1 (Alternative hypothesis) will be accepted, and if otherwise, vice-versa.

X^2 table value of 5% of Level of Significance.

$$df = (r-1)(c-1)$$

$$r = 8, c = 5$$

$$= (8-1)(5-1)$$

$$= 7 \times 4$$

$$df = 28$$

$X^2_{(0.05, 28)} = 16.9$ is the table value

From the analysis above x^2 (chi-square) calculated or computed value is 120.802.

X^2 table value at level of significance ' α ' 5% and degree of freedom (df) =28 gives 16.9.

Decision Rule says if x^2 table value is less than x^2 calculated value, we should reject Null Hypothesis i.e. H_0 and accept Alternative hypothesis or vice-versa.

From the above, it is obvious that the x^2 calculated is greater than x^2 table value i.e.

120.802 is greater than 16.9 ($120.802 > 16.9$)

This makes it imperative to reject the Null Hypothesis H_0 that says: Public trust did not affect the acceptability of motor insurance products in Lagos State. Therefore, we then accept the Alternative Hypotheses H_1 that says: Public trust affect the acceptability of motor insurance policies in Lagos State.

Ebitu et al (2012) attempted to investigate the factors that affect Insurance Consumption in Akwa-Ibom state, Nigeria, with focus on the insurance institutional framework. Thus, data were collected on: accessibility and prompt payment of claims, knowledge of the use and importance of insurance, professional activities of insurance agents, nature of insurance policy statement and the overall corporate image. Findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between effective institutional performance and insurance consumption, hence, the public's poor perception of the insurance institutional framework in terms of decayed indemnification of genuine claims, poor publicity and awareness campaign, unprofessional attitude of insurance marketers, and the incomprehensible nature of insurance policy statements are factors that hinder Insurance consumption.

Abass et al (2018) posit that the risk attitude of drivers constitutes a major factor in the purchase of auto insurance products. In their study, *Risk Attitude And Third Party Motor Liability: An Empirical Study Of Commercial Bus Drivers In Lagos State, Nigeria*, a cross sectional survey was carried out among 150 commercial drivers in order to investigate the relationship between the risk attitude of commercial drivers in Lagos State and the demand for third party liability insurance. The findings of the study showed that there is a significant relationship between commercial drivers' attitude in Lagos and purchase of third party liability insurance. The findings further revealed that although most commercial drivers in Lagos possess third party liability insurance through their unions or associations, none of them have any claims experience due to their low confidence in insurance claims management and low compliance by relevant agencies.

For Dansu et al (2018), pricing is the most significant factor influencing the choice of auto insurance products in Nigeria. The findings of their study which sought to identify the major factors that makes third party liability insurance the most preferred auto insurance product among academic staff in Nigeria revealed that the cheap premium of third party liability insurance makes it the most preferred choice, despite its limited coverage, when compared with the third party liability, fire & theft and comprehensive coverage.

Shrikant et al (2018) attempted to identify the key Service Quality factors that influence customer purchase intention of insurance products in the study, investigating the Empirical Relationship between Service Quality, Trust, Satisfaction, and Intention of Customers Purchasing Life Insurance Products. The findings reveal that the combination of customer satisfaction, consumers' trust with key factors such as the problem-solving skills, empathy and helpfulness of insurance agents leads to an increase in customers' intention to purchase life insurance products. The study further posits that the presence of these factors may lead to the recovery of customer service and possible retention.

Kassegne and Venkat (2013) however argue that trustworthiness of insurance companies is essential to the success of a service industry like the insurance sector that sells promises. The paper which sought to examine role of trust in building customer loyalty in insurance sector pointed out that customer trust is crucial as it has direct and positive relationships to customer loyalty in the insurance sector. Furthermore, the findings of the study reveal that Price, Customer Service and Convenience are essential factors that also determine the choices of insurance providers chosen by customers.

In the same vein, Aygei et al (2020) point out that there are different trust dimensions in the insurance business and sought to examine the influence of these trust dimensions on customer engagement, and consequently, the impact of customer engagement on customer loyalty in the context of life insurance. The study observed that trust in the insurer, trust in the regulator, economy-based trust, and information-based trust significantly influence customer engagement. The findings further revealed that trust in the insurance companies and trust in the regulator result to a higher level of customer engagement. Hence, this implies that customer trust is intrinsic to ensuring customer engagement and customer loyalty.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

According to Section 68 (1) of Nigeria Insurance Act 2003, Third party motor insurance policy is compulsory for every owner of vehicle in order to protect the interests of any other third party road users against the occurrence of certain contingencies caused by the policyholder. However, despite this statutory provision, the Third party motor insurance is often abused and misunderstood because, ninety percent of third party motor insurance certificates presented by motorists to the police at checkpoints were fake certificates (This Day, 2021).

Thus, this study seeks to analyze the effect of 'public trust' on the acceptability of third party motor insurance policy in Lagos state, Nigeria. The findings of the study reveal that public trust has significant direct effect on the acceptability of third party motor insurance policy in Nigeria or the purchase intention of customers. The study further observed that there are other key factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions and these include: Pricing, Professionalism of Insurers, Problem-solving skills and empathy of insurance agents, and the past experiences of consumers in regards to claims handling services.

However, Motor Third Party Insurance remains the most popular motor insurance policy in Nigeria, despite its limited coverage, even though the policyholders do not necessarily trust their insurers in terms of risk transfer, but because it is a legal requirement stipulated by the law on all vehicle owners.

Recommendations

- i. Rather than focusing solely on sales, insurers need to turn the customer relationship into one of protection and meeting needs, as integrity attracts trust. Hence, insurance companies need to be transparent by ensuring that the insurance products being offered are what the customers really want or need.
- ii. For real trust to exist the industry must strive to significantly reduce the number of claims and fines that continue to surface by enlightening consumers in order to solve their problems and ensuring an effective and efficient claims-handling service. This must be the focus of services provided rather than saddling customers with expensive complicated products.
- iii. Insurers need to improve on their problem-solving skills by creating a more strategic relationship with their clients that exceeds only risk transfer. Hence, adopting holistic approaches will enhance customers' trust and increase the acceptability of insurance products and services.
- iv. Insurers should carry out insurance education and publicity routinely through local media (and preferably in local languages), to enlighten and sensitize customers about the benefits of third party motor insurance, Also, insurance policy statements should be written in simple succinct terms to prevent misconceptions between policyholders and their insurers.
- v. The federal government, through the insurance regulatory body National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) should ensure an overhauling of the insurance sector by stamping out poor industry behaviors and continuously enhancing the regulatory and legal framework pertaining to insurance processes. This would address challenges in trust and confidence by the public in insurance as well as provide consumer protection, which in turns inspires consumers' trust in the insurers.

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ECOWAS and Regional Peacekeeping Integration: A Review of Challenges

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Abstract

The formation of ECOWAS was seen as the beginning of a new era in the history of economic cooperation in West Africa. Its overall aim was to promote cooperation and integration, with a view to establishing an economic and monetary union as a means of stimulating economic growth and development in West Africa. However, since the emergence of ECOWAS, the organization has been saddled with a lot of challenges and intra-regional crises without much economic integration being achieved. The paper seeks to examine why ECOWAS lags behind in its quest to integrating the economies of West African region. Basically, the study is primarily qualitative, utilizing mostly secondary source of data such as books, journals, newspaper articles and internet publications, among others; all considered relevant in understanding the issue of ECOWAS integration in West Africa. The findings reveal that ECOWAS needs serious reforms in order to maximally benefit from integration mechanisms the way other regions have done. The prospects are great, thus, the paper concludes by affirming that the current economic turmoil afflicting the region may be seen as a temporary setback, and that a new ECOWAS with a new set of leaders will emerge to realize the dreams of the founding fathers of one larger political and economic union. The study recommends among other things that governments of the region must demonstrate both the political will and willingness to implement ratified protocols, treaties and programmes. They must take necessary remedial steps towards fiscal restraint, currency flexibility and introduction of supervisory mechanisms to keep pace with financial liberalization. ECOWAS must also tackle the issue of corruption which limits good governance and provision of social amenities.

Keywords: ECOWAS, Regional Integration, Prospects, Challenges, Globalization

INTRODUCTION

Many countries in West Africa were involved in civil wars and ethnic conflicts, the effects of which are wreaking havoc on their citizens. In the 1990s, West Africa was becoming not only the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real “strategic” danger, but also a region where scarcity of resources, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private military and security

companies and international drug cartels are the most telling characteristics (Kaplan 1994:46). It was to address these crises that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) created the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to help restore peace and security to these countries.

The focus of this paper is therefore a discussion of the challenges and lessons learned from ECOMOG's intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This discussion has become necessary because the issue of peacekeeping intervention in the sub-region, while not being neglected, has in recent times been relegated to the background. Despite how events and developments in Liberia and Sierra Leone subsequently shaped ECOWAS's military and political agenda, little seems to have been discussed on the lessons of ECOMOG's intervention in other peace building activities in the ECOWAS sub-region.

This paper therefore contributes to the peace building and peacekeeping literature by showing how neutrality during interventions, and leaders' political will to support interventions with the necessary financial and logistical support, will play important roles in promoting peace and security in the ECOWAS sub-region. The paper argues that while ECOMOG faced daunting challenges—disagreements among ECOWAS member states, financial constraints, equipment and logistical problems—key lessons were learned that subsequently shaped the military and diplomatic intervention missions by ECOWAS in Côte d'Ivoire in 2003 and Togo in 2005, respectively.

In making the argument, the paper will first examine the conflicting theories of sovereignty, humanitarian intervention, and the responsibility to protect (R2P), as well as post-Westphalian peacekeeping principles that are in contemporary times at the heart of relations among states in the international community.

It then delves into the root causes of the conflicts in the two West African countries, the efforts by ECOMOG to deal with the problems, the challenges that confronted the missions, and finally the lessons learned, especially with regard to ECOWAS's future peacekeeping initiatives in the sub-region.

CONCEPTUALIZATION REVIEW

CONFLICT IN LIBERIA AND SIERRA LEONE: THE ROOT CAUSES

It is important to state that the roots of the conflicts were varied. Having brought together and examined some of the theoretical issues regarding sovereignty and humanitarian intervention, as well as the Westphalian and post-Westphalian perspectives on peacekeeping, this paper will move on to discuss its place and relevance to the conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative methodology gathering data from various secondary sources such as journals, official websites, literary works, documentaries, and newspapers. All the information collected for this study is directly relevant its purpose. The analysis of content and utilization of a thematic approach played a significant role in examining the data.

CONDITIONS IN LIBERIA

Liberia was founded and declared as a state and a republic in 1847 by freed black American slaves, commonly referred to as Americo-Liberians. The Americo-Liberians, constituting less than five percent of the total population, excluded the indigenous people from the government of Liberia by monopolizing all political, economic, and social positions of eminence (Mgbeoji 2003:7). Politics in Liberia centered on the True Whig Party (TWP), founded by the Americo-Liberians in 1869 (Ellis 1999:45). The TWP became the means by which not only political success was realized, but also, together with the Americo-Liberians' cultural and religious institutions, as well as the Christian churches, became the avenue for social advancement and mobility. Thus, the marginalization of the indigenous population by the Americo-Liberians and their second-class status bred resentment, which subsequently led to the violent military coup led by Samuel Doe in 1980. The advent of Doe's military government marked a turning point in Liberia's political development, since it set the stage for tyrannical rule and state failure (Mgbeoji 2003:6–7). Most Liberians, especially the indigenous people, initially greeted Doe's coup with euphoria and enthusiasm, but he basically practiced his predecessors' ethnic and class politics. He established a power base founded on ethnic solidarity between himself and his own ethnic group (Krahn), which constituted 5 percent of the population, but controlled all the toplevel positions in government and bureaucracy (Outram 1999:163–174).

In the process, other ethnic groups were targets of suppression, marginalization, and brutality, especially the civilian population of Nimba County, which is generally populated by the Gio and Mano ethnic groups (Outram 1999:163–174). In fact, Doe's rule was characterized by sustained levels of brutality, dramatic economic decline, and purges of real or imagined enemies (Sesay 1996:36). It is as a result of these factors that Charles Taylor, an Americo-Liberian, at the head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and with the support of individuals from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, invaded Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire on 24 December 1989, aiming to overthrow the Doe regime and regain power for Americo-Liberians, as well as undertaking a vendetta against Doe on the part of Libya's Muammar Gaddafi. The invasion quickly developed into a full-fledged war, which lasted more than a decade and devastated the country's infrastructure. The crisis in Liberia largely reflected the internal factors outlined above, but one should not ignore the role of West African states in encouraging and fueling the conflict. As a result of political, economic, military, ethnic, and personal motives and reasons, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, for example, provided financial and military assistance to Taylor's NPFL (Mgbeoji 2003:48–49).

CONDITIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

Sierra Leone attained independence from the British in 1961, it was ruled by the Margai brothers, Sir Milton Margai and Sir Albert Margai, under the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). Democratic elections in 1967 saw the All Peoples Congress (APC) winning; a coup immediately thereafter delayed the APC's coming to power. Ultimately, in 1968, the military leaders handed over power to Siaka Stevens, leader of the APC. Over time, political power became centralized under Stevens, culminating in the establishment of a one-party system in 1978 (Zack-Williams 1999:143–162). In addition to the centralization of power, economic mismanagement and corruption characterized Stevens's reign. By 1980, government expenditure in Sierra Leone was

outstripping revenues, reducing the Stevens's government's ability to maintain the state. It is under these circumstances that Stevens turned to international financial institutions (IFIs), such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), for financial support; however, the usual loan conditionalities of the IFIs worsened economic and political conditions in the country.

Sierra Leone had a high incidence of corruption, which enabled political leaders, the governing class, and top-level bureaucrats to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest of society (Reno 1995). Such political repression and leadership corruption alienated popular sectors of the society and sowed the seeds of discontent (Kandeh 2003). As a result of a precipitous decline in the Sierra Leone economy, Stevens decided to hand over power to General Joseph Momoh, his army commander. Momoh sought to overcome the dismal economic circumstances of the country by embarking on economic reforms and continuing his predecessor's adjustment-and-stabilization program, which failed to yield the desired results, especially in dealing with corruption in the public sector (Adebayo 2002).

Ultimately, the patrimonial system of wealth distribution, lack of political accountability, and inequitable exploitation of the country's resources set the tone for a rebellion by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by Foday Sankoh and composed mainly of disaffected and unemployed youths and children (McGregor 1999).

ECOWAS, ECOMOG, AND MILITARY INTERVENTION

The conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone represented a serious challenge to ECOWAS and the ECOWAS Charter (1975) because they raised the issue of reconciling the principles of sovereignty with the idea of intervening on humanitarian grounds, or on what Bellamy, Williams, and Griffin (2010). There was the problem of which principle should take precedent over the other, since they both seem to be part of the protocol and charter of regional bodies like ECOWAS and the then Organisation of African Union (OAU), which had been established in 1963. For example, according to Article III of the OAU Charter, member states shall not only respect the sovereignty of all member states, but also shall afford each state its inalienable right to independent existence and resolve to peaceful settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, or arbitration. Also, the ECOWAS Protocol on Non-Aggression (1978) states that the community "cannot attain its objectives save in an atmosphere of peace and harmonious understanding among Member States." As a result of these provisions and the ECOWAS Protocol, ECOWAS faced legal problems and challenges justifying its interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone. ECOWAS initially justified the need to intervene on the basis of the Mutual Assistance on Defence Matters (PMAD) (1981), which includes the provision for Allied Armed Forces of the Community (AAFC) (Tuck 2000).

According to Article 16, the head of state of the member under attack may request action or assistance from the community. Article 4 of the protocol empowers ECOWAS to initiate collective intervention in any internal armed conflict, within any state, engineered and supported actively from outside likely to endanger the security and peace of the entire community. Article 6 (3) and article 17 empower the authority to decide on the expediency of military action, to impose a peacekeeping force between the warring factions, or to engage in political mediation. Article 13

(1, 2) provides for creation of the AAFC from earmarked units. The problem was that while Samuel Doe did request aid, it was from Nigeria, not ECOWAS; it was Nigeria that then took the issue to ECOWAS for consideration. Similarly, not only did humanitarian considerations not have legal basis for intervention, but also ECOWAS could not draw on international legitimacy, since the UN did not authorize ECOMOG until October 1992, when it retrospectively approved ECOMOG's actions under chapter VIII of the UN Charter. Compounding the problem was the fact that just like Charles Taylor, whom ECOMOG wanted to replace, few of the governments that were contributing troops to ECOMOG had been elected through democratic means.

Despite the aversion of political leaders to interventions in the domestic affairs of member states, as well as the fact that the existence of the relevant principles in the ECOWAS protocol and OAU Charter created considerable legal challenges, ECOWAS made the unprecedented decision to intervene, first in Liberia and later Sierra Leone, to restore peace and security. Intervention in the affairs of another member state calls for the walking of a fine line between adhering to its stated principles while ensuring the continued support of its members (Bah 2009, 2010).

Moreover, the crises in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as in the ongoing Darfur crisis, exposed the political and operational challenges of implementing such an intrusive agenda. After meetings and peace negotiations that took place in Geneva at the behest of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia's warring factions, ECOWAS, the OAU, and the UN agreed to a new peace plan, which was signed in Cotonou, Benin, in July 1993. The importance of the Cotonou Agreement lay in the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL), and the undertaking of a peacekeeping operation between United Nations and ECOMOG (Adebayo 2002:56). Finally, in 2005, elections were held and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf won the presidency. Since then, Liberia has experienced marked achievements since the end of the civil war: not only has the fighting come to an end and the country currently become governed by Africa's first democratically elected female president, but also she enjoys broad support from the international community (Reisenger 2009:493).

ECOMOG'S POLITICAL AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

The state's inability to provide security to citizens in certain African countries had a devastating impact on political developments in those countries. Ineffective economic policies and the collapse of the nation-state combined to exacerbate the economic and political conditions in which Liberia and Sierra Leone found themselves. Given such a state of affairs and the negative ramifications/security threat, internally displaced persons, and refugee movement—in the two countries, as well as on those in the whole of the West Africa sub-region—it is not surprising that ECOWAS, through ECOMOG, adopted a policy of intervention to rescue an already bad situation. Despite the existence of the ECOWAS Non-Aggression Pact (1978), which obliges ECOWAS member states to uphold international norms forbidding the resort to military settlement of disputes, the Non-Aggression Pact (1978) was supplemented with PMAD (1981).

Other problems and challenges that bedeviled ECOMOG's mission in Sierra Leone and Liberia included the fact that there were intense disagreements among ECOWAS member states on how to deal with the civil war, especially in the case of Liberia. Various countries in the sub-region had their own political, economic, social, and in some cases personal motives for supporting or

opposing the ECOWAS military intervention. In this regard, there was a lack of consensus on the way forward in the crises in Liberia and to a lesser extent Sierra Leone.

In addition to differences between ECOWAS member states, the involvement of some external actors and the support they provided to belligerent parties further complicated the ECOWAS intervention. Besides the dissent within ECOWAS ranks, in Liberia for instance, the NPFL's refusal to recognize the peacekeepers' intervention made the mission much more difficult. It is therefore unsurprising that the NPFL not only attacked ECOMOG forces, but was also initially noncompliant of cease-fire agreements that they had signed (Adebayo 2002:50). Not only were ECOMOG soldiers ill-equipped relative to the warring factions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, but also the soldiers seemed ill-prepared for the guerrillalike onslaught being waged in both countries. This was compounded by the lack of logistical and operational support in the form of military and communication equipment, vehicles, medical suppliers, translators (Adebayo 2002:90–91), inadequate maintenance of equipment, and problems relating to accommodation and cooking arrangements (Aboagye 1999:161–164). The lack of logistics and capabilities was worsened by the poor quality and patchy nature of ECOMOG's joint multinational military leadership. The problem of poor military leadership was evidenced in the capture and execution of President Samuel Doe on 9 September 1990 by one of the faction leaders, Prince Yormie Johnson (Gberie 2005:57). The killing of President Doe after he had been captured at ECOMOG's headquarters in Monrovia's Freeport, severely undermined the credibility of ECOMOG, because serious questions were asked as to why the peacekeepers did not act to save Doe (Gberie 2005:58).

Added to these, the enforcement action and intervention action undertaken by ECOMOG before authorization by the Security Council set a dangerous and disturbing precedent for international law, since powerful states can engage in illicit enforcement action and still have the Security Council ratify their actions on the basis of collective self-defense. Another perennial problem that ECOMOG contended with had to do with the financial costs involved, the burden it placed on participating countries, and the inadequate funds available for their mission. The financial costs for maintaining individual country contingents were borne by the respective countries (Sesay 1996:47); hence, some of the world's poorest countries had to divert resources from the myriad of domestic and developmental problems at home to support the multinational coalition, though it was not always the case that they could provide the necessary financial support to their troops. In the absence of funds, it became difficult for military personnel to carry out their responsibilities effectively, especially to pay the salaries of soldiers. The nonpayment of soldiers' salaries not only dampened the morale of the troops, but led peacekeepers to engage in activities incongruent with their status and role. There were numerous reports that ECOMOG peacekeepers engaged in looting, expropriation, and theft of Liberian assets (Mgbeoji 2003:140).

In addition, ECOMOG soldiers were accused of human-rights abuses, and sexual exploitation of women and children. These developments bespoke of the lack of discipline and accountability of the armed forces of the countries involved, especially Nigeria. The civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone exposed the extent of disunity among the ECOWAS leaders. ECOWAS itself was divided into two rival camps: Anglophone and Francophone. Some Francophone states, like Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso, consistently refused to contribute troops to ECOMOG and supplied the NPFL with military, material, and financial support in their confrontation with ECOMOG.

CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN WEST AFRICA

ECOWAS has not been able to record any appreciable impact on the international arena because the member states' economies are still too weak within the existing trade arrangements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to exert meaningful pressure to their benefits. Essien (2006) cries out that ECOWAS remains of marginal interest to the Western countries. Apart from Nigeria's oil export to the USA and Niger's uranium to France and possibly France's continuous alliance with its former colonies, ECOWAS is only a source of strife and of economic, demographic and environmental crises. Its relevance to the West may be in the form of its ECOMOG forces in the security issues in the region and saving the western nations from direct involvements in foreign conflicts. Thus, Chambas (2007) identified the following as some of the major challenges of ECOWAS:

- i. Wide proliferation of small arm and light weapons. It is estimated that about 10 million arms are easily and currently available throughout the community which constitutes one of the causes of extended conflicts in the region.
- ii. Respect for Human Rights and Civil Liberties. Human rights and civil liberties abuses are a big challenge which stem from bad governments. Chambas affirms that ECOWAS is building a network of National Human Rights Committees with international partners to address respect for human rights challenge.
- iii. Ensuring credible, transparent, free and fair elections. This is difficult because there are many crises in this area. Although there are positive examples from many countries in the region such as Ghana, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin etc where opposition parties had won elections.
- iv. Migration. Migration is a very important challenge in West Africa because the youth do not see any future within the region and therefore are risking their lives to reach Europe or America. Economic opportunities must be created for the youth to stay and help develop the region.
- v. Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering. West Africa is a soft spot for drug trafficking and money laundering where organized groups use the region as a transport point because of weak and control of the community borders. ECOWAS is working with the UN Drug Control regional office in Dakar to address the issue.
- vi. Global Warming. Global warming presents yet another challenge to the region which was exemplified by this year's severe flooding across West Africa. Chambas advises the ECOWAS leaders to focus on the management of common resources such as river basins, lagoons and other fragile ecosystem.

OTHER CHALLENGES AFFECTING WEST AFRICAN INTEGRATION INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- a) The absence of a development and integration culture which had been pointed out by scholars as one of the factors affecting integration in West Africa. One of such scholars is Abass Bundu. Bundu (1993) posed these questions to ECOWAS leaders: how many member states have drawn up national development plans or programmes with regional considerations or the regional market as their point of reference? What measures have been introduced by

governments as incentives for their business communities to venture into cross-border investments and transactions, and what encouragement are ordinary people offered to think in West African terms? An integration culture is not yet fully developed in West Africa.

- b) The differences in political ideology to some extent have influenced attitudes and approaches to regional integration in West Africa. Despite the linguistic, legal and administrative barriers inherited from colonial era, the status of Nigeria as a sub-regional power with over 65 percent of the population and trade throws up several issues. The most important of these suspicions of Nigeria in Francophone West Africa and a lingering fear that it might dominate them. Bundu (1993) observes that Nigeria overshadows every other country in the region several times over in terms of population, gross domestic product, and natural resource endowment. The French tend to provoke and sustain this fear of domination, as they strive to maintain their sphere of influence in the region. It is this intervention of the French and its quest to maintain a sphere of influence in the West African region against the peoples' wish for integrated and economically viable West Africa that made Obiozor (1993) to declare:

There are certainly some countries, some leaders and some powerful people world-wide who it is in their interest to see Africa and Africans as non-actors or passive observers, chronic recipients of international generosity, marginalized and irrelevant, now and throughout the 21st century. It is our duty, indeed our obligation to prove the peoples and countries wrong by doing our best in whatever capacity we find ourselves to improve the African condition in a trinity of ways – political, economic and military/strategic.

- c) Monetary and Exchange Rate Problems: The existing differences in the monetary and exchange rate policies of the countries of West Africa both before and especially after the adoption of structural adjustment programmes by ECOWAS members have adversely affected cross border trade. Obiozor, Olukoshi and Obi (1993) lament that the difference in monetary policies between the sterling areas and the franc zone has remained the main cause of the distortion in economic relationships in West Africa. They used Nigeria as a case study to explain how differences in monetary and exchange rate problems affect integration in West Africa. According to them:

The devaluation of the naira by some 1,000 percent within six years has made products from Nigeria (both those produced locally and those imported) cheaper and more attractive to its franc zone neighbours. The result has been an apparently favourable balance of trade for Nigeria and the decline of the industries of neighbouring countries whose goods are no longer competitive in the Nigerian market and in the face of Nigerian imports into their home markets.

Obiozor, Olukoshi and Obi (1993) argued that it may appear on the face of things that Nigeria is gaining from the increased exports of its products and cash crops, while the industries of neighbouring countries go to ruin, it must be pointed out that in reality, very little is gained in terms of returns to Nigeria because of the convertibility of the CFA (French: Communauté Financière d'Afrique, English: Financial Community of Africa) which is very attractive to cross border money launderers, speculators, traders and others seeking to transfer millions of naira from Nigeria to

European banks. Obiozor, Olukoshi and Obi advised by suggesting that if any reasonable progress must be recorded in the economic integration of West Africa, there should be a dialogue aimed at the harmonization of the monetary policies.

- d) Lack of commitment among the ECOWAS Leaders. It has been observed by scholars and commentators of African politics that Africa's current economic decline and social discontent reflect a leadership crisis on the continent. If this is true of individual countries, it is equally valid for the regional integration process. It is a well-documented feat in history that early industrialized nations as well as the Southeast Asian Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) benefited from the technology or industrial innovations of other nations because of the kind of quality leaders they had. The US and Germany according to Owugah (2003) industrialized to a large extent by using British manufacturing innovations, Japan followed a similar pattern by copying US technological innovations, while Korea and other Asian tigers similarly achieved their technological development by copying from the US and Japanese products and process technology but Africa or West Africa are yet to achieve technological breakthrough. If African leaders can come up with a clear and well-articulated policy on technological development, sound macroeconomic policies, then regional integration will no longer be for the developed regions alone.

THE PROSPECTS OF ECOWAS

ECOWAS no doubt has strong and brighter prospects of becoming the ASEAN of Africa. The documents of the Executive Secretariat of ECOWAS (2009) in its analysis of the performance of ECOWAS stated that though the results of the integrational efforts might have been clearly below expectations, there are, however, promising signs which indicate better prospects for the future. The document observed that recent events in the political and economic scenery of West Africa have gradually helped to remove the principal obstacles to integration. Among these are:

The advent of democracy in most ECOWAS countries, particularly, in Nigeria which is the dominant economy in West Africa;

The gradual withdrawal of the state from the sectors of productive activity, and the realization that private sector must be the mainspring of growth and economic integration;

The adoption of strategy for accelerating the ECOWAS process of integration in order to create a single regional market based on trade liberalization, to establish a common external tariff and harmonize economic and financial policies;

The harmonization of the programmes of ECOWAS and UEMOA in connection with the acceleration of the process of integration in West Africa;

The liberalization of national markets and external trade that resulted from adjustment and reform programmes that led to some amount of convergence in macroeconomic policies;

The common challenge that is thrown by the creation of trade blocs in other regions of the world and globalization which risks marginalizing Africa, this makes it necessary to accelerate the transition towards an autonomous and self-financed development within the framework of African integration;

The restructuring of the Executive Secretariat and ECOWAS Fund within the framework of the improvement of their operational procedures.

The document concludes by pleading with the ECOWAS member states to lean on these prospects for enhancing the process of regional integration and accept the development challenge of the 21st century. To be sure, one can argue with conviction that the prospects for closer cooperation and integration among countries of West Africa are bright. Recent trends and developments show many of the countries to be on the side of increased commitment to the sub-regional cooperation and integration. Adetula (2004) observes that this resurgence of interest in closer cooperation and integration among West African States was largely influenced by developments at the national, regional and global levels. Adetula argues that:

At the global level, the external environment has become less friendly to African economies. International economic environment has been increasingly characterized by depressed world commodity market, discriminatory protection, debt crises, and the continuing distortions by TNCs. On the positive side, there is new global consensus on the validity of the basic principles of regionalism. The dominant idea, which is rooted in contemporary political thoughts, is that regional cooperation is still a very effective means of promoting the goals of self-reliance and economic development. This arguably is underscored by the fact that the most powerful and wealthiest countries in the world-in Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia – now pursue prosperity through regional economic cooperation. As expected, many African countries are already responding to the global realities that have made regional cooperation very imperative.

At the level of national politics, Adetula argues that some progress has been recorded with respect to political reforms in many African countries. This in turn is enhancing the capacity of West African countries for regional integration in Africa.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we have been able to review and discuss the reasons for the formation of ECOWAS, analyzed the different perspectives associated with integration as a concept for easy and proper understanding of the concept, the challenges and prospects of ECOWAS were also investigated. We can authoritatively assert that it is clear that the state of affairs of West African sub-region is far from being satisfactory given the precarious environment facing ECOWAS particularly under the trend of globalization. ECOWAS as the only West African all-encompassing organization cannot afford to lag behind in its development. Thus the study recommends that: ECOWAS States maintain high and sustainable rate of economic growth and of exports.

This requires them to sustain their economic reforms, ECOWAS members need to offer attractive investment opportunities for foreign companies. They should also encourage private sector participation in many infrastructure projects; the governments of the region must demonstrate both the political will and willingness to implement ratified protocols, treaties and programmes; they must take necessary remedial steps towards fiscal restraint, currency flexibility and introduction of supervisory mechanisms to keep pace with financial liberalization. Due diligence must be accorded to: development of physical and institutional infrastructure, peace and security, prudent economic

and financial reforms to improve the business environment and improve the competitiveness of the region, and deepening of intra-African trade (Mkwezalamba, 2011).

Other areas ECOWAS must tackle to be relevant in the global system include the following: corruption which limits good governance and provision of social amenities; effective border patrol which will limit the high rate of arms trafficking and violent crime; ECOWAS governments should increase their investment in agriculture and establish clear timetables for achieving the 10% ECOWAS Regional Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP) in order to guarantee food security in the region.

In conclusion, regional integration can be seen as the modality that West Africa has to refine to meet the challenges of the inevitable onslaught of globalization. The current economic turmoil affecting West Africa represents only a temporary though painful setback to the onward march of West African economies. Hopefully, the bad leadership in West Africa will give way to excellent leadership as was envisaged by the ECOWAS founding fathers.

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Étude psychanalytique : La séparation dans la Peste d'Albert Camus

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Résumé

*La critique littéraire est un acte qui ne va pas disparaître assez tôt, car tant que les écrivains écrivent, il y aura toujours ceux qui vont chercher à critiquer de même que ceux qui vont lire juste pour se distraire. Depuis sa découverte, l'étude psychanalytique fonde ses bases sur la littérature. Bergez, lui, peint l'image de l'écrivain, tout comme l'artisan, qui fabrique visiblement ses mots, mais la trame dessine également une image in observable et instinctive, une image camouflée dans le croisement des fils, ce qui est le secret de l'œuvre (pour son auteur et ses lecteurs. Tous nos actes conscients sont issus de l'inconscient, selon Sigmund Freud dans sa théorie psychanalytique. On arrive plus à ignorer l'aspect de l'inconscient en lisant une œuvre, car lire est également un acte, où l'inconscient joue son rôle d'interférence. Le lecteur partage l'espace psychique avec l'écrivain à travers les mots de ce dernier. Albert Camus est un de ces écrivains qui n'arrêtent pas d'afficher leurs originalité dans leurs œuvres et la lecture de ces œuvres à chaque moment provoque un désir différent. En lisant *La Peste*, le lecteur a l'impression d'entendre sa voix interne, une situation rendue possible à travers le thème de la 'séparation', thème central évoqué dans le roman. Avec ce thème, on se rend compte de la domination de la dimension psychique, d'où le désir de mener une étude psychanalytique de l'œuvre.*

Mots clés: psychanalytique, littérature, conscient, inconscient, psychique

1.1 Introduction

Il est à bien noter que la critique littéraire devient de plus en plus trop sophistiquée jour au jour, dans la mesure où de nouveaux champs d'analyse sont découverts. L'analyse psychanalytique, par exemple, s'affiche bien dans ces nouveaux champs, avec les publications de Sigmund Freud depuis les années 90.

La psychanalyse prônée par Sigmund Freud, dont font objets l'inconscient et l'appareil psychique et menée à travers un nombre important de concepts, issus du promoteur principal, dépeint les processus et la nature des mécanismes gouvernant le psychique humain. Les œuvres littéraires ont, dès le départ, fait objets de plusieurs cas analysés par Sigmund et ses fidèles tout au long de l'histoire de la psychanalyse. Depuis Sigmund, nous voilà parcourir l'œuvre littéraire d'une manière tout-à-fait différente. De nos jours, le mystère, l'ambiguïté et le don ne sont plus des caractères attribués exclusivement aux écrivains. Les œuvres de ces écrivains, selon la théorie psychanalytique, peuvent être interprétées et exprimées. Peu importe la façon dont la théorie psychanalytique est appliquée, ce qui est important, d'après Sigmund, est que l'inconscient dirige tous les actes conscients, y compris l'artistique. Au fait, parcourir une œuvre littéraire sans tenir

compte du rôle que joue l'inconscient est non pratique, car lire, en lui-même, est un acte où s'affiche constamment l'inconscient. En explorant une œuvre littéraire, on se retrouve dans la même espace psychique que l'écrivain à travers les mots des textes.

L'étude est répartie en quatre grandes parties. Dans la première partie, nous débutons sur l'introduction de l'étude, avant de nous amener sur le contexte de l'étude, la problématique de l'étude et le cadre théorique. La deuxième partie, dont font objets l'engagement de l'écrivain et le résumé du récit, nous entraîne dans les études antérieures. La troisième partie s'ouvre sur des analyses de quelques-uns des thèmes évoqués tout au long du récit dans la troisième partie de cette étude, alors que la conclusion vient clôturer l'étude dans la quatrième partie.

1.2 Le contexte de l'étude

En raison de curiosité pour chercher à établir jusqu'à quel point l'inconscient dirige le conscient; jusqu'à quel point l'inconscient est derrière tous nos actes; jusqu'à quel point l'inconscient porte de l'influence dans une œuvre littéraire ou dans une créativité artistique, nous nous sommes amené à faire travailler le cerveau à l'égard de cette étude psychanalytique de *La Peste*, un travail qui nous semble être pertinent. À cette fin, nous avons donc choisi d'étudier le thème de la 'séparation' dans *La Peste*. Nous trouvons le choix de ce thème très approprié, dans le cadre où il s'inscrit bien aux caractères de la théorie psychanalytique, dont fait l'objet de notre étude de *La Peste*. Le thème de la 'séparation', comme nous l'avons déjà remarqué, domine dans l'œuvre, ce qui explique le choix de ce thème, qui fait révéler l'absence incontestable des personnages féminins, qui ne sont que peindre dans l'œuvre et qui cèdent la place à la société, dominée par les hommes.

1.3 La problématique

L'œuvre de Camus est symbolisée par '*le drame de la séparation*', qui entraîne la 'séparation' des êtres. L'absence, l'effacement et le silence des figures féminines, symbolisent-ils cette séparation. Y a-t-il des signes d'impression et des souvenirs personnels dans *La Peste* qui pouvant être source de ce phénomène? Pouvant lire *La Peste* comme une allégorie ou comme un Mythe ? Ainsi demeure la raison de cette analyse.

1.4 Le cadre théorique

Nous menons cette étude à travers deux approches, l'approche sociocritique et l'approche psychocritique. Au niveau de l'approche sociocritique, nous adoptons l'approche sociocritique de Claude Duchet pour analyser les conditions sociales émergeant au moment de la rédaction du roman. Pour la bonne compréhension du concept de la sociocritique, nous referons à cette définition de Duchet (1973:450):

La sociocritique est une approche du texte littéraire et à ce titre, elle fait de la socialité des textes son centre d'intérêt. Par socialité, il faut entendre tout ce qui manifeste la présence, hors du roman, d'une pratique sociale, ce par quoi, le roman s'affirme, dépend d'une réalité sociohistorique antérieure ou extérieure à lui.

L'approche sociocritique met en lumière ce thème de la 'séparation', car au niveau du contexte social, cette séparation est marquée par l'évocation lamentable des femmes. Des figures féminines qui cherchent à s'émanciper.

Au niveau de l'approche psychocritique, nous adoptons l'approche psychocritique de Charles Mauron, ses travaux sur l'inconscient en les juxtaposant avec la vie inconsciente de l'écrivain et ses inspirations, afin de les rapprocher au concept du mythe. (Gengenbre, 1996 :11) décrit la psychocritique ainsi:

La psychocritique est les métaphores obsédantes particularités d'écriture, lacune, répétitions ou expression insolites au-delà des structures dramatiques (Racine, Molière Ou poétiques Mallarmé, Baudelaire, Valéry...) se dessine une structure signifiante fondamentale qui décrit un des destins possible de l'auteur. Ce destin mythique, mais personnel est comparable au sens latent du rêve. Il compose un système symbolique qui n'est pas arbitraire.

À travers l'approche psychocritique, on cherche à établir que l'œuvre de Camus est symbolique et mythique. Nous appuyons sur cette approche scientifique, car elle nous permet de mieux comprendre les personnages et les figures féminines, afin de découvrir leurs oublis, leurs actes manqués, leur caractère, leurs paroles et d'autres caractéristiques.

2.1 L'engagement de Camus

Les existentialistes, dont Camus en est un, placent l'existence au cœur de leurs réflexions. *Le Petit Larousse*, (1996:418) définit ainsi l'existentialisme:

Mouvement philosophique qui s'interroge sur l'Être en général à partir de l'existence vécue par l'homme

L'engagement de l'homme est totalement libre, de sorte qu'il ne peut recourir ni à rien, ni à personne. La liberté, que détient l'homme dans son engagement, est tout-à-fait une charge, dont il doit choisir tout seul sa conduite, sans demander l'avis de qui que ce soit. Pour Camus, le monde est absurde. Il le déclare autant lorsqu'il répète sans arrêt que « ce monde absurde n'est qu'un monde où on ne trouve jamais de réponse. » (Albères, 1964 :8). Camus (1993:20) élabore ce terme dans son œuvre le *Mythe de Sisyphe* et il décrit Sisyphe ainsi:

« Sisyphe a été condamné par les Dieux à rouler éternellement une pierre. Dès qu'il atteint le sommet de la montagne, la pierre dégringole et, il doit recommencer son travail absurde. »

Sisyphe représente l'image de l'existence aux yeux de Camus, car l'on suppose que Sisyphe est heureux, ayant compris et accepté l'absurde de sa condition. Face à cette absurdité, l'homme ne doit pas se plaindre de sa condition. L'homme ne doit pas se lamenter sur l'absurde et sur la création mal effectuée. L'homme doit donc accepter le monde tel qu'il est et affronter l'injustice et le malheur. Dans *La Peste*, Camus fait dévoiler sa révolte contre un monde absurde qui, par exemple, impose la souffrance et la mort à des enfants. Camus décrit la création ainsi :

Une telle création est un scandale et il vaut mieux pour dieux qu'il n'existe pas. (Corbic, 2003:19).

Il ira plus loin pour ajouter que:

En fait, ce n'est pas le monde qui est absurde, c'est la confrontation de son caractère irrationnel et de ce désir éperdu de clarté dont l'appel résonne au plus profond de l'homme. (Corbic, 2003:19).

Par conséquent, l'absurde ne réside pas dans l'homme, ni dans le monde, mais dans leur compagnie collective. Camus récapitule ses dits de manière suivante:

Je tire de l'absurde, trois conséquences, qui sont ma révolte, ma liberté, ma passion. Par le seul jeu de ma conscience, je transforme en règle de vie ce qui était invitation à la mort, et je refuse le suicide. (Corbic, 2003:20)

Pour Camus, c'est bien cela la définition de l'attitude de l'homme absurde. Subir une expérience, un destin, c'est l'admettre totalement dans cette conscience et dans cette révolte à tout moment.

La peste continue à faire son malheur. Le docteur Rieux et de nombreuses personnes du corps médical, y compris les volontaires, vont-ils pouvoir lutter de toutes leurs forces pour faire disparaître la maladie dénommée Peste? Des mesures ont été prises, comme fermer les portes de la ville, l'empêchement de tout envoi de courrier, réduction au strict minimum l'emploi des moyens de transport et l'utilisation de l'électricité. Les habitants d'Oran doivent apprendre à vivre en autonomie ou autarcie, détachés du monde. Aussi, malgré des séparations douloureuses qui eurent lieu dans certaines familles et entre des amants, les habitants d'Oran vont éprouver un nouveau sentiment, celui de la solidarité ou de l'entraide. C'est dans des situations pareilles que l'on se rend compte que tous les hommes sont égaux. Effectivement égaux devant la mort et ils doivent donc s'allier ou se léguer contre l'injustice lorsque celui-ci vient tomber sur les très jeunes et les faibles. Le roman est plein d'humanisme et des scènes très émouvantes.

2.2 Résumé du récit

Dans les années quarante, des rats, porteurs de peste, ont été découverts à Oran et dès la mort des premières victimes, les habitants mis en quarantaine, obligés à faire face à leur destin, font manifester différentes formes de réactions, la panique, l'indifférence et la résignation. La peste semble alors à ne pas prendre fin et les habitants se soumettent à ne plus revoir ceux dont ils sont forcés de couper les liens. Pourtant, la peste continue à faire ses ravages, avec l'identité de ses futures victimes demeurant inconnue. Les hommes de bonne volonté, s'organisent pour lutter contre le fléau. Le docteur Rieux, personnage principal et narrateur du récit, en compagnie d'autres volontaires s'organisent de leur côté pour mener la lutte contre le fléau et soulager la souffrance des habitants d'Oran. La présence de femmes demeure essentiellement discrète et absente. La seule présence de femme à noter est celle de la mère de Rieux, mais qui ne parle pas. À l'égard de la mère de Rieux, on remarque que malgré sa présence, il y a tout de même un effacement caractérisé par son silence. Le récit tourne autour du personnage du docteur Rieux, personnage ne laissant jamais faire apparaître ses émotions, cherchant toujours à faire disparaître son individualité devant des vagues que suscite l'ensemble de ses congénères. Ce personnage est beaucoup plus crédible que Camus semble s'être inspiré de sa propre personnalité avant de l'intégrer à son récit. Si les habitants d'Oran se doutent les uns des autres et doivent être mis en quarantaine chez eux même à tout moment qu'un intime se trouve être atteint de la maladie, la prudence manque chez le docteur Rieux. Sa profession lui aura permis de mieux connaître les malades en général. Mais le docteur ne se laisse jamais abuser par les états d'âme de ces malades. Plus en plus de personnes meurent jour au jour.

Plusieurs thèmes sont souvent évoqués dans des œuvres et les œuvres d'Albert Camus n'en font pas d'exception. On se rend compte de ceci dans *la Peste* à travers lequel l'écrivain met en cause plusieurs situations sociologiques douloureuses qui font face aux êtres.

3.1 Le thème de la ‘séparation’

Le thème de la maladie, qui apparaît brutalement et se répand rapidement est décrite avec une précision toute médicale, détaillant sa transmission par les rats, les symptômes de fièvre et des abcès, des difficultés respiratoires. La situation dégénère, des dispositions légales sont prises Mais, c’est le thème de la ‘séparation’ qui prédomine l’œuvre. La ville pestiférée est coupée du monde. Nul ne peut y entrer, nul ne peut en sortir. Les courriers ne sont plus acheminés, sauf les télégrammes qui permettent d’avoir de loin en loin des nouvelles des absents. Chacun est donc comme exilé de sa famille ou de ses proches, marquant d’une façon ou d’une autre, l’expérience d’une ‘séparation’. La menace quotidienne de la mort et l’enfermement modifient les comportements. Ils provoquent un esprit de révolte et aussi des actions de dévouement et de solidarité.

Il est à noter que l’élaboration de ce thème de la « séparation » dans *La Peste* implique la prédominance de la perspective psychique, d’où notre désir de se lancer dans cette analyse psychanalytique de *La Peste*. Le rapprochement à l’importance de l’idée de la ‘séparation’ que Camus évoque dans *La Peste* peut être lié évidemment à la situation sociale dont il se trouvait au moment où il rédigeait *La Peste*. Camus s’est affairé de la rédaction de *La Peste* au moment où la deuxième guerre mondiale faisait ses ravages. *La Peste* a été publiée en 1947, un an après la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale. Il est à ajouter ici qu’en 1946, au même moment où il rédigeait *La Peste*, Camus avait cherché de lier la terreur au thème de la séparation dans le *Combat*, un journal, issu de la libération, dont il fut rédacteur-en-chef.

Ayant été victime de la séparation lui-même, car de 1942 jusqu’à la libération, il vivait en exil, séparé de ses proches. L’écrivain fait une analyse poignante de la séparation, lorsqu’il écrit au début de la deuxième partie du roman:

À partir du moment les portes de la ville sont fermées, un sentiment aussi individuel que celui de la séparation d’avec un être aimé devint soudain dès les premières semaines, celui de tout un peuple. (Camus, 1996:18).

L’écrivain fait son analyse du caractère réel de la ‘séparation’. Il dépeint la séparation en tant qu’un porteur des effets désastres contre l’amour ; qui entraîne la souffrance, provoquée par l’absence et l’imagination sans fin de ce que devient l’être tant aimé. En élaborant ce thème de la ‘séparation’, Camus évoque la question de la solitude qu’elle entraîne et dont souffrent les personnages évoqués dans le roman et qui demeurent loin de ses chers affectifs. Il note que :

...la séparation fut général [...] Les séparés, cette heure du soir, qui pour les croyants, est celle de l’examen de conscience, cette heure est dure pour le prisonnier, elle est celle de l’amour frustré. Peste, c’est la séparation qui est la règle, le reste est hasard. (Albères 1964:112)

Le thème de la ‘séparation’ évoque un sentiment particulier chez Camus. Les séparés, pour lui, demeurent les seuls personnages vraiment intéressants.

3.2 Le sens allégorique.

On peut se servir de l’allégorie pour divertir évidemment, mais elle est beaucoup plus un outil indispensable et efficace dans la résolution de problèmes. La poésie a été le premier genre littéraire à apparaître dans une société. Bien entendu, parler de la poésie, c’est de parler inévitablement de

figures de style et surviennent à l'esprit, les mots tels que, comparaison, métaphore, personnification et allégorie. D'après Skayem (2003), l'allégorie est une figure de style qui consiste à dépeindre une notion abstraite à travers une personne s'habillant en des vêtements ou des objets symboliques, parfois, elle agit ou parle. Cependant, l'allégorie permet de décrire une notion abstraite en rapprochant celle-ci à une notion concrète. Par exemple, dans cet extrait de Baudelaire « Ah, Mort, le port commun des hommes ». Dans cet extrait, Baudelaire associe la Mort, notion abstraite, au port, notion concrète. Une figure de style demeure toujours une forme littéraire. L'allégorie, selon la définition, permet de personnifier un défaut, une qualité ou une caractéristique morale humaine et d'en faire des créatures autonomes, qui s'expriment, qui agissent et qui interagissent. L'allégorie implique l'emploi d'autres termes que des termes propres

La Peste fait revivre les grandes épidémies qui ont frappées le monde et les horreurs qu'ils ont entraînées. En une sorte, La Peste se veut une sorte d'hommage à des victimes oubliées du fléau. La Peste est un œuvre d'homme révolté, caractérisé par les personnages de Rieux et Tarrou. En effet, il faut voir le fléau, non seulement comme la seule manifestation d'une épidémie exemplaire, qui permet de dévoiler de manière frappante des attitudes et des actions, mais il faut aussi le voir comme la condamnation de toute forme d'occupation d'un sol et celle de tout asservissement.

On peut remarquer que Camus n'a pas voulu réellement parler d'Oran, mais voulait mettre en évidence la mauvaise conscience des hommes, une conscience noyée dans le silence ou la lâcheté et qui conduit l'homme à accepter l'horreur. C'est le totalitarisme qui est mis en cause, une idéologie qui mérite à être condamnée.

Enfin, le roman met l'emphase sur une signification bien généralisée, car il fait témoin à la souffrance et à la maladie sur l'engagement de Rieux et Tarrou, des révoltés, qui ont compris pourtant que ce combat n'a pas de fin: C'est ainsi que l'histoire se termine sur une note d'avertissement comme suit:

Rieux savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait, [...] que le bacille de la Peste ne meurt ni ne disparaît jamais [...] et que, ce qui fait peur à Rieux (Camus) c'est la menace d'une Peste qui peut-être le jour viendrait ou pour le malheur et l'enseignement des hommes, la Peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse. (Camus, 1996:240).

Le bonheur s'achète-t-elle à quel prix? Voilà la conclusion que l'on peut tirer de ce récit. *La Peste*, qui porte sur l'invasion par épidémie meurtrière de la ville d'Oran, est une simple évocation de la condition humaine.

3.3 Œuvre symbolique

Le symbole, selon les spécialistes, Mallarmé et Verlaine, est un procédé d'écriture pour décrire une idée de façon imagée. Quitte au lecteur seul d'interpréter pour comprendre le sens caché. Un symbole en d'autres mots, sert pour représenter une idée abstraite de manière concrète à travers un objet ou un animal. La peste, symbole du mal, condamne les hommes à la 'séparation', à la solitude, à la mort. Face à ce fléau, certains fuient, ou refusent de se sentir perturbés, d'autres s'engagent dans la lutte en résistance. La peste, autant que la maladie de l'âme, est l'absurde contre lequel toute victoire n'est que provisoire, puisqu'un jour, elle renaîtra Si les oranais sont venus au bout de la maladie, c'est parce qu'ils ont manifesté tout long de leur exil, leur désir de sauver l'humanité par la participation collective. La solidarité est un principe de conduite morale. Elle est une volonté

consciente de changer le monde pour le bien de tous. À travers leurs œuvres, les écrivains cherchent à se libérer de leur condition, laquelle constitue un obstacle pour leur épanouissement. La nécessité les oblige à être solidaires les uns des autres pour se libérer de leur condition. Les textes sont remplis de symboles et une lecture symbolique d'une œuvre, implique toujours la découverte de nouveaux sens.

La Peste est un récit symbolique, marqué par un emblème du mal sous toutes ses formes. *La Peste* amène l'homme à faire face à lui-même, le poussant à agir, en se révoltant ou se renonçant. Le titre d'une œuvre porte en lui-même des éléments les plus pertinents d'une œuvre. Le titre est un miroir d'une œuvre. Il est un élément assez important dans la compréhension d'une œuvre, car il aide le lecteur à situer l'action dramatique. Le titre doit révéler certaines informations pour attirer l'attention et lui donner l'envie de lire. Le choix de *La Peste* comme titre de ce roman représente pour Camus un choix adéquat dans le cadre où il est l'équivalent profond du point de vue individuel en face de l'absurde. Camus entendait s'exprimer par symboles, pour parler indirectement de la guerre et de ses maux. *La Peste*, la maladie collective la plus terrifiante, est le symbole du tragique et du châtement des Dieux. *La Peste* fait exposer de nombreuses réflexions sur la mort et la peine capitale. De la manière générale, la peste qui ravage inexorablement et de façon aléatoire, met en lumière la condition de vie des habitants d'Oran, la façon moderne de mourir dans la solitude. La mort est un des aspects essentiels de l'absurde. Elle met un terme définitif à toute une existence. Car, quelle que soit notre richesse ou notre puissance, elle peut nous enlever et nous mettre à part de nos bien-aimés. L'épidémie de peste, que Camus évoque dans son œuvre, est une évocation symbolique de la condition des hommes.

3.4 Le sens du mythe

La 'séparation' provoque nécessairement des souffrances et ces souffrances dépeignent des histoires d'amour brisé. Ce destin, que l'on peut qualifier d'être tragique, est une mise en scène des êtres qui ont de l'affection les uns pour des autres et qui se voient 'séparer' à cause de la maladie, l'évènement, la société. De tous les maux issus de la peste, la 'séparation' fut le mal le plus sérieux aux yeux du narrateur du récit. Et Camus s'emploie du mythe pour décrire ses dispositions qui font manifester tout au long du récit. La mythologie grecque fait un récit de ce mythe si choquant et dépeint cette vie avec plein de souffrances.

Dans *La Peste*, on retrouve cette conception et idéologie qui rattache à la vie autre que celle d'Eurydice et d'Orphée, ces amants dans la mythologie grecque, dont leur amour certainement tragique continue d'évoquer l'émotion à travers des siècles. Le thème du Mythe d'Orphée et d'Eurydice sera appliqué dans *La Peste*, l'auteur met l'accent, non seulement sur les "séparations couples, mais plus que cela, sur la faiblesse même de l'amour, comme ce fut le cas pour ce mythe. D'une part, *La Peste* fait révéler ce symbole d'Eurydice et d'Orphée qui s'éternise sur la perte de l'être aimé et d'autre part, elle fait révéler le symbole des difficultés faisant face à des couples. C'est le journaliste Rambert, face à la "séparation", qui témoigne de cet amour qui existe entre l'homme et la femme, lorsqu'il prononce les mots suivants dans le récit : « je n'ai pas été mis au monde pour faire des reportages, mais peut-être ai-je été mis au monde pour vivre avec une femme » déclare-t-il. (Camus, 1996:98). Se retrouvant en Algérie pour mener une enquête au sujet des conditions de vie des arabes, Rambert finit par devenir un prisonnier de la Peste car, « Malgré tous ses efforts, il ne parvient pas à sortir d'Oran pour rejoindre à Paris la femme qu'il aime. L'amour est la grande affaire de la vie de Rambert jusqu'au moment où il découvre qu'il peut y avoir de la honte à être heureux tout seul ». (Camus, 1993 :98) Et il rajoute « Maintenant j'ai vu ce que j'ai vu.

Je sais que cette histoire nous concerne tous» (Camus, 1993 :99). On s'aperçoit qu'il y a ce débordement du bonheur individuel et l'appel à la fraternité chez Rambert. Ce qui était d'intérêt pour lui jusque-là, c'était l'amour sensitif, l'amour de la femme et «qu'on vive et qu'on meurt de ce qu'on aime». (Camus, 1993 :100). De sa part, Rieux a également connu le prix de la "séparation" et qu'elle déchire l'amour, entraîne les couples séparés qui éprouvent des remords et qui se rendent compte de leurs propres défaillances.

Il leur était facile de remonter dans leurs amours et d'en examiner es imperfections, en temps ordinaires, nous saisons tous [...] qu'il n'est pas d'amour qui ne puisse se surpasser, et nous acceptons pourtant avec plus ou moins de tranquillité, que le nôtre demeurât médiocre mais le souvenir est plus exigeant». (Camus, 1993 :100).

A travers les personnages de Tarrou, de Grand et même de père Paneloux, on est confronté à une autre manifestation de l'effet de la peste et qui est celui de la transformation même des personnes luttant contre elle. Devenir un saint demeure l'ambition de Tarrou, mais voilà qu'il en doute lorsqu'il lâche ses mots « peut-on être un saint sans dieu, c'est le seul problème concret que je connaisse aujourd'hui» (Camus, 1993:102). On pressent néanmoins certaine attitude de doute chez le narrateur, dans sa narration de la réunion de Rambert et de sa maîtresse.

Rambert lui, n'eut pas le temps de regarder cette forme courante vers lui, qui déjà elle s'abattait contre sa poitrine, et tenant à plein bras, serrant contre lui une tête dont il ne voyait que les familiers. Il laissa couler ses larmes sans savoir si elles venaient de son bonheur présent ou d'une douleur trop longtemps réprimée, assurée du moins qu'elles l'empêcheraient de vérifier si-ce visage enfoui au veax de son épaule était celui dont il avait rêvé. (Camus, 1993:291).

Pour Rambert, qui sait très bien qu'il n'est pas le moment d'admirer cette femme qui courait vert lui pour se débarrasser de l'enfer de la "séparation", nous pouvons supposer que c'est l'échappe au destin d'Orphée, contrairement à Rieux. Rieux envisage toujours que« Pour quelque temps au moins, ils seraient heureux, il savait que s'il est une chose qu'on puisse désirer toujours et obtenir quelques fois, c'est la tendresse humaine». (Camus, 1993:205). Cette tendresse est la force derrière la résistance contre le fléau et cela demeure, malgré toute la destruction, une exigence du cœur.

Comme réponse à la deuxième question come cela concerne l'aspect mythique, nous retenons que La Peste est un mythe. Cet aspect mythique est mis en lumière dans l'œuvre à travers les personnages féminins. À ce niveau, on retrouve la première qui est la figure de la femme compagne. À travers son sacrifice, l'écrivain a accompagné la femme de M. Rieux, personnage principal, au point de non-retour, ce que l'on peut associer au mythe d'Eurydice, lorsqu'elle a débuté sa descente vers le royaume des morts. Il devient assez difficile de s'imaginer une idée de la relation des époux. Camus atteste à ce propos, lorsqu'il affirme dans ses Carnets cette fréquence à l'époque du mythe d'Eurydice. Il note que « ...utilisation immodérée d'Eurydice dans la littérature des années quarante. C'est que jamais tant d'amants n'ont été » (Albères, 1964:262). Le deuxième en l'occurrence est la figure de la mère qui rejoint 'le paradis perdu'. Nous remarquons que le « maternel », donc le féminin, occupe une place importante dans l'univers de Camus. Le « paradis perdu » peut se rapporter à cette quête de la mère, ce qui peut signifier la métaphore d'une profonde quête spirituelle, car dans l'œuvre, la mère symbolise la survivance de l'affection au cœur même de la

terreur et de l'horreur. Sur la quête de la mère et le thème mythique dans *a Peste*, Gassin (1981:211) écrit:

L'univers Camusien idéal le royaume nous l'on si souvent suggéré la mère et l'enfant n'y forme qu'un univers celui de la communion, aussi tout au long de l'œuvre, la quête de la mère illustre le thème mythique du paradis perdu. Un paradis que s'efforce de retrouver, cette recherche qui passe inévitablement par la femme, celle-ci n'est-elle pas tout ce qui nous reste du paradis terrestre

3.5 Etat des figures féminines

Avant de nous lancer dans l'analyse propre des personnages féminins, cherchons à noter cette définition par le *Dictionnaire du littéraire* (2002:45') du mot 'personnage'

Un personnage est d'abord la représentation d'une personne dans une fiction, le terme apparu en français au XV siècle, du latin, *persona* qui désignait masque que les acteurs portaient sur scène. Il s'emploie par extension à propos de personnes réelles ayant jouées un rôle dans le récit de celle-ci des personnages historiques

Pour Camus, le personnage ne s'applique pas aux femmes, car ce terme ne s'applique qu'aux hommes, tandis que les femmes ne sont que des figures. Dans *La Peste*, on assiste à des difficultés de l'identité, associées surtout à des figures féminines, qui sont dépourvues de noms et de spécificités. Elles n'ont aucun droit à la parole, étant éclipsées par les protagonistes masculins à travers les rôles que jouent ceux-ci sur leur silence et leur suppression.

La présence donc de ces figures féminines est trop discrète. Alors que les unes, dans leur silence, sont restées dans la ville menacée par la peste, les autres ont retrouvé la mort.

Lorsque les portes de la ville se referment sur les 'prisonniers', les femmes sont désormais, comme dans toutes les prisons, plus présentes que jamais, ce qui signifie que les hommes sont seuls, face à leur destin et ce qui explique l'ambition de Camus, qui note « En pratique, il n'y a que des hommes seuls dans le roman. (Carnet III, 1963:113)

La Peste nous présente des personnages que l'on peut classer selon les rôles qu'ils jouent dans le récit. Il y a certains de personnages qui sont beaucoup plus actifs que les autres. Dans un roman, le personnage demeure effectif aux yeux du lecteur, car l'écrivain lui trouve une identité, un nom et un caractère. Les rôles qu'ils jouent déterminent leur portrait jusqu'à un point. Les femmes sont reléguées au second plan en période de la peste, ceci est évident lorsqu'il a été noté dès la deuxième que le récit a pour objet de décrire la vie de « nos concitoyens » (Camus, 1996:56), le narrateur étant un de ces concitoyens. Et comment décrit-on ces fameux concitoyens:

Nos concitoyens travaillent beaucoup, mais toujours pour s'enrichir, ils s'intéressent surtout au commerce et ils s'occupent d'abord, selon leurs expressions, de faire des affaires. Naturellement ils ont du goût aussi pour les joies simples, ils aiment les femmes, le cinéma et les bains de mer. (Camus, 1996:57)

Ce qui implique que les femmes ne font pas partie de « nos concitoyens ». Elles ne sont que des passe-temps et non des êtres humains ingénieux. Le narrateur laisse entendre que c'est par souci d'objectivité, qu'il a récolté les observations de différents points de vue, afin que son histoire puisse incorporer de différents points de vue.

[Le narrateur] voudrait au moins justifier son intervention et faire comprendre qu'il ait tenu à prendre le ton du témoin objectif. Pendant toute la durée de la Peste. Son métier l'a mis à même de voir la plupart de ses concitoyens, et de recueillir leur sentiment il était donc bien placé pour rapporter ce qu'il avait vu et entendu. Etant appelé à témoigner, à l'occasion d'une sorte de crime il a gardé une certaine réserve, comme il convient à un témoin de bonne volonté».

(Camus, 1996:263)

Pourtant, aucun de ces points de vue représentent le monde féminin. En toute objectivité donc, le seul avis qui mérite d'être récolté demeure celui des 'hommes' en cas de peste dans une ville. Les personnages masculins dans *La Peste* sont nombreux et détiennent presque tous un nom et exerçant des professions de médecin, de journaliste, de juge d'instruction. De prêtre, de concierge, de directeur, d'employé de mairie. Et ceux qui n'ont pas, ni de nom, ni de métier, ils sont tout de même distingués suivant un détail défini, comme les personnages du vieil espagnol souffrant de l'asthme et le petit vieux qui crache sur les chats. Si les personnages masculins détiennent presque tous des noms, c'est bien le contraire du côté féminin, pas d'aucune identification. Tout au long du récit, elles demeurent obliérées et anonymes dans la plupart des cas. Seules 'Nicole' et 'Jeanne' ont des noms et l'on peut imaginer que ces deux ont été identifiées dans le roman, suivant les professions qu'elles exercent qui sont trop importants à travers le récit. Des deux professions principalement exercées par des femmes: la garde malade et la femme de ménage. La femme de Grand fait son apparition dans le récit à travers les confidences de son mari. Ceci a été incorporé dans le récit sous forme de souvenirs. À part celles-ci, tous les autres personnages féminins sont dénommés: "sa femme", "sa mère", "la femme de", ainsi que "Mme" suivi du nom de son mari. "Mme Rieux" désigne aussi bien la mère que l'épouse du personnage principal. Il est expliqué que le docteur «Rieux appela sa femme par son prénom» (Camus, 1996:8). Rullier-Theuret (2001:6) insiste que «Le prénom n'est à ce stade qu'un signe vide». De ceci donc, il est à noter que les femmes, à travers leur silence et leur anonymat, renforcent cette absence et cette 'séparation', une situation perturbante.

À travers le roman, les femmes n'ont que deux fonctions, soit comme souvenir errant dans l'esprit d'un homme, ici on fait référence à des femmes qui ne se trouvent pas à Oran au moment de la peste et dont le narrateur ne parle que par allusion, soit être passive, envisagée pour faire le deuil, s'occuper des malades et faire le ménage. Ceci peut-il expliquer l'abus des femmes dans le récit? Comme elles sont privées de noms, les femmes n'ont pas de spécificité dans le roman. Les rôles qu'elles jouent sont donc interchangeables. N'importe quelle femme peut entreprendre à jouer le rôle de n'importe quelle autre femme. Alors que les personnages masculins ne sont pas interchangeables et superposables, car ils ont des métiers spécifiques à eux, tels que médecin, journaliste, prêtre, juge, les personnages féminins sont interchangeables, car ces personnages n'ont pas de spécificité.

L'épouse du docteur Rieux (donc Mme Rieux) éloignée d'Oran avant la fermeture de la ville, est immédiatement remplacée par la mère du docteur (donc Mme Rieux) qui vient de s'occuper de la maison de son fils, en l'absence de la malade. (Camus, 1996:7)

Le récit fait étaler, sous des formes différentes, les difficultés de la parole chez les figures féminines, ainsi que l'usage des mots. Le manque des mots est très bien évident chez les personnages féminins et ceci est marqué par une série de gestes incohérents. Ces termes que l'on retrouve dans le récit témoignent de ceci : "un mouchoir sur sa bouche ", "ne parlait toujours pas ", "toujours en silence", "effacement ", "simples " "tranquilles ", faisant d'elle "une ombre", "sans jamais réfléchir ", tant de "silence et d'ombre", "effacement, effacée". Tous ces termes sont des termes que l'on peut très bien associer au silence des figures féminines et à l'image calamiteux de ces personnages féminins. Comme on rejette l'idée d'octroyer une identité propre à chaque personnage féminin, les femmes s'unifient pour devenir ;'sa femme' tout au long du récit. Ce que l'on peut tirer de l'interprétation des figures féminines dans le roman, c'est qu'elles représentent la vie passive des femmes dans les années quarante, des femmes qui ont subi une marginalité, provoquant une écrasante et douloureuse 'séparation' dans des cas certains.

L'image de la mère reflète cette image du pays éternellement lacé dans l'angoisse de la perte et dans l'amour brisé et inactif. L'écrivain s'emploie de cette image dans le but d'amasser la transparence et la simplicité des "paradis perdus". Autrement dit, l'écrivain veut atteindre sa vérité par le biais de ces femmes qui défendent et qui contribuent à cette vie porteuse de sens. La figure de la mère occupe une place essentielle dans la pensée de Camus, de sorte que dès la première lecture, on la retrouve dans son mutisme et dans cet amour douloureux et silencieux qu'il lui consacre. La figure féminine demeure un symbole de souffrance et de la « séparation », ce qui explique la raison pour laquelle l'écrivain lui accorde de l'importance, car c'est elle qui est la voix sémantiques du texte. C'est elle qui crient, qui hurlent de loin en loin les tortures infligées par la Peste.

3.6 Représentation de *La Peste* de Camus

Sur le plan social, la peste représente l'anéantissement, le nazisme, l'occupation, la résistance, la guerre, la révolution. Elle représente toutes sortes de terreur et d'horreur de même que la démonstration monstrueuse de la violence. Dans son échange avec Barthes, Camus écrivait :

La Peste, dont j'ai voulu qu'elle se lise sur plusieurs portées, a cependant comme contenu évident, la lutte de la résistance européenne contre le nazisme. La preuve en est que cet ennemi, qui n'est pas nommé, tout le monde la reconnu, et dans tous les pays d'Europe. (Barthes, 1964:180).

L'Europe des années quarante n'est pas une destination pour l'amour, car, la 'séparation' caractérisée par les femmes absentes, indique une situation dotée de la souffrance la plus pénétrante. L'amour ne peut donc triompher dans une situation sociale pareille. Camus a soulevé cette question dans le roman, lorsqu'il témoignait que: « 80 % de divorces chez les prisonniers rapatriés 80% des amours humains ne résiste pas à cinq ans de séparation, voilà de quoi nourrir la défiance de Rieux » (Conte-Spovsnil, 2001:104). La Peste est donc une allégorie, car elle évoque indirectement la résistance à l'occupation, la guerre. Il est à remarquer qu'au cours des années quarante, que Camus était un de ces écrivains qui soulevait sa voix contre l'oppression, la dictature, la guerre et le nazisme.

Conclusion

La Peste est une réflexion des réalités qui ont profondément atteintes son auteur. L'auteur cherche à abattre la « séparation ». Il voyait venir « l'horreur » et se gênait de ce qui allait arriver à ses proches ou siens. Soulevant la question qui se rapporte à la lecture de *La Peste* dans le sens allégorique, nous affirmons catégoriquement que le roman a ce caractère allégorique, car l'écrivain peint une image de la souffrance, des malades, qui ont été affligés par le fléau.

La " séparation" et l'effacement de la femme indiquent plus à fond une remise en question de l'amour inné durant les années quarante; la maladie de la Peste demeure une représentation allégorique dans la mesure où Camus laisse entrevoir dans *La Peste* ses notions antinazies et renonce parmi d'autres l'atrocité subie par le peuple français au cours de la seconde guerre mondiale. À partir d'ici, La maladie devient une représentation allégorique du nazisme baptisé alors "*Peste*. Les malades sont une représentation de la population française, alors que les femmes évoquent la résistance. On peut remarquer que Camus n'a pas voulu réellement parler d'Oran, mais voulait mettre en évidence la mauvaise conscience des hommes, une conscience noyée dans le silence ou la lâcheté et qui conduit l'homme à accepter l'horreur. C'est le totalitarisme qui est mis en question, une idéologie qui mérite à être condamnée.

La peste est un mythe, que ce soit à travers la figure de a femme qui se rattache à la 'séparation' comme seul secours du 'sacrifice' ou que ce soit à travers de la figure de mère, qui regagne le 'paradis perdu'. Elles demeurent principalement titulaires de sens dans le roman et évoquent ce mythique qui marque l'œuvre.

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Workplace Learning and Its Influence on Job Satisfaction and Job Performance in Nigerian-German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated workplace learning and its influence on job satisfaction and job performance in Nigerian- German Chemical (NGC) Plc, Ogun State. This study was hinged on the need to investigate how workplace learning influenced job satisfaction and job performance in a leading Pharmaceutical and Industrial Chemicals in Nigeria and as such very little studies have been conducted with respect to a study of this nature. The study was a survey which utilized Ex-post facto design. A total of 180 employees were selected, using Taro Yamane's formular for calculating sample size, with simple random sampling applied in selecting the respondents for the study. Questionnaire format was used to obtain the relevant data. The collected data were analyzed using T-test for Independent Measures with the applications of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. The results showed that there was a significant influence of workplace learning on job performance in Nigerian-German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State $\{t(178) = 8.43, p < .01\}$ There was also a significant influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction in Nigerian-German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State $\{t(178) = 13.86, p < .01\}$. It was concluded that workplace learning significantly influenced both job satisfaction and job performance respectively in Nigerian-German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State. It was recommended that business owners should motivate employees and encourage them to share ideas as well as contribute to the management decision.

Keywords: Workplace Learning, Job Satisfaction, Job Performance, Employees, Influence, NGC

1.0 Introduction

Many organizations are still confronted with challenges in promoting employees' wellbeing, satisfaction and performance (Jacobs & Park, 2009). Despite their success at making economic connections, organizations often lack adequate psychological support for their employees and fail to provide sufficient opportunities for cultural and social exchanges (Tynjälä, 2013). To deal with these challenges, organizations need to promote new forms of collaboration among workers, provide them with professional skills and knowledge, establish their work identities and, above all, engage them in different types of workplace learning that enhance job satisfaction and job performance (Jacobs & Park, 2009; Tynjälä, 2013).

Modern organizations are dynamic, complex, ambiguous, non-traditional and environment-affected (Nixon, 1992). Thus, they accept change as an evitable essential (Turban, 2004). These companies which work in knowledge-based environment with competitions, customer-gaining, responsibilities, premiership and varieties should compete on creative and responsible human resource as a competitive tool (Turban, 2004), because satisfied and full-energy personnel are the most important source of organization (Abolalaei, 2005). Job performance is being effective in job and shows the level of satisfaction from that (Shimon, 1996). Impressive human resource is the power factor of an organization as compared to others and it is focused on it.

There is a general understanding among researchers that performance is an important variable in work organizations (Suliman, 2001) and has become a significant indicator in measuring organizational performance as found in many studies (Wall, 2004). Employee performance can also be measured through the combination of expected behavior and task-related aspects (Motowidlo, 2003), even though performance is often determined by financial figures. In reality, performance that is based on an absolute value or relative judgment may reflect overall organizational performance (Gomez, Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2007; Wall, 2004). However, Wiedower (2001) asserted that performance measure that is based on the performance appraisal items offers higher reliability in evaluating performance.

In general, job performance is defined as actions or behaviours relevant to organizational goals (Campbell, 1990), which includes both productive and counterproductive employee behaviours that contribute to or detract from organizational goals (Hunt, 1996). Viswesvaran and Ones (2000) introduced a more recent definition of job performance as behaviour and outcomes that employees undertake that are contribute to organizational goals. This means job performance refers to the effectiveness of individual behaviours that contribute to organisational objectives and should consist of task performance and contextual performance (Motowidlo, 2003). Both constructs are influenced by different factors, for instance job-related experience determines task performance while individual's personality type determines contextual performance (Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994).

However, another dependent variable in this study is job satisfaction. It was expressed in 50 and 60 decays with economic slump which in that time most of workers were unsatisfied with their job's condition (Christina, Chi, Dogan Gursoy, 2010). These situations attracted managers' attention (Mohammadi, 2005). Job satisfaction is an important factor for improving effectiveness

and also person's satisfaction in a company. Managers always tend to increase Job satisfaction among their employee. This factor is important not only for behavioral science scientists but also for managers and attitudes towards that (Cherrington, 2006). Thus, human motivation and spirit of human resource has high priority (Bghbanyan, 2003). Blanchard believe that successful and effectiveness human resources are due to use behavior science effectively and understanding impressive factors of that (Davis, 1995). On the other hand, at the time of hiring, a set of requests and wishes (i.e. job expectations) appear and related to job satisfaction as the most important factor for employee to judge about their job and organization (Rabins, 2005). Job satisfaction is a multi-face structure and theorists have many definitions for that. For example, Pleasant or unpleasant attribute of employee toward job (Castle, 2006), positive and understood sensation and emotional about job experiences (Willem, 2007)

According to Simatwa (2011), job satisfaction means a function which is positively related to the degree to which one's personal needs are fulfilled in the job situation. Kuria (2011) argues that employees are the most satisfied and highly productive when their job offers them security from economic strain, recognition of their effort clean policy of grievances, opportunity to contribute ideas and suggestions, participation in decision making and managing the affairs, clean definitions of duties and responsibilities and opportunities for promotion, fringe benefits, sound payment structure, incentive plans and profit sharing activities, health and safety measures, social security, compensation, communication, communication system and finally, atmosphere of mutual trust respect. Job satisfaction means pleasurable emotional state of feeling that results from performance of work (Simatwa, 2011).

Halin & Judge (2003), on the other hand defines job satisfaction as multidimensional psychological responses to an individual's job and that these personal responses have cognitive (evaluative), affective (emotional) and behavioural components. Job satisfaction scales vary in the extent to which better. On the other hand, if job satisfaction is low, there will be performance problems. They assess the affective feelings about the job or the cognitive assessment of the job (Moses, 2018).

Affective job satisfaction is a subjective construct representing an emotional feeling individuals may have about their jobs (Thompson & Phua, 2012). Hence affective job satisfaction for individuals reflects the degree of pleasure or happiness their jobs in general induces (Thompson & Phua, 2012). Cognitive job satisfaction is a more objective and logical evaluation of various facets of a job (Thompson & Phua, 2012). They can be uni-dimensional if it comprises evaluation of just one facet of a job, such as pay or maternity leave, or multidimensional if two or more facets of a job are simultaneously evaluated (Thompson & Phua, 2012).

Cognitive job satisfaction does not assess the degree of pleasure or happiness that arises from specific job facet, but rather gauges the extent to which those job facets are judged by the job holder to be satisfactorily in comparison with objectives. They themselves set or with other jobs (Tomazric, Seljak, Aristounic, 2014). While cognitive job satisfaction might help to bring about affective satisfaction, the two constructs are distinct, not necessarily directly related, and have antecedents and consequences (Moorman, 1993). It (job satisfaction) can be understood in terms of its relationship with other key factors such as general well-being, stress at work, control at work,

home-work interface and working conditions (Tomazric, Seljak, Aristounic, 2014). Job satisfaction plays a prominent role in the recruitment and retention of employees in today's business environment Billikopf (2003). According to Lerman (2009), and Billikopf (2003), training is time-consuming for employees to adapt and struggle with the undertaking given. This study will analyze training is differed from exercise to facilitate people may prove as a casual activity for fun. A study commissioned by Saks (1996) shows that the amount of training followed by an employee significant new relationship with a collaborative satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Billikopf, 2003). According to Lim (2008), job satisfaction is important not only for employees, but also for the success of the organization, because if the employee is not satisfied with the job, then he or she will not be loyal to the organization, and dissatisfaction may lead the employee to search for another job.

Statement of the Problem

In the last decade, employee performance and satisfaction were found to be of major concern to management in organizations. This concern has been noticed from the realization that trained, experienced, satisfied, and committed employees are vital for long-term organizational success (Maaniemi, 2013). Much evidence shows that people learn more from each other and through finding solutions for their day-to-day problems at the workplace (Felstead, 2005; Hager & Johnsson, 2009; Silverman, 2003). The failure of an organization to get her employees satisfied and achieve high level performance can prove to be key issues because low performance and dissatisfied employees can lead to a number of problems, such as insufficient workforce, continuous labour turn over, the costs of recruiting and training new employees, organizational inefficiency and lack of productivity (Johnsson, 2009). All these increase the burden on management. Hence, keeping employees satisfied, motivated, committed, and increasing the performance in their jobs has been identified as an important task for managers (Silverman, 2003).

It is as a result of the various issues associated with job satisfaction and job performance that the concept of organizational learning is being explored in this research to determine how workplace learning can be used ~~in~~ to achieve better employee satisfaction and high level of performance that can lead to better organizational success.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to: investigate the influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction and job performance in Nigerian German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State. The specific objectives are to:

1. determine the influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction among employees of the Nigerian German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.
2. assess the influence of workplace learning on job performance among employees of the Nigerian German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.
3. examine the influence of fore-thought (a component of workplace learning) on job satisfaction and job performance among employees of the Nigerian German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.
4. assess the influence of fore-thought (a component of workplace learning) on job satisfaction among employees of the Nigerian German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.

Research Hypotheses

- There would be a significant influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.
- There would be a significant influence of workplace learning on job performance in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.
- There would be a significant influence of fore-thought (a component of workplace learning) on job performance in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.
- There would be a significant influence of fore-thought (a component of workplace learning) on job satisfaction in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is hinged on relevant theories to explain the three variables of the study (i.e. workplace learning, job satisfaction and job performance. These theories are stated and discussed accordingly.

Theories of Workplace Learning

Adult Learning Theory

The Adult Learning Theory is also known as Andragogy is a European concept (indeed, even today there are academic departments of andragogy in several Central and Eastern European countries) imported to the U.S. by Malcolm Knowles in the late 1960s (Knowles 1968). He introduced it as “a new label and a new technology” distinguishing adult learning from children’s learning or pedagogy (Knowles 1968). Typical adult learning theories encompass the basic concepts of behavioral change and experience, up until the 1950s basic definitions of learning were built around the idea of change in behavior (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). After this point more complexities were introduced “such as whether one needs to perform in order for learning to have occurred or whether all human behavior is learned” (Merriam and Caffarella, 1999)

Jean Piaget states that there are "four invariant stages of cognitive development that are age related" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). According to the authors, Piaget contends that normal children will reach the final stage of development, which is the stage of formal operations, between the age of twelve and fifteen. As cited by Merriam and Caffarella (1999), Arlin (1975, 1984), established from the work of Gruber (1973) on the development of creative thought in adults, has attempted to identify a fifth stage of development, in addition to Piaget's formal operations.

Arlin (1975) proposes that Piaget's fourth stage, formal operations, be renamed the problem-solving stage. According to Merriam and Caffarella (1999), Arlin's hypothesized fifth stage was the problem-finding stage. This stage focuses on problem discovery. Though Arlin's proposed fifth stage produced more questions than answers, it opens the door to understanding the learning needs of adults; to be approached as thinkers.

According to a literature review by Ross (2002), humanism, personal responsibility orientation, behaviorism, neo-behaviorism, critical perspectives, and constructivism are all important facets of,

and perspectives on, adult learning theory. The most common treatments of the research of these areas of self-directed adult learning are learning projects, qualitative studies, and quantitative measures. Collins (1991) explores adult learning as the interactive relationship of theory and practice. In basic terms, the adult learner studies a particular theory and then puts it into practice when presented with the opportunity to do so. Thus, the understanding of an adult learning theory can prompt practice and practice can prompt adult learning theory revision (Collins 1991).

Malcolm Knowles might well be considered the founding father of adult learning. He contrasted the “concept of andragogy, meaning “the art and science of helping adults learn, with pedagogy, the art and science of helping children learn” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 272). Knowles’ original studies and writings arose from the assumption that there are significant, identifiable differences between adult learners and learners under the age of eighteen. Primarily, the differences, according to Knowles, relate to an adult learner being more self-directing, having a repertoire of experience, and being internally motivated to learn subject matter that can be applied immediately – learning that is especially “closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role”. Knowles proposed the following set of assumptions about adult learners:

1. As a person matures his or her self-concept moves from that of a dependent personality toward one of a self-directing human being.
2. An adult accumulates a growing reservoir of experience, which is a rich resource for learning.
3. The readiness of an adult to learn is closely related to the developmental tasks of his or her social role.
4. There is a change in time perspective as people mature from future application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Thus, an adult is more problem centered than subject centered in learning (Knowles, 1980).
5. Adults are mostly driven by internal motivation, rather than external motivators.
6. Adults need to know the reason for learning something (Knowles, 1984).

Behaviorist Learning Theories

The origins of behaviorist learning theories may be traced back to the late 1800's and early 1900's with the formulation of "associationistic" principles of learning (Ebbinghaus, 1885). The general goal was to derive elementary laws of learning and behavior that may then be extended to explain more complex situations (Ebbinghaus, 1885). Inferences were tied closely to observed behavior in "lower organisms" with the belief that the laws of learning were universal and that work with laboratory animals could be extrapolated to humans (Ebbinghaus, 1885). It was believed that a fundamental set of principles derived from the study of learning in a basic or "pure" form could then be applied to the broader context of learning in schools (Ebbinghaus, 1885).

Following a tradition begun by Ebbinghaus (1885), researchers studied learning in terms of memory for individual items, most commonly nonsense syllables and individual words. It was assumed that understanding simpler forms of learning would lead to understanding of more complex phenomena. During this time, the predominate research methods were those of serial list

learning and paired associate learning. These methods allowed researchers to study, predict, calculate and calibrate "associations" or the degree/ likelihood that a nonsense syllable or word could elicit a particular response from learners. In short, the basic premise underlying associationistic views of learning was that ideas become connected, or associated, through experience (Hull, 1952).

Furthermore, the more frequently a particular association is encountered, the stronger the associative bond is assumed to be. For example, the stimulus "bread" is likely to elicit the response "butter" more often and more rapidly than the response "milk," because the association between bread and butter has been frequently experienced and thus has become well learned.

Like Ebbinghaus, Thorndike was also interested in studying learning in terms of associations, but in terms of actions, rather than ideas (Thorndike, 1978). For his research, Thorndike used animals (e.g., cats and chickens) which were placed in "puzzle boxes" and measured learning in terms of the amount of time it took for the animal to operate a latch and escape. The results led Thorndike to believe that animals learned to associate a sensation with an impulse when its action had a satisfying consequence (Ebbinghaus, 1885). For instance, an animal may form an association between a sense (the interior of a box) and an impulse (operating a latch) because the action led to a satisfying result--namely, escaping the box. This principle, termed the Law of Effect, helped modify the classical principle of association and later held significant implications for behaviorism (Hull, 1952). One of the clearest formulations of associationistic learning principles was made by Hull (1934, 1952) and Spence (1936-1956).

Like Thorndike, Hull and Spence based their propositions on data from numerous experiments with laboratory animals (Ebbinghaus, 1885). However, unlike Thorndike, Hull and Spence derived equations to explain different actions such as habits, drive and inhibitions. Hull (1952) was able to demonstrate that the elementary laws of learning captured in these equations could account for a number of behaviors such as trial-and-error learning and simple discrimination learning in animals.

Transformative Learning Theories

Transformative learning is also known as transformational theory. The theory was developed by Jack Mezirow in the late 1900s (Taylor, 2009). He used this theory to describe how people develop and use critical self-reflecting to consider their beliefs and experiences, and over time, change dysfunctional means of seeing the world. Mezirow was interested in peoples' worldviews and what leads people to change their particular view of the world (Taylor, 2009).

Since the late 1900s, the theory has evolved "into a comprehensive and complex description of how learners construe, validate, and reformulate the meaning of their experience. For learners to change their meaning schemes (specific beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions), "they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation (Taylor, 2009). The meaning schemes that make up meaning structures may change as an individual adds to or integrates ideas within an existing scheme and, in fact, this transformation of meaning schemes occurs routinely through learning (Taylor, 2009).

A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience (Taylor, 2009). For some, any uncritically assimilated explanation by an authority figure will suffice. But in contemporary societies we must learn to make our own interpretations rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments', and feelings of others. Facilitating such understandings is the cardinal goal of adult education. Transformative learning develops autonomous thinking (Merrimack, 2004).

A number of critical responses to Mezirow's theory of transformative learning have emerged over the years. One criticism of Mezirow's theory is its emphasis upon rationality. Some studies support Mezirow, others conclude that Mezirow grants rational critical reflection too much importance (Brookfield, 2000). While the learning process is certainly rational on some levels (Brookfield, 2000), it is also a profound experience that can be described as a spiritual or emotional transformation as well. The experience of undoing racist, sexist, and other oppressive attitudes can be painful and emotional, as these attitudes have often been developed as ways to cope with and make sense of the world (Crantin & King 2003). This type of learning requires taking risks, and a willingness to be vulnerable and have one's attitudes and assumptions challenged (Crantin & King 2003).

Other theorists have proposed a view of transformative learning as an intuitive and emotional process. John, Robert, Gordon, & Rosemary (2003) link Mezirow's rational, cognitive and analytical approach to a more intuitive, creative and holistic view of transformative learning.

Theories of Job Satisfaction

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Modern two-factor theory was originally developed by Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson, and Capwell (1957), in which the authors stated that job factors could be classified according to whether the factors contribute primarily to satisfaction or to dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1957).

Two years later, Herzberg, Mausner and Snyderman published the results of a research study, which they interpreted as supportive of the theory. Since 1959, much research has been directed towards testing the two-factor theory. Two aspects of the theory are unique and account for the attention it has received. First, the two-factor theory says that satisfaction and dissatisfaction do not exist on a continuum running from satisfaction through neutral to dissatisfaction. Two independent continua exist, one running from satisfied to neutral and another running from dissatisfied to neutral. Second, the theory stresses that different job facets influence feeling of satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell, 1957).

The results of a study made by Herzberg which show that factors such as achievement, recognition, work itself, and responsibility are mentioned in connection with satisfying experiences, while working conditions, interpersonal relations, supervision, and company policy are usually mentioned in connection with dissatisfying experiences. The study shows the frequency with which each factor is mentioned in connection with high (satisfying) and low (dissatisfying) work experiences. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Herzberg's theory is that at the same time a person can be highly satisfied and highly dissatisfied. Also the theory implies that factors such as

better working conditions cannot increase or cause satisfaction, as they can only affect the amount of dissatisfaction that is experienced. The only way satisfaction can be increased is by effecting changes in those factors contributing primarily to satisfaction (Mausner, Peterson, & Capwell 1957). In a similar vein, Ibrahim, Ghazalli, Abdullah, Rahmat, AbdulHamid and Azhari (2023) established the relevance of motivators and hygiene factors in the motivation for educational learning, specifically, their findings disclosed that the application of motivator and hygiene factors from Herzberg's Two-Factor theory is feasible in finding the students' motivations in language learning.

The theory has been admired as the most useful model to study job satisfaction (Kim, 2004), for example, the theory has been found supported in educational settings (Karimi, 2007) and it has been used as a theoretical framework for scientifically assessing police officers' job satisfaction (Getahun, 2007) however, a review of literature revealed criticisms of the motivator-hygiene theory (Karimi, 2007). For example, researchers have not been able to empirically prove the model. Likewise, the theory ignores the individual differences and assumes that all employees react in a similar manner to the changes in motivators and hygiene factors. The model is also criticized for suggesting no specific method to measure the factors of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Neo, 2009).

Theory X and Theory Y

Theory X and Theory Y are theories of human job satisfaction, work motivation and management. They were created by Douglas McGregor while he was working at the MIT Sloan School of Management in the 1950s, and developed further in the 1960s. McGregor's work was rooted in motivation theory alongside the works of Abraham Maslow, who created the hierarchy of needs. The two theories proposed by McGregor describe contrasting models of workforce motivation applied by managers in human resource management, organizational behavior, organizational communication and organizational development (Douglas, 1970).

Theory X explains the importance of heightened supervision, external rewards, and penalties, while Theory Y highlights the motivating role of job satisfaction and encourages workers to approach tasks without direct supervision (Elizabeth, 2009). Management use of Theory X and Theory Y can affect employee motivation and productivity in different ways, and managers may choose to implement strategies from both theories into their practices (Worth & Micheal, 2011).

Theories of Job Performance

Trait Activation Theory

This is a theory of job performance based on the concept of trait activation, and is derived from an integration of trait theory, situations, and personality-job fit theory (Henry, 1938). The principles of trait activation can be traced back as early as 1938, when Henry Murray described that situations "press" individuals to exhibit traits (Henry, 1938). Trait activation theory is based on a specific model of job performance, and can be considered an elaborated or extended view of personality-job fit. Specifically, "trait activation is the process by which individuals express their traits when presented with trait-relevant situational cues (Henry, 1938). In fact, personality traits have been

associated with important life outcomes. Tett, Simonet, Walser, & Brown (2013) summarized the key contributions of others' ideas that preceded and influenced trait activation theory with the following quotes:

- "Trait and situation form two sides of the same coin that cannot be separated from each other" (Tett, Simonet, Walser, & Brown 2013)
- "Traits influence behavior only in relevant situations...Anxiety for example, shows up only in situations that the person finds threatening (Tett, Simonet, Walser, & Brown 2013)

According to Judge (2015), situational cues may stem from organization, social, and/or task cues. These cues can activate personality traits that are related to job tasks and organizational expectations that the organization values (i.e., job performance). These cues may also elicit trait-related behaviors that are not directly related to job performance (Judge, 2015). It makes an argument for situational specificity; that is, whether a trait leads to better performance depends on the context; or, alternatively, whether the context is relevant for performance depends on the trait. Thus, proponents of the theory argue that trait-relevant situations result in better performance than situations that are trait-irrelevant (Costa, 1997).

Since its introduction, several researchers have sought to test this idea. Tett & Guterman (2000) conducted one of the first large-scale tests via an investigation of the impact of situation trait relevance on the relationship between traits and behaviors. Specifically, they analyzed the relationships between participants' responses to a personality test assessing five personality traits (risk taking, complexity, empathy, sociability, and organization) and responses to a measure about behavioral intentions in multiple scenarios designed to target these same traits. Results of this tests support notion that traits are expressed to the degree that the situation offers opportunities for their expression. In addition, the study found support for the idea that situations can be assessed for the degree to which they are relevant to certain traits (even those targeting the same trait) (Tett & Guterman, 2000).

Kamdar & Van Dyne (2007), also found support for the theory via a field research study in which they examined 230 employees, their coworkers, and their supervisors and found that high quality social exchange relationships at work weakened the positive relationship between personality (specifically, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and job performance (Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007). These results were interpreted to be consistent with trait activation theory because they suggested that high quality social exchange relationships signaled the existence of a norm of reciprocity that subsequently constrained the expression of personality (Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007). With respect to agreeableness, for example, the authors hypothesized that, relative to those high in agreeableness, less agreeable employees do not have natural inclinations for tolerance and empathy, and therefore "need other incentives to motivate helping such as the sense that relationship partners are trustworthy. Similar conclusions were drawn with respect to employees who scored relatively low on conscientiousness (Kamdar & Van Dyne, 2007).

Most recently, Judge & Zapata (2015) developed and tested an interactionist framework of the personality to job performance relationship, focusing on both general (situation strength) and specific (trait activation; Tett & Burnett, 2003) situational influences. However, the authors are

careful to note that the variance attributable to situational strength is not inconsequential. These authors also note that the study was limited due to its focus on job and task-based cues (to the explicit neglect of social cues) which could also impact the personality-job performance relationship.

Affective Event Theory

Affective events theory (AET) is a theory developed by organizational psychologists Howard M. Weiss (Georgia Institute of Technology) and Russell Cropanzano (University of Colorado) to explain how emotions and moods influence job performance and job satisfaction. The theory explains the linkages between employees' internal influences (e.g., cognitions, emotions, mental states) and their reactions to incidents that occur in their work environment that affect their performance, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Smith (2003) proposes that affective work behaviors are explained by employee mood and emotions, while cognitive-based behaviors are the best predictors of job satisfaction. He proposes that positive-inducing (e.g., uplifts) as well as negative-inducing (e.g., hassles) emotional incidents at work are distinguishable and have a significant psychological impact upon workers' job satisfaction (Smith, 2003). This results in lasting internal (e.g., cognition, emotions, mental states) and external affective reactions exhibited through job performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Smith 2003).

Alternatively, Ashkanasy & Humphrey (2011) suggest that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between various antecedent variables such as dispositions, workplace events, job characteristics, job opportunities, and employee behavior exhibited while on the job (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors, counter-productive work behaviors, and job withdrawal) (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011). To that end, when workers experience uplifts (e.g., completing a goal, receiving an award) or hassles (e.g., dealing with a difficult client, reacting to an updated deadline), their intention to continue or quit depends upon the emotions, moods, and thoughts associated with the satisfaction they derive from their jobs (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011).

Ashkanasy & Humphrey (2011) also made it known that the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover is fully mediated by intention to quit; workers who report low job satisfaction are likely to engage in planned quitting. However, this relationship does not account for employees who report high job satisfaction, but quit unexpectedly. Although extrinsic rewards, such as better job offers outside their current organization, may influence their decisions, employees' personality factors may also impact their decisions to exit early from otherwise ideal jobs under ideal working conditions (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011).

Empirical Review

In a study conducted by Rowden and Conine Jr (2022) on the impact of workplace learning on job satisfaction in small US commercial banks, the authors revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between the workplace learning variables and the job satisfaction variables. The study established the importance of informal and incidental learning, rather than formal learning. By practical implications, the study emphasized the need for managers to make learning

opportunities available to enhance overall job satisfaction. In addition, helps place the need for expenditures on non-formal learning, not just formal learning where all the money is usually spent.

Similarly, in a study conducted by Lehtonen, Nokebinen, Rintala and Puhakka (2021) on thriving or surviving at work: how workplace learning opportunities and subjective career success are connected with job satisfaction and turnover intention?, the authors revealed that higher access to resources that support learning, more opportunities for professional growth and satisfactory career decisions made by employees were connected to lower TI. The processes of well-being and learning were found to be strongly intertwined and mutually reinforce each other, reducing the willingness to change a job in the near future.

3.0: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was a survey, which employed Ex-post Facto design. The independent variable was Workplace Learning. The dependent variables were Job Satisfaction and Job Performance.

Population of the Study

The targeted population of this study consisted all employees working in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC) in Ogun State, Nigeria. The total numbers of employees are 400 according to the company profile. The employees included both male and female employees.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample size was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973) with 95% confidence level.

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

Where:

n= the sample size

N= the population of the study

e= the margin error in the calculation

$$400 / (1 + 400(0.05)^2)$$

$$400 / (1 + 400(0.0025))$$

$$400 / (1 + 1)$$

$$= 200$$

$$= 200$$

Therefore, the obtained sample size was 200. Hence, simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study.

Research Instrument

For the purpose of the research a well-structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire shall be made up of four (4) sections namely.

SECTION A: Socio-Demographic Measures: This section contained the socio-demographic information of the respondents, which include: Name of business enterprise, age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, working experience (in years), position held, etc.

Section B: Workplace Learning: Under this section, the Self-Regulated Learning at Work Questionnaire Scale (SRLWQ) developed by Fontana, Milligan, Littlejohn and Margaryan (2015) was used. The scale was designed to measure self-regulated learning behaviour in the workplace. The scale contains 60 items and five (5) -point Likert scale measures three aspects of workplace learning: (1) the formal learning scale (20 items, $\alpha = .81$), measuring respondents' perception of planned, organized training activities, (2) the informal learning scale (15 items, $\alpha = .73$), measuring respondents' perceptions of unstructured activities or spontaneous demonstrations that lead to perceived learning on the job, and (3) the incidental learning scale (12 items, $\alpha = .78$), measuring respondents' perception of normal workplace activities.

SECTION C: Job Satisfaction: The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) developed by Paul E. Spector (1994) was adopted under this section. The JSS contains 36 questions and it was adopted to capture job satisfaction of participants. The questionnaire was measured on a 5- point Likert Scale, namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The Cronbach alpha value was 0.80 was reported for the scale

Section D: Job Performance: Under this section, the Individual work performance questionnaire (IWPQ) developed by (Koopmans, 2014) was used. It measured three specific factors of Job performance including Task performance (TP), Contextual performance (CP), and Counterproductive work behavior (CWB); thus, each factor evaluates the overall job performance process. This approach to job performance includes behaviors that might have positive effects and behavior possibly having negative effects on organizational accomplishment (Motowidlo, 2003). It contains 18 items and the three components, Task performance (TP) (5 items, $\alpha = .79$), Contextual performance (CP) (8 items, $\alpha = .83$), and Counterproductive work behavior (CWB) (5 items, $\alpha = .89$) will be measured by the responses to the (IWPQ). A 5-point Likert-type scale was used with scores ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Administration of Instrument

Two hundred (200) copies of the questionnaire were administered by the author in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC) in Ogun State to facilitate easy administration, filing and collection of the questionnaire. The researcher obtained permission letter from Head of Department (HOD), Human Resource Development, Osun State University and presented it to Head of Administrative Departments in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State. After successful administration of the structured questionnaire among departments in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State, the respondents returned the copies questionnaire. One hundred and eighty (180) copies of filled

question could be retrieved while the remaining 20 copies could not be retrieved from the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered from socio-demographic information were presented in form of frequency tables with percentages while the stated hypotheses were tested with inferential statistics specifically using T-test for independent measures. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0 was used.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Results revealed that 104 (57.8%) of the respondents were male while 76 (42.2%) were female; 27 (15%) of the respondents were within age bracket 20-24 yrs. 31 (17.2%) were within age bracket; 29 (16.1%) 25-29 yrs. of the respondents were within age bracket 30-34 yrs.; 42 (23.3%) of the respondents were within 35-39 yrs.; 25 of the respondents were within the age bracket 40-44 yrs.; while 26 (14.4%) of the respondents were within age bracket 45 yrs. and above; 47 (26.1%) of the respondents were Ordinary National Diploma/NCE/Diploma holders; 63(35%) were HND/First Degree holders while 36(20%) of the respondents were Postgraduate Diploma holders while 34 (18.9%) of the respondents were MSc/MED/MA holders while 24 (13.3%) of the respondents had worked between 0-4yrs; 38 (21.1%) of the respondents had worked between 5-9yrs; 45 (25%) of the respondents had worked between 10-14yrs; 48 (26.7%) of the respondents had worked between 15-19 yrs while 25 (13.9%) of the respondents had worked between 20yrs and above.

Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the results of the tested hypotheses. Essentially, hypotheses were stated and tested with t-test for independent measures. The results are presented clearly below:

Hypothesis One: *This stated that there would be a significant influence of workplace learning on Job satisfaction in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC)Plc, Ogun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures. The result is presented in table 1 below:*

Table 1: A Summary Table of T-test for Independent Measures Showing the influence of Workplace Learning on Job Satisfaction in Nigeria German Chemical Ogun State

DV	Workplace Learning	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	P
Job Satisfaction	Higher Level	94	86.75	31.63	178	8.43	<.01
	Lower Level	86	68.42	28.05			

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2020

The result in table 1 above revealed that there was a significantly influence of workplace learning on Job satisfaction in Nigerian-German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State {t (178) = 8.43, p<.01}. This indicated that employees in NGC Plc who were higher on workplace learning (\bar{X} = 86.75)

reported more job satisfaction than employees in NGC Plc who were lower on workplace learning (\bar{X} = 68.42). Therefore, the hypothesis one was supported by the result of the study.

Hypothesis Two: *This stated that there would be a significant influence of workplace learning on job performance in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures. The result is presented in table 2 below*

Table 2: A Summary Table of T-test for Independent Measures Showing the influence of Workplace Learning on Job Performance in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State.

DV	Workplace Learning	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t	P
Job Performance	Higher Level	94	77.15	30.53	178	13.86	<.01
	Lower Level	86	60.28	23.42			

Source: Authors’ Fieldwork, 2020

The result in table 2 above revealed that there was a significant influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction in Nigerian-German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State {t (178) = 13.86, p<.01}. This indicated that employees in NGCs Plc who were higher on workplace learning (\bar{X} =77.15) reported more Job performance than employees in NGC who were lower on workplace learning (\bar{X} =60.28). Therefore, the hypothesis two was supported by the result of the study.

Hypothesis Three: *This stated that there would be a significant influence of Fore-Thought (a dimension of Workplace Learning) on Job Performance in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures. The result is presented in table 3 below*

Table 3: A Summary Table of T-test for Independent Measures Showing the Influence of Fore-Thought (a dimension of Workplace Learning) on Job Performance in Nigeria German Chemical, Ogun State

DV	Fore-Thought	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	p
Job Performance	Higher Level	104	18.42	8.54	178	11.05	<.01
	Lower Level	76	12.66	3.27			

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2020

The result in table 3 above revealed that there was a significant influence of fore-thought on Job performance in Nigerian-German chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State {t (178) = 11.05, p<.01}. This indicated that employees in NGC Plc who were higher on fore-thought (\bar{X} =18.42) reported more job performance than employees in NGC Plc who were lower on workplace learning (\bar{X} =12.66). Therefore, the hypothesis three was supported by the result of the study.

Hypothesis Four: *This stated that there would be a significant influence of Fore-Thought (a dimension of Workplace Learning) on job satisfaction in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State. The hypothesis was tested by t-test for independent measures. The result is presented in table 4 below*

Table 4: A Summary Table of T-test for Independent Measures Showing the Influence of Fore-Thought (a dimension of Workplace Learning) on Job satisfaction in Nigeria German Chemical, Ogun State

DV	Fore-Thought	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t	p
Job Satisfaction	Higher Level	104	19.27	7.03	178	6.37	<.01
	Lower Level	76	16.15	4.86			

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2020

The result in table 4 above revealed that there was a significant influence of fore-thought (a dimension of workplace learning) on job satisfaction in Nigerian-German chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State {t (178) = 6.37, p<.01}. This indicated that employees in NGC Plc who were higher on satisfaction (\bar{X} =19.27) reported more job satisfaction than employees in NGC Plc who were lower on satisfaction (\bar{X} =16.15).

Therefore, the hypothesis four was supported by the result of the study.

Discussion of Findings

The main objective of the study was to investigate the influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction and job performance in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State. The study establishes the framework that is found to be interlinked with many literatures in the past. However, this study attempts to provide a practical scenario in selected businesses in Nigerian-German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State, this will help the business sectors and future researchers and scholars in various aspects and helping them to try an intensive study in Nigeria context.

The hypothesis one which stated that there would be a significant influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction in Nigeria German- Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State was supported by the result of the study. The finding indicated that workplace learning significantly influenced the job satisfaction in Nigeria German- Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State. The finding indicated that employees who experienced higher level of workplace learning reported-more job satisfaction than employees who experienced lower levels of job satisfaction. This finding is supported by the study conducted by Frye (2004) who showed that there is a positive influence of workplace learning on job satisfaction. Also, Adevally (2017) also revealed that there is a positive relationship between workplace learning on job satisfaction.

The hypothesis two which stated that there would be a significant influence of workplace learning on job performance in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State was supported by the study. The findings indicated that employees who experienced higher level of workplace learning reported more job performance than employees who experienced lower levels of job satisfaction. The findings also identify that workplace learning significantly influence job performance in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State. This finding was supported by the study conducted by Frye (2004) who showed that there is a positive influence of workplace learning on job performance. Also, Ruiz-Mercader, Merono-Cerdan, & Sabater-Sanchez (2006), contend that individual and organizational learning show significant and positive effects on job performance.

The hypothesis three which stated that there would be a significant influence of forethought on job performance in Nigerian- German Chemicals (NGC) Plc, Ogun State was supported by the study. The finding indicated that employees who experienced higher levels of forethought were found to perform better at their job than those who have experienced low level of forethought. This finding was supported by the study conducted by Hung, Lien, Yang, Wu & Kuo (2011). Also, Collin (2006) supported this hypothesis by revealing that forethought has a significant influence on job performance. According to Collins, forethought has acquired visibility and saliency” because “it sits at the juncture of new thinking concerning the nature of learning about new forms of knowledge, about the transformation of the nature of work and on the performance of employees (Collins, 2006).

5. 0: Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that workplace learning significantly influenced job satisfaction and job performance of employees in Nigerian-German Chemicals Plc.

In view of the obtained findings of this study, it is recommended as thus:

Organization should put the right structure in place that will aid learning in the workplace. A flexible structure that will help employee achieve job performance and satisfaction should be made put in place by the management of the organization.

- It is recommended that after knowing the positive relationship of job satisfaction and job satisfaction, manager in Nigeria German Chemical (NGC), Ogun State should pay more attention on improving the job scope and satisfy the employees in order to better employee performance and job satisfaction;
- The business enterprises should also take care in managing their employees and gain their willingness to work towards the organizational goal;
- It is recommended that there is need for deepening the mentoring practice in the workplace in order to raise globally acceptable workforce;

There is also a need for counselling system in NGC Chemicals Plc to enable employees grow adequately from workplace learning which will consequently impact their job satisfaction and job performance.

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Benin-Iuleha Relations in Pre-Colonial Times

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Abstract

The hegemonic roles of the Benin Kingdom over other Edoid groups and the neighbouring polities cannot be contested. Lasting legacies of Benin's influence on the socio-cultural and political institutions of other Edoid communities are a reminder of the historical links between Benin and other mini states in the Edo area. Yet, not much attention has been paid to the history of the Edoid peoples outside of the Benin nucleus. The current study attempts a historiographical interpretation of the relationship between the Iuleha clan, a northern periphery of the Edoid nation, and the Benin kingdom, which was the core of the Edoid nation. Using historical narratives, the study examines traditions of origins and migrations, as well as enduring socio-political practices to connect Benin's influence on the Iuleha clan and vice versa. Based on empirical evidence, the study maintains that Iuleha clan was largely outside the real imperialist enclave of the powers of the Benin state because of geographical and strategic considerations. Accordingly, the clan was tangentially affected by Benin's conquest and actual subjugation. As a result, the relationship between the two groups was more of kinship cooperation rather than imperialist subordination and exploitation by the imperial Benin state.

Keywords: Edoid peoples, Benin Imperialism, Iuleha Community

Introduction

The history of Iuleha clan is one of the neglected themes in the general history of the Edoid peoples because of the relative dearth of scholarship on Iuleha history as well as its inland remote location, away from Benin City. Besides, a noticeable trend in the historiography of the Edoid group has been the over concentration on the large and famous political entities, prominent kingdoms and major ethnic nationalities such as the Benin Kingdom, the Esan (Ishan) and Etsakon (Etsako) communities among others as if others are footnotes in the histories of the bigger polities.² This lopsided nature of the existing research on the Edoid communities gives the impression that the Edoid history begins and ends with the history of the Benin Kingdom and, occasionally, its imperial activities in the other Edoid communities.³ In trying to remedy the situation and create awareness on the historiographical importance of the mini-states among the Edoid group, Onaiwu Ogbomo has recorded some impressive scholarly achievements in the area of Owan and Ora (Evbiobe community and related other communities) studies.⁴

However, because of their Owan-wide ambition and focus on gender relationship especially the complexity of gender and class within the systems of domination and oppositional strategies alike among the Owan communities, Ogbomo and others made scanty references to Iuleha, especially

the relationship between Iuleha and the Benin Kingdom.⁵ Owing to this neglect, the subject of Iuleha-Benin relations has occupied a scanty space in Edoid historiography. Thus, it has been impossible to understand the relative contributions of Iuleha community to the development of the Benin Empire and vice versa. This has left a significant gap in our knowledge and understanding of the historical context in which Iuleha-Benin engagement and interactions were constructed.

The Iuleha clan is located in Owan West Local Government Area of Edo North Senatorial zone. It is bounded to the north by the Ivbimion clan, to the east by the Emai and Uokha clans, to the west by Ondo State, to the south by Ora clan, and to the south-west by Sobe clan. It lies on latitude 7⁰ N and 5 ²⁴ E.⁶ The landmass of the entire Iuleha area is approximately 113 square miles.⁷ This comprises three mini-clans: Aoma (which includes Uzebba, Avboisi old and new, Ivbiughuru, Ukhuse old and new, Obola and Okagboro), Eruere (including Oshiofo and surrounding communities), and Okpuje (including Ivbiodohen, Ikpeyan, Iloje and the surrounding communities).

The vegetation is an admixture of both forest and grassland. It is situated on the eastern slopes of the watershed between Ose River and Owan River. It is one of the gateways of Edo State to the western part of Nigeria, especially the Yoruba communities of Ifon and Owo. Iuleha connects Ondo State via the Uzebba-Ifon border.⁸ By virtue of political ward distribution, Iuleha is the largest single clan in Owan West Local Government Area, accounting for six wards out of the eleven in the locality.⁹ Being a frontier community, Iuleha exhibits a combination of Edoid and Yoruba cultures. This reflects in the complex and sometimes confusing traditions of origin, migrations and settlement of the people, which take cognizance of Edoid and Yoruba influences. The rest of the paper discusses the origins and migrations of Iuleha people, Benin-Iuleha relations and the extent of Benin imperialism in the area, areas of cooperation between Benin and Iuleha, moments of resistance to Benin's hegemony and imperialism, and conclusion. Lastly, the paper's main objective is to historicise elements of inter-group relations between two Edoid groups since the pre-colonial period.

Iuleha and Benin and the Issue of Origins and Migrations

The Iuleha occupies a unique place in the history of Edo State because apart from being a frontier community between the Edo-speaking and Yoruba-speaking groups of Southern Nigeria, it shares several cultural similarities among the other groups in Edo State such as the Bini (Edo), Esan (Ishan), Etsakon and Akoko-Edo. Similarly, it has several cultural similarities with the Yoruba community of Ifon in Ondo State. The story of the origins and migrations of Iuleha community appears complex because of the varying versions that exist in oral traditions. This daunting problem is not peculiar to Iuleha community. As Atanda rightly observed:

The origin of peoples in any society is a problem, which inevitably confronts the historian in or outside that society. The confrontation is inevitable because questions about origins form part, indeed constitute the first part, of the natural series and sequence of questions, which homo sapiens must need to ask about himself. Questions like, who am I? Where am I?...These and allied questions are a function of the reason faculty which distinguishes man as a higher animal from the lower animal. Such questions

constitute an index of man's historical consciousness, lacking which man, to my mind, ceases to be a rational being.¹⁰

The same sentiment is expressed by Ogbomo when he argued that: "There is a problem of explaining the origins of a people only in terms of the activities of a founding hero (the migrants) without any concern for ethnic composition of the region under study."¹¹ He further posits that:

... questions as what Owan society has been like in the past; how it has come to be what it is; what factors operate within it; what currents and forces move the people; and what general and personal factors have shaped events in the area should be the concern of historians interested in Owan history. In answering these questions the origins of the people and the evolution of precolonial sociopolitical institutions should be investigated.¹²

On the strength of the above argument, the next section of the work presents and analyzes the different versions of the origin of Iuleha people to situate the discussion in the light of existing historiographical interpretations and to show how traditions of origin can shed more lights on the relationship between them and their Bini neighbour.

Tradition of Origin from the Sky

Iuleha people share in the Bini version of human origin from the sky. Generally, several Edoid groups believe in the concept of a universal supreme being, *Osanobua*, through whose grace the whole earth was supposedly peopled. This claim of descent from the sky could be a convenient explanation for two possibilities, one being that the people have a relatively long antiquity and the other relating to the people's attachment to ancestral beliefs and practices. On the first, Ryder has submitted that the Edo-speaking groups probably occupied their present site for upwards of three thousand years.¹³

The tendency towards the theory of origin from the sky is vague and limited only to a section of Iuleha elders who believe in offering sacrifices to *Osanobua* through the latter's representatives on earth. These representatives, who are the priests of *Osanobua* or *Ohen-Oise*, argue in favour of autochthony.¹⁴ However, there are no known archaeological discoveries in the area to suggest long antiquity. Nevertheless, this version of origin could suggest the possibility of the presence of some indigenous groups in Iuleha before the migrations from Benin, Ile-Ife or from neighbouring Edoid communities.¹⁵

Theory of Origin and Migration from Ile-Ife/Yorubaland

Both the Bini and Iuleha share a history of traditional connections with Ile-Ife. Indeed, the claim of Ife origin appears popular among the three sub-clans of Iuleha. Oral evidence indicates that the hypothetical founder of Iuleha, Irimo was a prince of Ife, who migrated to the area via Benin.¹⁶ Amu's version of the Ife origin, which relates to the controversial Ekaladerhan story, posits that Iuleha is paternally Benin and maternally Ile-Ife.¹⁷ His submission that Iuleha is paternally Benin is hinged on the argument that Irimo was one of the sons of Oduduwa (or Izoduwa) and that Oduduwa was the same as Ekaladerhan who is believed to have been ostracized from the Benin

Kingdom towards the end of the Ogiso dynasty. The authenticity or otherwise of the Ekaladerhan story has received much attention from scholars and public commentators that it will not constitute part of this discussion.¹⁸

Apart from the complex story of origin from Ife aforementioned, Ogbomo believes that to some extent, Yoruba migrants from the Ife and Ondo areas comprised sections of Uokha, Otuo and Iuleha communities before Benin migrants arrived the area. It is difficult to identify pre-colonial Yoruba communities in Iuleha because oral tradition has little to say about the Yoruba migrants and their specific settlements in Iuleha. Certainly, the Yoruba migrants met some aboriginal people. As speculated elsewhere, substantial parts of their cultures and traditions were later swallowed up by those of the migrants and were assimilated in the process.¹⁹ As Ogbomo rightly observed, “It would appear that Iuleha oral tradition has suffered from... (some) kind of amnesia and adjustment...The original Yoruba foundations have been forgotten...”.²⁰ Nevertheless, he agrees that the Irimo tradition is a tacit acceptance of Yoruba elements in Iuleha. This fact has never been denied by Iuleha people.²¹

The presence of Benin and Yoruba languages in communities in Iuleha testifies to the cultural interactions that resulted from the interactions between Iuleha and the two groups. According to Omoikhefe Enahoro, “Some words in Iuleha are synonymous with some Yoruba words ...”²² With specific reference to Yoruba cultural influences, the following loanwords are related to Yoruba words/expressions:

Table 1: Possible Yoruba Loan Words in Iuleha Language

S/no	Yoruba Language/Dialects	Iuleha (Uzebba) Dialect	English Equivalent
1	Oti pari	Akpao	Finished/Concluded
2	Oke	Oke	Up/ Up town
3	Isapa	Asakpa	A kind of Vegetable
4	Agbo	Agbo	Ram
5	Ewure	Ewe	She-goat
6	Ibere	Abere	Start/Started
7	Itan	Itan	Story/history
8	Omu	Omuon	Take/Took
9	Oti re mi	Ore me	I am tired
10	Adugbo	Adugbo	Quarter/area
11	Gidi/pupo	Gidigbi	Huge
12	Ke re/kekere	Khe re	Small

13	Mo de	Ise de	Come/Coming
14	Joko (Sit)	Ijoko (Seat)	Sit/Seat
15	Aga	Aga	Seat
16	Apoti	Akpoti	Box
17	Idowu	Idowu	A child born after a set of twins
18	Alaba	Alaba	A child born after Idowu
19	Igbo	Ugbo/Ogo	Forest/bush
20	Ose	Ose	Sunday
21	Ema da lohun	Kha da eho gho	Do not mind (him or her)

Source: Researcher’s personal observations (2013-2022).

From the table, we can deduce that Yoruba migrants in Iuleha may have influenced the language and the culture of their host communities. However, the potential for confusion as to how this came about is great. While these cultural interactions have given Iuleha a unique combination of Edoid and Yoruba cultures, it is however, difficult to determine at what point some of these Yoruba expressions got into the Iuleha dialect. For instance, the word *Akpoti* (a box) probably got into Iuleha dialect during the colonial period. Prior to the colonial era, raffia designs were used in place of boxes.

In addition, the fact that Iuleha people experienced colonialism through Ifon (Ondo State) and Benin is enough to say that some of these words entered Iuleha lexicon as a result of the interactions between the two groups. While this conclusion does not offer detailed explanations as to why the words replaced their Edoid equivalents, it is fair to conclude that cultural borrowing between the two groups was a two way affair, a characteristic of a frontier or “marcher region.”²³ In fact, the dialect of Ifon (Yoruba) as well as those of the neighbouring Yoruba communities has considerable elements of the Edoid language. Hence, it is possible that some of the aforementioned Yoruba expressions were already entrenched in Iuleha dialect and vice versa prior to colonialism.²⁴ This does not undercut the dominant and overwhelming elements of the Edoid culture in Iulehaland.

Theory of Origin of Iuleha from Benin

In his scanty treatment of the history of Iuleha, Jacob Egharevba posits that the people of Iuleha and other Edo-speaking people were all emigrants from Benin.²⁵ Based on his Hamitic version of the history of Benin, Egharevba’s theory of origin may as well include the supposition that like the Bini, Iuleha people migrated from Egypt via Ile-Ife. Such a claim, which though was not the invention of Egharevba, has since been dismissed for being apocryphal and discredited for its unscientific attempt to promote the Hamitic hypothesis about the origin of African people south of the Sahara.²⁶ Therefore, the story of origin from Benin should not be tied to the broad version of Egharevba’s Egypt-Ife origin of the Bini.

Ade Obayemi is one of those not comfortable with the version of origin from Benin on the grounds that it appears to have been over-flogged. According to him:

The overwhelming commitment to the theory of origins from Benin, which has now become standard in a region in which Benin City has enjoyed political and cultural supremacy has effectively obscured the identification of what, properly speaking, should have given us an insight into the steps towards the formation of mini-states of the region. So spontaneous have been the narrations of the stories which say that founding ancestors came from Benin that they have been accepted with little questioning and eminent scholars have been let into taking them as fact or into using them as working hypotheses... The farthest we can go is to say that especially during the past six or more centuries, there were Benin cultural influences like kingship emblems, on the other polities, but emphatically these do not establish folk movements from Benin as the only cause of the first men settling in the area of Urhobo, Isoko, Ivbiosakon, Etsako, Ishan, Akoko-Edo or even the metropolitan area of the Benin kingdom.²⁷

Ogbomo agrees with Obayemi that the story of migration from Benin has overshadowed the entire history of origin in the Owan area. However, unlike Obayemi, Ogbomo attributed the reason to the fact that the Benin migrants after 1500 were the most historically conscious compared to the other migrants. Also, Ogbomo posited that the Benin migrants were not pioneers in a virgin land as such, but rather “small groups settling among an established population.” Therefore, like Obayemi, Ogbomo concluded that “neither the Yoruba nor the Edo migrants after 1500 founded any of the communities in Owan.”²⁸ However important as this conclusion may be, it cannot be generalized for the whole Owan communities, especially the border areas along the Owan-Ondo axis.

A further interpretation of the emigration from Benin indicates that Benin could have served as a mere stopover and not the beginning of the migration of the people to the present location of Iuleha. It follows, therefore, that the autochthonous Iuleha people belonged to those groups identified and classified by Ben Elugbe, as speakers of the ancient Edoid language.²⁹ Based on archaeological and linguistic evidence, H.B. Harunah relates the original homeland of all Edoid-speakers, and several other indigenous groups in Nigeria to the Niger-Benue Conference area.³⁰

Two perspectives promoted by Harunah and others are relevant in this attempt to historicize the migration story. They are the origin from the area of the hills of the ancient Akoko-Edo, which was part of the southern Niger-Benue Civilization, and the area northeast of the Niger-Benue Confluence. It is believed that migrations from the two areas into various parts of present day Nigeria started before the first millennium A.D.³¹ The movements resulted in the emergence of different variants of the Edoid dialectical groups including: the south-western Edoid group such as the Isoko, Urhobo (Sobo), Okpe, and Uvbie (Effurun), among others; the north-central Edoid group such as the Edo (Bini), the Esan (Ishan), the Ora-Emai-Iuleha-Sobe (of Owan territory), Otuo, Yekhee (Etsako), North Ibie and Three-Ibie (Imiegba, Imiakebu and Itsukwi), the Uneme, Osoo, Ate (Atte), Ikpeshi, Sasaru, Okpella, and Ihievbe, among others; the north-western Edoid group, including Akuku in present day Akoko-Edo area, Okpamheri in and around Ibillo in Akoko-Edo, the Okpe, near Igarra area of Akoko-Edo, and the Idesa in the Otuo area of Owan, among others;

and the Delta Edoid group including the Degema, the Egene (Engenni) and the Epie-Atisa, among others.³²

The conclusion from the above analysis is that the Nigerian Middle Belt or the central Nigerian area is the most probable place of origin of the ancestors of the various Nigerian groups, including the Edoid, the Yoruboid, and the Nupoid, among others and that several Edoid groups migrated from that area.³³ The implication of this is that in a broader sense, the Bini and Iuleha people are cousins the same way some Edoid and Yoruboid communities are related. In a restricted sense, and based on evidence of geography, linguistic, social, political and cultural institutions, Iuleha was an admixture of aboriginal, Yoruba and Benin influences.

Nevertheless, the predominance of Edoid words (especially Esan and Bini) in Iuleha dialect indicates Edoid origin of Iuleha. This is further buttressed by the clan's reverence for the leopard, the royal totem of Benin. However, the few available Yoruba words and expressions indicate that a Yoruba participation in the formation of Iuleha clan cannot be completely ruled out. These various groups assimilated in the cultures of Benin and Yoruba immigrants that settled among them.³⁴

Background to Benin-Iuleha Relations and the Extent of Benin Imperialism in the Area

Beyond the traditions of origin and theories of migrations and settlement of the Bini and Iuleha people, effective relationship between the two groups started during the period of Benin expansion to the area of present day Edo North about the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries.³⁵ The outcome of this relationship resulted in a form of imperialism, which essentially meant three things: a relationship that existed between a relatively stronger and more powerful state and a weak or less powerful polity; both the subordinated polity and their rulers owed allegiance only to the emperor, although they were usually allowed the right to exercise local suzerainty within their respective domains; and it encouraged the exploitation of the subordinate states or communities by the imperial sovereign.³⁶ Iuleha-Benin engagement was partially encapsulated in the first and second categories.

Benin imperialism in the area of Edo North was motivated by certain factors, which included the need to extend and expand the boundary of the kingdom into as many territories as possible in order to draw attention to the kingdom, increase its external image, and enhance its fame and popularity in about the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries; the need to facilitate the elevation of the status of the kingdom and ensure its transformation to an empire; and the desire to take further advantage of the situation not only to ensure the subordination of all the conquered states or communities and their rulers, but also to facilitate the exploitation of their human and material resources for the benefit of the kings.³⁷

To further expand into Edo North, Benin's military presence in the area started during the reign of Oba Ewuare from about 1440 to 1480. The Oba is reported to have conquered no fewer than two hundred and one towns and villages in the area.³⁸ It is possible that Iuleha was not originally part of the strategic plan of the Oba based on its relative isolation and sparsely populated communities. Most of the people were farmers and lived in scattered farm settlements where they could easily escape into the forest in the event of external attacks. The few relatively populated communities

such as Uzebba, Avbiosi and Ivbiodohen had natural defence such as rivers, thick forests and mountains that made external invasion relatively difficult.

However, the area was affected possibly because of its geographical location along the Benin-Akure/Yoruba axis. This point is stressed by Osadolor when he argued that at the end of the eighteenth century, the Benin military system had provided the means of consolidating the frontiers of the empire. While Iuleha may be regarded as one of the frontiers of the empire, the Benin expansion to and influence in the area benefitted more from the use of culture as a means of expansion and consolidation, especially in the period from 1600 to 1800. To that extent, it can be argued that the military system was more of a check on attempts towards disintegration of the state than further expansion through conquests.³⁹

Osadolor provides other areas of political borrowing from Benin. These include the fact that most of the mini-states in the empire adopted aspects of Benin political culture and social organization such as in the western Igbo and Esan communities where the Benin high ranking titles of Oliha, Edohen, Ezomo, Iyase, Esogban, Ero, Uwangue, Edogun and Ine were adapted by the communities in varying degrees of their political needs. Osadolor considered them the most receptive of the political ideas of Benin. Other Edoid groups that borrowed extensively from Benin political cultures during this period included the Urhobo, which adopted three of such titles - Izomor, Iyase(re), and Eni. The Itsekiri adopted titles such as Iyasere, Ero and Uwangue. In Kwale, such titles as Ozoma, Iyasele, Isagba and Uwangue are evidence of the expansion of Benin's cultural influences coupled with migrations from Benin.

In addition, Osadolor attributed the absence of such Benin titles among the Edoid group of Akoko-Edo, Etsako and Owan to the influence of the Islamic religion. This author finds the argument as a stretch of the limited influence that the Islamic religion had on south-western Owan. Indeed, that conclusion is not entirely true of Iuleha area where Islamic influences were tangential or non-existent. The current researcher agrees that the absence of any such titles might indicate a kind of subtle resistance to the power and influence of Benin.⁴⁰ What seems apparent is that there were tendencies towards republicanism in most part of the pre-colonial history of Iuleha as opposed to the established monarchical system of the Benin state. Beyond that, Iuleha people were more disposed to gerontocracy and the chieftaincy systems until the beginning of colonial rule in the first decade of the twentieth century.

Areas of Cooperation between Benin and Iuleha

To a large extent, the people of Iuleha had peaceful relationship with the Bini and the Benin Kingdom. According to Bradbury, the Ivbiosakon people "retained closer association with Benin and a stronger allegiance to the Oba than other Northern Edo groups".⁴¹ The reasons for the high level of cooperation and strong allegiance can be interpreted to mean that there was cooperation and understanding between the people of Iuleha and the Benin monarch. Similarly, the allegiance was not necessarily supported by coercion. Memories of kinship ties between the two groups and the acceptance of Benin's cultural suzerainty were more important in the tribute-paying system. This aligns with Bradbury's findings that "many of the founders are said to have left Benin as a

result of quarrels and banishment”.⁴² This may shed light on the level of homage and material tributes the people paid to the Oba of Benin.

The expansion of the Benin Kingdom to Iuleha and other northern Edo became intensified in the 15th century, when Oba Ewuare, noted for his disposition to aggressive expansion, introduced some remarkable changes which helped to transform the Benin state to an empire.⁴³ First, palace service including service in the army was structured to embrace majority of the able-bodied men in the kingdom. Second, Ewuare’s reputation as a warrior grew steadily through the years of his reign. He led his armies in person and waged war in all directions and far beyond the previous bounds of the state. It was perhaps during this period that the tribute-paying culture became extended to the Owan area.⁴⁴

Egharevba has given an insight into the beginning of the tribute-paying tradition by the mini-states. His summary of the military adventure of the Benin Kingdom demonstrates that “Ewuare fought against and captured 201 towns and villages in Ekiti, Ikare (Akoko), Kukuruku (Northern Edo), Eka and the Ibo Country on this (western) side of the river Niger. He took their rulers captive and caused the people to pay tribute to him”.⁴⁵ Available evidence indicates that the people of Iuleha, especially the community of Uzebba paid tributes to the Oba of Benin. In part of his research in 1917, Bradbury discovered that the Uzebba community:

used to send 10 goats, 10 fowls and some game to the Oba each year. It was the general custom in the area to present the skins of all leopards that were killed to the Oba. At Uzebba a special house was set aside for the Oba’s messengers and immediately before the British occupation one “Chief Obanyagboe” of Benin was responsible to the Oba for Uzebba. No Uzebba man should see the blood of a Benin man and if the former were to kill a Benin native he would pay four male and five female slaves in compensation.⁴⁶

Oral tradition is scanty on the beginning of the tribute-paying regime. There is no evidence of the capture of Iuleha rulers by the Benin army because most communities in the area prior to the establishment of colonial rule did not operate a centralized political administration. The chieftaincy system, which was the highest political institution in most communities, operated on the basis of seniority in terms of initiation. This meant that the capture of one leader would not automatically have forced that community to surrender. Therefore, it can be argued that cultural issues, rather than actual military conquest, were more important in the tribute-paying culture between Iuleha and the Benin Empire.

Some questions are important on some of the issues raised by Bradbury. For instance, it is not clear why the imperial forces of Benin could not install Chief Obanyagboe (Obayagboe) as king in Iuleha instead of appointing him as a mere “financial ambassador” of Benin in Uzebba? In that regard, we can speculate that the Benin Kingdom recognized the separate political institution of Iuleha people. Second, why did Uzebba people cooperate with Chief Obanyagboe without an army of occupation attached to him to safeguard his assignment in the community? The cultural relationship between Uzebba and the Benin Kingdom may provide insights into this question. Apart from the aforementioned Egharevba’s position, the Obazu festival/culture forbade Uzebba people from harming people related to the legendary Obazua, believed to have migrated from Benin.

Moreover, before the time of Obanyagboe, the people of Iuleha already had a political relationship with the Benin Kingdom.⁴⁷ Like most other communities in the Ivbiosakon area, they did not have a hereditary system of leadership. Their socio-political administration was carried out through the gerontocratic and chieftaincy systems. Communities such as Iuleha, Ake, Ikhi, and Aroho in their efforts to widen their political structures are believed to have obtained their first monarchical titles from Benin.⁴⁸ The story as told by the people indicates that during a period of political crisis in Iuleha, the elders sent the contestants in the kingship tussle to Benin for the purpose of selection. However, one of the contestants, Uantioje remained at home.

When the delegation arrived in Benin, the Oba of Benin gave them royal emblems, including the *ada* (royal sword) and some beads to take home and crown Uantioje because in his judgment, Uantioje demonstrated royal wisdom.⁴⁹ Uantioje then became the first crowned Oba of Iuleha. The pieces of information contained in the story have not been properly analyzed and clearer historiographical interpretations would need some inputs from archaeology and other allied disciplines for verification, especially with the confirmation by the palace of the Okumagbe of Iuleha of the existence of that particular royal sword, which along with the beads, are believed to have been buried with Uantioje at his demise a few months after his installation.⁵⁰ He is believed to have been poisoned possibly because the people were not comfortable with monarchy. The name of the Oba of Benin who ordered the crowning of Uantioje is silent in the traditional historiography of Iuleha clan.

The story about Uantioje is connected with the general trend of the period. Obayemi has observed that the practice was a vital factor in the promotion of the power of the Oba of Benin over neighbouring kingdoms because he had to sponsor candidates who would be loyal to him. Such was the case in some communities in Esan, Urhobo, Isoko and other Edoid-speaking communities.⁵¹ Sometimes, the Oba confirmed their appointment upon the payment of fees or the offering of presents, and so on.⁵² Nonetheless, there is no historical indication that this was what happened in the case of Uantioje.

In any case, after the Uantioje's episode, the people of Iuleha reverted to the chieftaincy and gerontocratic systems of leadership, which were hitherto the basic elements of socio-cultural and political administration in the area. Nevertheless, the two systems benefited from the cultural practices of the Bini. For instance, the Obazu Festival, which is based on the gerontocratic culture, is celebrated in honour of a Benin noble, Obazua, who settled among Aoma people of Iuleha. He is referred to as *Eraman* ("our father") by Aoma communities. The festival demonstrates the extent of kinship relationship between the two Edoid groups. The reverence accorded the legendary figure appears unrivalled, even when compared with the figure of Irimo, who tradition believes founded the Iuleha clan.⁵³ In fact, Ogbomo has even speculated that "had Irimo been the founder, as the tradition wants us to believe, there seems little doubt the festival (of Obazu) would have been created in his honor."⁵⁴ The much we can say is that the various elements contained in that festival do not suggest master-slave or conqueror-conquered relationship.

Moments of Resistance to Benin Hegemony and Imperialism

The people of Iuleha and other Ivbiosakon groups are believed to have successfully resisted Benin imperialism in and occasional raids on the area shortly before the Benin Expedition of 1897.⁵⁵ The extent of the success of the various resistant measures has not been fully explored in historical literature. Attempts made by Harunah⁵⁶ and Osiki⁵⁷ indicate that the level of resistance was not massive but could have been limited to a guerrilla system of resistance anchored on the “kukuruku strategy” or surprise attack and escape. For the purpose of clarification, the “Kukuruku cry” derived from the sound of the war approach displayed by some Edo north communities during the era of the Nupe slave-raids and invasion of the 1830s, 1840s, and early 1860s. The Nupe slave-catchers and kidnappers usually carried out their raids on the aforementioned areas, through their farms and homes. Their unexpected emergence in the farm areas, for instance, had usually caused so much panic and feeling of insecurity in the people being attacked that they usually raised an alarm, crying, or shouting, “Ku-ku-ru-ku”, “they have come again oh”!⁵⁸ This cry, which served as a signal, had usually informed and warned the people not yet attacked, of the emergent danger, as a result of which they would flee for safety”.⁵⁹ It is possible that the cry predates the era of the Nupe invasion down to the time of the Benin invasion around the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶⁰

The result of the Benin Expedition of 1897 and the subsequent exile of Oba Ovonramwen to Calabar offered an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting between the Oba of Benin and the then ruler of Iuleha, Chief Okun Imona. Tradition recounts how Okun was engaged in some power tussle exercises with Ovonramwen in their Calabar exile over who was in charge of political leadership in the Edo area. Oral sources indicate that in one of the conversations between Ovonramwen and Okun, the latter reaffirmed his belief in the political independence of Iuleha within the larger Edoid socio-political enclave, and that such an audacity of socio-cultural and political “nationalism” offended Ovonramwen.⁶¹ Though this said “verbal combat” may have been embellished by Iuleha people to emphasise their political worth, the general belief is that both leaders encountered each other in Calabar.⁶² Okun was fortunate to return home after his period of incarceration but could not perform his community duties maximally before his death in the 1920s. From the time of Okun’s death to the emergence of all-Iuleha-wide political heads represented by Chief Dogo Omogbai and Johnson Bare, Iuleha land reverted to the chieftaincy system of political administration. Dogo was more or less a product of colonial creation and exigencies.

Similarly, Johnson became the clan head of Iuleha in 1963 partly because of his exposure to Western education and the colonial service, unlike many of his contemporaries who did not have that opportunity. He was a staff of the Public Work Department (PWD). There is no clear information on the involvement of the Benin Kingdom on the installation of either Dogo or Johnson. However, Johnson’s successor and relative, Chief Timothy Omo-Bare, the first Okumagbe of Iuleha, had a good working relationship with the Oba of Benin, as both of them were members of the Bendel State Council of Traditional Rulers and later Edo State Council of Traditional Rulers until Omo-Bare’s demise in 1994. The power tussle and numerous disputes that accompanied the succession processes to fill the vacant *Okumangbeship* once again compelled the people of Iuleha to seek the guidance of the Benin monarch. The faction led by the son of the late Okumangbe, Chief Ayo Omo-Bare II, received the blessing of Oba Erediauwu II. Chief Omo-Bare II was installed as the Okumagbe of Iuleha in 2002 under the title of Omo-Bare II. It is believed

that the Oba of Benin played a significant role in his installation, a re-enactment of pre-colonial relationship between Benin and Iuleha.

Conclusion

In all, this work has contributed to Edoid studies by filling a gap due to the neglect of the study of the history of mini-states in the Edoid area. Unlike most previous attempts, which emphasized the history of Benin's relations with the bigger polities such as Benin-Esan relations, Benin-Etsako relations and the relationship between Benin and the Yoruba states of Akure and Owo, the current study focuses on the mini-state of Iuleha. It demonstrates that Iuleha enjoyed a status far beyond that of a subjugated political entity in its relationship with Benin. For instance, the work argues that unlike most other Edoid groups which adopted the hereditary monarchical system of Benin, pre-colonial Iuleha remained a gerontocratic state until it willingly adopted and adapted the chieftaincy and monarchical systems from either Benin or Ile-Ife. Nonetheless, Iuleha chiefs and elders continued to govern their people without much interference from the Benin state.⁶³

Moreover, when necessary Iuleha cooperated with Benin in their relationship and this was based more on cultural and kinship ties. Indeed, kinship ties and determined acceptance of Benin's hegemonic role in the affairs of Iuleha were germane in the relationship between the two groups. Historical narratives and cultural considerations rather than military occupation helped to cement their relationship. In the end, Iuleha people successfully internalized borrowings from both the Bini and the Yoruba, thus forming a uniquely Iuleha identity which is neither Benin nor Yoruba, but part of the Edoid-Yoruboid culture complex characteristic of a frontier community.

Endnotes

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- ¹³ A. F. C. Ryder, "The Benin Kingdom," O. Ikime (ed.), *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Heinemann Educational Books, Ibadan, 1980, 109.
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- ¹⁵ Ogbomo, *When Men and Women Mattered*.
- ¹⁶ Interview: Chiefs B.A. Oren, Eruere, B.O.I. Eguaoje, Okpuje, 24 November, 2003.
- ¹⁷ Sunday Amu, "Authoritative History of Iuleha," unpublished; Osiki, "A Sociopolitical History of Iulehaland: Earliest Times to 1994," 30-31.
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^{49.} Interview with Sunday Amu, and some other elders of Uzebba, November 1998.

^{50.} Interview with Aidenana Abode (who claimed that it was his father who discovered the sword at the sacred burial sites for Chiefs), January, 2008; Sunday Amu (who said the sword was discovered during a construction activity near the former palace of the late Okumagba, Chief T. Omo-Bare) May 1998, and in 2003.

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