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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN NIGERIA AND UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (USA)

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Abstract

In contrast to the United States of America's (USA) local government system, which has made significant contributions to local people's development, Nigeria's system is wracked by operational issues that prevent it from effectively meeting the developmental needs of the masses at the grassroots level. This paper compared and contrasted the organisational structures of Nigerian and American local governments in order to determine the extent to which grassroots administrations in these two nations have addressed the developmental needs of their respective populations. This paper adopted the efficient service theory and fiscal federalism theory as its theoretical foundation and relied on secondary source of data collection which is a qualitative method from textbooks, journal articles, research projects, publications etc. The findings suggest that the way and manner the system of local government administration is organized in the United States of America (USA) is better both legally and structurally and have achieved higher level of development than its Nigerian counterpart. Results showed that local government administration in Nigeria was underperforming due to a number of internal issues, such as a lack of financial autonomy, corruption, inadequate financing, and so on. In the light of the foregoing, the paper recommends that the Nigerian government should take a cue from the American model of local government in order to improve on the responsiveness of the country's administration, to achieve self-sustenance and democracy to the aspirations of development of the local government.

Introduction

The global development process relies heavily on local government systems, which are designed to bring development to the masses at the grassroots level. Therefore, the administration of the local government performs its functions to the people in the form of providing social services to the people of the grassroot level including primary healthcare, market stalls, feeder roads etc. In contrast to the United States of America (USA), which has been using its local government system for over a century, Aliyu and Kohen (2020) argue that the development of local government system in Nigeria has been by experimentation as compared to the local government system in the USA which has made a remarkable progress as a result of its long practice of the system.

In the USA the political executives consist of the mayors and supervisors, in Nigeria it consists of the chairmen, the vice chairmen, the political secretary as well as the supervisors. There are two basic types of local government structure which are the single-tier and the multi-tier type. In the single tier type the local government plan and implement all its services and projects under its jurisdiction, while in the multi-tier type, it involve two or more levels of local government in one territory sharing and performing these functions simultaneously, although this could bring about administration complexity as there may be overlapping of functions, notwithstanding it provides greater opportunity for political participation and training politicians as the two or more layers of local government provide a wider group of leaders. In fact, United State of America has three distinct structures of local government, it is on this note that this paper actually made a comparison of the local government system in Nigeria practicing single tier and United State of America practicing multi-tier system in local government administration.

Although, studies are abound concerning local government matters, for example, Okolo and Osimerah (2017) who researched on ‘‘Politics of Local Government creation: Implications for National Development in Nigeria’’ and Ozohu-Suleiman, (2023) who researched on ‘‘Local government administration in Nigeria: The search for relevance’’. However, there is a lack of research that compares the local government systems in the USA and Nigeria; this paper aims to address that knowledge gap. This paper therefore, is aimed to compare and contrast the local government systems in the USA and Nigeria so that we can appraise the relative merits of the two systems in terms of their effect on national human development.

In addition to the introduction the paper is divided into different major sections. These are: (i) Theory and Methods (ii) Conceptualisation/Literature Review (Local Government; Sources of Local Government Revenue in Nigeria and USA; and Evolution of Local Government systems in Nigeria and USA) (iii) Analysis of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA (Similarities of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA; Differences of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA; and Comparison of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA; (iv) Concluding Remarks and Recommendations.

Theory and Methods

The paper adopted the efficient service theory and fiscal federalism theory as its theoretical foundation. The efficiency service theory as propounded by Edmund in 2006 expressed the need for the existence of local government to provide essential services to the local community as the nearest political unit to the people. The efficient service theory was complemented by the theory of fiscal federalism, which helps to explains how local government funds are generated for developmental programs at the local level. The theory was propounded by Musgrave in1959 and Oates in 1972 and their works focused on the distributions of public sector functions and funding in a more appropriate manner among the different arms of government (King, 2011).

The paper made use of documentary approach which is a qualitative method and generated secondary data from text books, journals, newspapers, federal and state gazettes, governmental regulations etc. The investigation, analysis, and interpretation of social events are at the heart of the documentary approach, which forms the backbone of data collection in social science research (Obasi, 2018). Nwana (2016), asserts that, the documentary approach draws on pre-existing materials that were created for reasons other than the researchers' use.

Conceptualisation/Literature Review

Local Government

Osuagwu (2019) described local government as a system government whereby an elected or appointed officers manage the public affairs of their localities that have some number of responsibilities and power to oversee the community of the grassroot level. The United Nations, (1998) defined local government as a political division of a federal system established by law and has specific purposes. Enemuo, (1999) argues that local government is the administration of the lowest unit of a state, which is legally separate and has the authority to make money and carry out functions under the supervision of elected or appointed leaders. As a result, local government is

accountable to the people living in that area. Augustine (2010) defined local government is a level of government whereby the participation in the process of decision making and decision makers midwifed by the local bodies.

Though, the authority of the government at the centre is being recognized, the government of the local takes responsibility for any decision it makes within its sphere of domain (Okolo & Lawyer-keme, 2023). Oyediran, (2012) describes local government in any nation as the least tier of government, which is distinct legally and structurally as a government of the third level in a federal system to perform some special duties that are distinct to the people of the grassroots level.

James (2013) argues that a nation's constitution establishes local governments to deliver unique, locally-oriented services to the people living at the grassroots level. Simeon, (2014) asserts that there are two models of local government systems. The first, the Ultra Vires model, acknowledges the limitations on local government autonomy in the constitution, and serves as a guide for local council authority. The second, the general competence model, encourages local governments to fulfil essential functions for the people at the grassroots level and show flexibility in providing the services that fall within their authority.

Adegbolu (2016) stated that in the contemporary world, local government is established by the law of a government at the centre in a unitary system, where as in a federation local government is established by the extant laws of a state by means of a document outlining its authority, composition, purview, and duties. Thereby, the local government is a separate legal body with the capacity to bring and receive lawsuits. Ugwu (2019) argues that the purpose of local government is to provide basic services closer to the people at the grassroots level. To bring development closer to the population in rural regions, all of the preceding conceptualizations lead to the fact that the local government system is different. Therefore, this paper agrees with the above conceptual framework. The paper compares and contrasts the local government systems in the United States and Nigeria using a qualitative methodology. In order to analyse the key issues that are pertinent to the research paper, it depends on the current literature.

Sources of Local Government Revenue in Nigeria and USA

Public revenue mobilisation in Nigeria has demonstrated a significant concentration of funds at the federal level, with little regard for the massive spending needs of the state and local

governments that are so close to the people (Olaoye, 2018). In Nigeria, local governments get funding from a variety of sources: 30% from Value Added Tax (VAT), 10% from state governments and 20% from the federation account (Adeyemi, 2010). Nonetheless, the aforementioned resources are insufficient to address the immense development issues present at the local government level in Nigeria (Abba & Nwanne, 2017).

Tonwe (2017) established a connection between the ineffectiveness of Nigeria's local government administration and its reliance on federation account allocations due to a lack of capacity to generate independent revenue. According to Nwakaire (2013), federal funding for Nigerian local governments increased steadily between 1976 to 1997, N100 million in 1976 and N352.6 million in 1980. Nwafor, (2016) stated that, the main cause of the decline in locally generated resources is the lack of proper training for government tax collectors. A better method for increasing local government income, according to their suggestions, would be to introduce new sources of money, provide stronger incentives for the revenue generation personnel to work extra, and, when necessary, raid tax defaulters.

Lawal and Oluwatoyin, (2011) asserted that local government administration should prioritise community needs, respond quickly and properly to those needs, and develop a better strategy to put these policies into action. Kunle, (2015) argues that competent, well-trained employees, supported by modern technology, are the key to a successful local government system. In order for local governments to carry out their statutory functions to the fullest extent possible. Ifeayekwu (2014) argues that the best way for them to do so is for their executive and legislative branches to work together, brainstorm, and establish shared goals and objectives. Local administrations have failed to meet expectations of the masses at the grassroot due to mismanagement of funds (Girish, 2014; Okolo, 2011).

No doubt, sound fiscal management is the cornerstone of efficient local government administration. Osuagwu, (2019) argues that the insufficient accounting control system and inadequate punishment of offenders are contributing to the rising tide of corruption and fraud in local government administration.

In the USA's federal system, the majority of a state's budget goes towards funding its local governments, but such entities do have certain revenue streams of their own, including property taxes, user fees, and company licence fees. State legislation severely limits their ability to collect

more funds, so it's no surprise they turn to their "grandparent" for help when circumstances are difficult. Meanwhile, they deal with the irritation of residents' increasing requests for spending. State funds constitute the most significant contributor to local coffers. Councils at the local level get around 40% of the state's budget (Okolo, 2011).

There are a variety of requirements for state grants, just like there are for federal grants-in-aid. Public education and social welfare get the lion's share of governmental funding. Public health, public safety, highways, and hospitals gets additional funding from the state. This leaves little room for discretionary spending by local governments. The amount of state aid to local authorities varied widely, reflecting the inherent variety in the division of labour between states and municipalities. Some states, like Hawaii, South Carolina, and West Virginia, have a very central government that finances and oversees several programmes, while others, like Maryland, New York, and Wisconsin, have more decentralised systems.

Evolution of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA

The contemporary system of local government in Nigeria has its roots in the several local administrations that emerged during the colonial era. There was a marked difference between the oligarchic and theocratic local government administration in Nigeria's northern and southern regions; the southern region's organisational structure was more democratic, reflecting the lack of clear stratification there. Ola, (2015) asserts that the colonial government of Nigeria chose to oversee local affairs under an indirect rule approach and included traditional institutions into its management. Initially established in Lagos and the Western and Eastern areas of Nigeria between 1950 and 1955, the elected local government council followed a format similar to the British Whitehall.

In 1950, the Eastern Region passed an ordinance establishing local government; in 1952, the Western Region passed a legislation establishing local government; and in 1954, Northern Nigeria passed a law establishing Native Authority. These acts laid the groundwork for local government during this time. At this point in time, the councils' purview had expanded to encompass not just elementary and secondary education, but also health, law enforcement, and the courts. In accordance with the ten-year welfare and development plans (1946–1956) put into place by the colonial government, the local administration at the time was structured to enable the provision of social services, such as feeder roads, the building of markets, and tax collection (Okolo & Boubai, 2021).

Financial, personnel, and general administrative issues were among areas where the councils had a lot of leeway to act independently. Following Nigeria's independence and the dissolution of the first republic, the military regime of Yakubu Gowon instituted a number of reforms, including renaming and restructuring of local government councils, which virtually standardised their administration across the country. In 1976, the Murtala/Obasanjo dictatorship enacted local government reforms to reposition and restructure the local government system throughout Nigeria, which further changed these administrative improvements (Okolo & Boubai, 2021).

When the dictatorship fell in 1979, a civilian administration took over (Chukwuemeka, 2013; Oyediran, 2012), however they failed to solidify the reform's goals. In an effort to improve service delivery at the local level, the Babangida regime implemented local government reforms in 1991. These reforms included doing away with the state ministry of local government and replacing the previous practice of appointing council leaders with democratically elected ones. As part of his reforms, Babangida advocated for the federal government to allocate funds directly to local government councils on a monthly basis (Ugwu, 2019). But it's worth noting that since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, there have been disputes and controversies surrounding the administration of local governments by the federal government and state authorities. This is due to non-financial autonomy, which has made local governments in Nigeria unable to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to an optimal degree.

Foundational Legal and Structural Elements of Municipal Government Systems in the United States and Nigeria. In 1976, during the Muritala/Obasango dictatorship, Nigeria's local government system was formally established, undergoing a legal reform and laying the institutional groundwork for enhanced service delivery. In 1978, the Constitutional Drafting Committee was established to safeguard the local government council from potential misuse by the state governments, as stated by George (2015). The 1979 constitution codified the committee's recommendations for a robust system of local governance that would be separate from the federal and state levels of government.

Nevertheless, the local government system in Nigeria is to be run by representatives chosen by the people, as stated in section 7(1) of the 1979 constitution, which sets the legal and institutional status of the council in question. This section elaborates on the idea that the governments of the states must guarantee their safety in accordance with the statutes that established them, outlined

their organisational framework, specified their membership, and allocated their funds. In addition, a strong and democratic system of local government administration was established by the constitutional amendments made in 1989 under Babangida's rule. These amendments included a presidential system of government at the council level and the application of a system of checks and balances within that system in part II, section 7 of the 1989 constitution (George, 2015). In 1999, the Nigerian constitution authorised 774 councils nationwide and provided powers to each state to decide on the system's funding, structure, composition, and functions. Section 8 of the same constitution allowed each state to administer the system through democratically elected local governments.

It was in 1789 that the United States Constitution was ratified, marking the beginning of American federalism and the rise of local government administration. Based on Riper's, (2014) research, the initial instance of a modern administrative state in American municipal government occurred from 1789 to 1829 when it was overseen by the federal government. American municipal administrations owe a debt to the logical administrative procedures that underpinned them, such as a hierarchical departmental organisation, a merit system, and a methodical decision-making process. America values democracy and holds the people in the highest esteem when it comes to managing the state's affairs (Porter, 2016).

At the grassroots level, local governments in the United States are tasked by statute with carrying out developmental programmes, such as the provision of social amenities like electricity, piped water, and paved roads. This puts the people first when it comes to representation and decision-making. In the United States of America, which is home to 54 individual states, there is a multi-tier system of local government that was established to handle various tasks and initiatives within each county, city, and special district.

Since the US Constitution mandates a "republican form of government" for the states and forbids delegating the organisation of local council to the federal authority, it is clear that the President, Congress, and the Supreme Court are responsible for ensuring the establishment and effective operation of the local government system in the US. The amendment granted the states the ability to form municipal governments. Article VI of the United States Constitution also grants the power to the states to form and organise municipal governments. The state authorities in the USA were compelled to establish several municipal sub divisions as a result of this, including counties, towns, library boards, and special taxation districts. Each state's constitution and law detail the

organisational make-up, budgetary allocation, and accountability of the state's local government, as well as the sub-divisions' relationships with one another and the state as a whole (George, 2015). Article VI of the United States Constitution mandates that every five years, in compliance with 13 USC 161, the United States Census Bureau is to conduct a census of all persons residing in local governments. The United States have 89,055 LGUs (counties, cities, and special districts (George, 2015).

Analysis of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA

Similarities of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA

Nigerian and American council administrations are similar in many respects. To begin with, each country's constitution makes it very clear what the rules and fundamental principles of its local government system are. In addition, the local governments in both nations comprised of members chosen by the people from each political ward, who serve as the foundation of the local council management. It is the constitutional duty of the states in both nations to establish, maintain, and ensure the proper functioning of local governments. Section 8 (1) of the Nigerian Constitution grants the authority to the state governments to establish, finance, organise, comprise, and perform the duties of such councils by a legislative act.

Again, the Constitution of both nations spell out in great detail the guiding principles and regulations of its municipal administration. Moreover, the local council management in both countries is based on members elected by the people from each political ward. Both countries' constitutions make it clear that it is the responsibility of the states to form, fund, and oversee municipal administrations. Legislative acts enacted by the state governments are authorised to be established, financed, organised, comprised, and to carry out the functions of such councils.

Differences of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA

When comparing the legal framework and administrative practices of Nigeria with the United States, there are noticeable disparities. As an example, in Nigeria, the ability to develop and implement enabling laws for the local government administration in each state was granted to the government of each federation state in section 7(1) of the 1999 constitution, subject to section 8(1) of the same constitution (as modified). A state newly formed municipal administration can also be enumerated by the National Assembly per the constitution.

However, unlike in Nigeria, the federal laws do not address the incorporation of local governments. Consequently, unlike in Nigeria, the federal government does not allocate resources

to support the establishment of local governments. In contrast to the three-model organisation in the United States, where each of the fifty-four states serves as a significant administrative entity, Nigeria's system of local government provides for a unified framework with standardised functions throughout all of the states. In the United States of America, each of the three levels of local government—counties, cities, and special districts—carries out a unique function in the national effort to foster grassroots development (George, 2015).

In comparison to Nigeria's 774 LGAs, the United States has an overwhelming majority of more local government councils (89,055 to be exact) due to the larger number of counties, municipalities, and districts in the country. In contrast to Nigeria, where the majority of local councils cover vast areas and communities are geographically distant from government headquarters, the United States has a much higher number of local governments that have successfully integrated far-flung areas into the country's development web (Okolo & Osimerah, 2017; Okolo & Lawyer-keme, 2023).

In contrast to Nigeria, where local governments often face budget shortfalls, local governments in the United States rely on taxes and loans to finance designated endeavours. Nevertheless, according to the 1999 constitution's fourth schedule, local governments in Nigeria get a monthly allocation from the federal account and other sources. When comparing the two nations' levels of autonomy, it becomes clear that the state's dominating role in Nigeria's local government administration severely limits the independence of the councils. The state government's handling of the joint state/council allocations, in which the impacted local government bodies have little or no say, is a classic illustration of the state's marginalisation of the local council.

Comparatively, local governments in the United States have complete financial autonomy, but in Nigeria this is not entirely guaranteed. Despite the fact that this clause is a component of the 1999 constitution that provides a democratically elected local government system in Nigeria, certain state governments in the country often fail to uphold it and impede the people's capacity to elect representatives at the grassroots level. The purpose of this system is to ensure inclusive administration and accountability at the grassroots level. On the other hand, Americans often have municipal elections to choose representatives who represent their interests.

Comparison of Local Government Systems in Nigeria and USA

The grassroots development process in Nigeria is less effective than in the United States, according to the American model of local government. Due to the fact that the system is based on elections, where eligible citizens choose representatives to serve on local government councils, the revise is the case Nigeria where most state governors favour appointing caretaker management committees comprised of their friends and political associates to run the council, the people are denied their basic right to elect their representatives to this position. In contrast to Nigeria, where a single council layer structure has significantly isolated the administration from the people and had little effect on their daily lives, the multi-tiered American council system—which includes counties, municipalities, and special districts—has helped local government initiatives succeed in the United States by bringing councils closer to the people through grassroots initiatives. Local governments in the United States are run by highly educated individuals, including those with doctorates. In contrast, in Nigeria, many of the council workers are semi-illiterate and seldom sent on training programmes (Mark, 2010).

In the United States, local governments have a lot of leeway to decide how to spend their own money, which means they can be more proactive in raising taxes on necessities and policy, councils can make their own decisions without interference from the federal government. The council system in Nigeria has challenges in carrying out its development programmes due to a lack of complete financial autonomy from the state government. Even more so, unlike in the United States, where local governments may extend their sources of locally produced earnings, the Nigerian system relies heavily on federal grants, which might mean little to no funding for project execution or satisfying financial commitments. Since the power to establish local governments is granted to states by the US constitution, it is not required that the proposed council be recognised through the federal legislative official gazette. In the United States, the strategy of fostering the direct construction of local governments has brought such governments closer to the people and has also contributed to the change of rural areas. The Nigerian government should take a page out of this policy's playbook and revise section 8 (1) of the constitution to remove the provision that allows individual states to establish more local governments without first receiving approval from the national assembly (Edmund, 2006; Ugwu, 2019).

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Both the United States of America and Nigeria are federalist democracies, and this research compared their respective systems of local government administration. Because the US local

government model is multi-layer and the Nigerian model is single-layer, the paper found that the two nations' systems of local government have evolved and are structured differently. In contrast to the US system, which is marked by a solid financial foundation and a robust administrative structure, Nigeria's local administration has struggled to fulfil its constitutional mandate due to the country's weak administrative structure and unstable financial foundation. In contrast to the USA, where the structural arrangement of the local government administration has significantly contributed to the nation's sustainable development, the paper concludes that operational challenges in Nigeria's local government system have significantly limited its optimal performance. This paper therefore recommended the followings:

i. To achieve the same level of efficiency as the American system, the Nigerian federal and state governments should step back and let the country's local governments handle all fiscal and political matters on their own.
ii. In order to enhance operational performances, local government workers in Nigeria should get frequent training in the United States to learn their local government system of administration.
iii. It is also imperative that Nigeria adopts the same attitude of openness and responsibility in local government administration that has been successful in the United States.
iv. To bring development closer to the people at the grassroots, Nigeria should follow the lead of the United States and establish more local governments. In contrast to Nigeria's 774 LGAs, the United States has 89,055 Local government units (counties, municipalities, and districts). In contrast to the vastness of most Nigerian local councils and the relative isolation of most communities from their respective headquarters, the dense network of US LGAs has drawn many outlying areas into the development web of their neighbouring councils, allowing for more targeted and efficient development assistance.
v. Also, a multi-tier local government system, like the one in the United States, would enable the devolution of authority to the local authorities and encourage effective administration at the local level; hence, Nigeria should amend its constitution to embrace this model.

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POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC STABILITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Political violence remains one of the most persistent threats to Nigeria's democratic consolidation. Despite more than two decades of uninterrupted democratic governance since 1999, the country continues to experience recurrent episodes of electoral violence, political unrest, and ethno-religious conflict that undermine institutional stability and erode public trust in democratic processes. This study investigates the causes, patterns, and implications of political violence for democratic stability in Nigeria, framed within the theoretical contexts of Relative Deprivation Theory, Frustration-Aggression and the Political Economy Theory of Conflict. Adopting a qualitative research approach, the study relies on secondary data, including content analysis of electoral reports in Nigeria. The findings reveal that political violence is primarily driven by elite manipulation, youth unemployment, ethno-religious polarisation, and institutional weaknesses within Nigeria's electoral and security systems. Furthermore, the monetisation of politics and a prevailing culture of impunity among political elites have entrenched cycles of violence, thereby weakened democratic norms and diminished citizen confidence in the political process. The study concludes that political violence not only disrupts electoral integrity and governance but also fosters authoritarian tendencies and deepens socio-economic instability. To achieve enduring democratic stability, Nigeria must strengthen democratic institutions, promote political accountability, empower youth, and institutionalise peaceful mechanisms for conflict resolution. Ultimately, the sustainability of Nigeria's democracy depends on the nation's capacity to manage political competition without violence and to cultivate inclusive political structures grounded in justice, equity, and the rule of law.

***Keywords*:** Political Violence; Democratic Stability; Electoral Conflict; Governance; Democracy;

Introduction

Political violence has remained one of the most enduring challenges to democratic stability in Nigeria. Since the country's return to civilian rule in 1999, the nation has witnessed repeated

episodes of violence associated with elections, political competition, and ethno-religious divisions. Despite its promise of participatory governance and peaceful transition of power, democracy in Nigeria continues to be marred by political intolerance, elite manipulation, and violent struggles for access to state resources (Ibeanu, 2007; Omotola, 2010). These recurrent violent outbreaks have not only undermined public confidence in democratic institutions but have also impeded the consolidation of Nigeria's fragile democracy. According to Ake (1996), democracy in Africa is inherently linked to the nature of the postcolonial state, which is often characterised by exclusion, patronage, and contestations over power and wealth. In Nigeria, this structural condition has been amplified by widespread poverty, unemployment, and ethno-religious fragmentation, creating a fertile ground for political violence (Suberu, 2010). Political violence manifests through diverse forms, including electoral violence, thuggery, political assassinations, arson, intimidation of opponents, and the destruction of property (Albert, 2007; Omitola, 2011). The recurring pattern of such violence reflects the deep-seated weaknesses in Nigeria's democratic culture, where politics is often perceived as a zero-sum contest for control of state power and access to its material benefits (Ibrahim & Egwu, 2005).

Historically, the roots of political violence in Nigeria can be traced to the pre-independence and early post-independence periods, when ethnic and regional rivalries shaped political mobilisation and competition. The crises in the Western Region in the 1960s, the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), and various communal clashes in the 1980s and 1990s were symptomatic of a political system that prioritised ethnic loyalty over national cohesion (Osaghae, 1998). The advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999 was expected to reverse these trends by institutionalising democratic norms, yet violence has persisted across multiple electoral cycles (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Reports from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and international observers show that every general election since 1999 has been accompanied by significant levels of violence resulting in loss of lives and property (Bekoe, 2011; Onapajo, 2014).

Several scholars have identified elite manipulation of ethnicity and religion, youth unemployment, and institutional weaknesses as central drivers of political violence in Nigeria (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; Obi, 2011). Politicians frequently mobilise unemployed and disenfranchised youths as agents of electoral intimidation, creating a cycle where economic deprivation and political patronage intersect to fuel violence (Omotola, 2010). Similarly, weak law enforcement, judicial inefficiency, and the culture of impunity have allowed perpetrators of political violence to evade justice (Okolie, 2015). The consequence is an erosion of democratic

accountability, public trust, and national security, all essential elements for democratic consolidation (Diamond, 1999).

Moreover, the monetisation of politics and the commercialisation of electoral processes have further entrenched political violence as a tool for achieving electoral victory. As Ibeanu (2007) observes, the struggle for political power in Nigeria is often linked to the control of vast state resources, making elections "a do-or-die affair." This instrumental use of violence to achieve political ends undermines democratic norms and distorts the legitimacy of elected institutions. Consequently, rather than serving as a mechanism for peaceful change of government, elections in Nigeria have frequently become flashpoints for conflict and instability (Omotola, 2010; Ibrahim, 2015).

The implications of political violence for democratic stability are profound. First, it weakens state institutions and undermines the rule of law, leading to a decline in citizens' confidence in democratic governance (Diamond, 1999; Ayoade, 2008). Second, political violence perpetuates a culture of intolerance and insecurity, discouraging citizen participation in politics and eroding civic engagement (Agbaje, 2011). Third, it fosters conditions that allow authoritarian tendencies to resurface, as governments resort to coercive measures in the name of maintaining order (Okoosi-Simbine, 2003). The combination of these factors limits Nigeria's ability to achieve the kind of stable and inclusive democracy envisioned by its constitutional order and international democratic norms (Norris, 2014). Addressing political violence, therefore, requires more than mere electoral reform. It demands comprehensive institutional strengthening, inclusive governance, and youth empowerment to break the cycle of manipulation and disillusionment. Scholars such as Agbaje (2011) and Ibrahim (2015) argue that promoting civic education, transparency, and accountability can help create a political culture anchored on dialogue rather than violence. Strengthening the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) reforming security agencies, and ensuring justice for victims of political violence are also essential steps toward democratic resilience (Omotola, 2010).

Therefore, the persistence of political violence in Nigeria exposes the fragility of its democratic system and the urgent need for systemic reforms. The stability of Nigeria's democracy will depend largely on its ability to manage political competition peacefully, ensure fair distribution of opportunities, and institutionalise the principles of justice, equity, and rule of law. Only through

these measures can Nigeria achieve the vision of a stable, participatory, and inclusive democracy capable of fostering sustainable national development.

Conceptual Review

Political Violence

Political violence is a multidimensional and deeply embedded phenomenon that has attracted extensive academic and policy attention due to its far-reaching implications for democracy, governance, and social stability. In political science and peace studies, the term "political violence" generally refers to the use or threat of physical force by individuals or groups to achieve political objectives or to influence political behaviour, processes, or outcomes (Gurr, 1970; Schmid, 1992). It includes a wide range of activities, from violent protests, assassinations, and coups d'état to civil wars, electoral violence, and state repression (Tilly, 2003; Goodwin, 2001). Political violence is thus both a symptom and a cause of political instability, often emerging where there are deep-seated grievances, social inequalities, or contestations over power and resources. According to Ted Robert Gurr (1970), in his seminal work Why Men Rebel, political violence arises primarily from relative deprivation, a perceived discrepancy between individuals' expectations and their actual socio-economic and political realities. When citizens or groups feel excluded from political participation or deprived of economic benefits, frustration builds, which may translate into violent resistance against perceived injustices or oppressive political structures. This theoretical framework underscores the psychological and structural underpinnings of political violence, linking it to socio-political exclusion, inequality, and economic marginalisation.

Similarly, Charles (2003) conceptualises political violence as a product of contentious politics, where groups resort to coercion to achieve political leverage. Tilly views political violence as a byproduct of the competition for state power and the struggle for control over political institutions. He argues that states and non-state actors alike engage in violence to secure, maintain, or challenge authority. This perspective situates political violence within the broader framework of state formation, legitimacy, and resource control. From a different angle, Arendt (1970) on Violence, distinguishes between power and violence, asserting that violence is often used when legitimate political authority has eroded. While power is rooted in collective consent, violence emerges as an instrument of coercion when political legitimacy and consensus break down. Arendt's distinction is critical in understanding the dynamics of state repression and authoritarian tendencies in political systems where democratic institutions are weak.

In the African context, scholars such as Ake (1996), Osaghae (1998), and Omotola (2010) note that political violence is deeply intertwined with the legacy of colonialism, weak state institutions, and patrimonial politics. Postcolonial African states inherited fragile political structures where state power became the principal avenue for wealth accumulation. Consequently, political competition often assumes violent dimensions because access to political office is synonymous with access to economic resources (Ake, 1996; Chabal & Daloz, 1999). In Nigeria, for instance, the struggle for political power frequently degenerates into violent conflict during elections, as political elites manipulate ethnic and religious sentiments to secure electoral advantage (Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; Omotola, 2010).

Political violence can be categorised into three major forms:

i. State-sponsored violence, where the state uses its coercive apparatus (e.g., the police, military) to suppress dissent or opposition (Gurr, 1986).
ii. Societal or communal violence, which involves clashes among social, ethnic, or religious groups in pursuit of political interests (Horowitz, 1985).
iii. Electoral violence, which occurs before, during, or after elections and is aimed at influencing electoral outcomes (Fischer, 2002; Bekoe, 2011).

Electoral violence has become particularly pervasive in emerging democracies like Nigeria and Kenya, where competition for political office is intense and institutions of electoral management are weak. According to Fischer (2002), electoral violence includes all acts that disrupt the electoral process, such as intimidation, vote-buying, ballot snatching, destruction of electoral materials, or attacks on candidates and voters. The prevalence of such violence reflects the erosion of democratic norms and the instrumentalisation of violence as a means to acquire or retain power (Omotola, 2010; Onapajo, 2014).

Furthermore, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) in their Greed and Grievance model, link political violence to both economic motivations (“greed”) and social grievances (“grievance”). They argue that while some political violence is ideologically driven, much of it is also economically motivated, particularly in contexts where political power guarantees access to resources. This dual perspective helps explain why political violence persists in resource-rich but institutionally weak states, where corruption, patronage, and exclusion are prevalent.

The effects of political violence are multidimensional. It undermines democratic consolidation, weakens state legitimacy, and erodes citizens' trust in public institutions (Diamond, 1999; Norris, 2014). It also discourages political participation, increases insecurity, and disrupts socio-economic activities (Okolie, 2015). In severe cases, persistent political violence may precipitate authoritarian reversals, as political elites justify repressive governance in the name of restoring order (Ayoade, 2008). To address political violence, scholars and practitioners advocate for inclusive governance, institutional reforms, youth empowerment, and effective justice mechanisms (Agbaje, 2011; Obi, 2011). Strengthening electoral management bodies, enforcing the rule of law, and promoting civic education are essential strategies for breaking the cycle of violence. Moreover, the promotion of peacebuilding and conflict resolution mechanisms, grounded in local contexts and participatory frameworks, is vital for sustaining democratic stability (Lederach, 1997).

In essence, political violence is not a spontaneous or isolated occurrence but rather a reflection of deeper structural and institutional dysfunctions within the political system. It represents a failure of governance, inequality, and exclusion, manifesting through violent means when peaceful political engagement becomes inaccessible. Understanding political violence, therefore, requires a multidimensional lens that integrates economic, political, psychological, and historical factors to design effective strategies for sustainable peace and democratic resilience.

Democratic Stability

Democratic stability is a central concept in political science, governance studies, and comparative politics, representing the condition under which democratic institutions, processes, and values are firmly established and resilient against authoritarian reversals, violent conflicts, and systemic crises. Broadly defined, democratic stability refers to the capacity of a democratic system to endure over time, maintain legitimacy, and provide an environment where political competition, participation, and accountability occur peacefully within constitutional frameworks (Diamond, 1999; Linz & Stepan, 1996). It signifies not merely the existence of democratic institutions but their consolidation, acceptance, and functionality in ensuring good governance and political order.

According to Linz and Stepan (1996) democracy becomes stable when it achieves the status of a "consolidated democracy," meaning that democracy is "the only game in town", that is, when no significant political actors seek to overthrow it, when public opinion broadly supports democratic norms, and when institutions perform effectively. In this view, democratic stability goes beyond

the procedural dimension of holding elections to encompass the behavioural, attitudinal, and institutional aspects of political life that sustain democratic governance. Behavioural stability implies that political actors abide by democratic rules and reject violence or unconstitutional means to attain power. Attitudinal stability suggests that citizens and elites internalise democratic values, while institutional stability reflects the existence of robust political and legal systems capable of managing conflicts and ensuring accountability (Linz & Stepan, 1996).

Diamond (1999) defines democratic stability in terms of democratic consolidation, which involves the institutionalisation of democratic norms, the rule of law, political tolerance, and effective governance. According to Diamond, a stable democracy is one in which the likelihood of regression into authoritarianism is minimal and where conflicts are resolved through peaceful, lawful, and legitimate mechanisms. Thus, democratic stability rests on the capacity of political institutions, such as the judiciary, legislature, and electoral bodies, to function independently and credibly, and on the extent to which citizens participate meaningfully in governance without resorting to violence (Diamond, 1999). Similarly, Huntington (1991) in The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century, argues that democratic stability is achieved when political transitions become routinised; that is, when changes in government occur peacefully through elections, not through coups or violent uprisings. Huntington emphasises the importance of institutional maturity, elite consensus, and socio-economic development in sustaining stable democratic systems. Without these elements, newly democratizing states remain vulnerable to instability, corruption, and authoritarian relapse.

From a structural-functional perspective, democratic stability is linked to the performance of political institutions in maintaining order, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Easton (1965) conceptualises political stability, including democratic stability, as a function of the system's capacity to adapt to changing demands and maintain citizen support. When democratic institutions fail to meet citizens' expectations, for instance, in delivering justice, equity, and economic development, legitimacy declines, and instability emerges (Lipset, 1959). Seymour (1959) modernisation thesis further posits that economic development, education, and social equality are crucial preconditions for democratic stability, as they foster political participation and tolerance necessary for sustaining democratic governance.

In the African context, democratic stability has been shaped by historical, socio-economic, and institutional challenges. Postcolonial African states inherited fragile political structures

characterised by ethnic fragmentation, weak institutions, and patrimonial politics, all of which hindered the consolidation of democracy (Ake, 1996; Osaghae, 1998). Scholars such as Osaghae (1998) and Ake (2000) argue that democratic stability in Africa requires the localisation of democracy; that is, grounding democratic practices in indigenous values such as communalism, consensus, and accountability. According to Ake (1996), democracy becomes unstable when it is perceived as an elite project disconnected from the social and economic realities of the people. Therefore, achieving democratic stability in Africa demands inclusive governance, equitable distribution of resources, and the strengthening of participatory institutions.

Furthermore, Norris (2014) emphasises the significance of electoral integrity and institutional trust as foundations of democratic stability. Where elections are free, fair, and transparent, citizens are more likely to perceive the political system as legitimate, thereby reducing the risk of political violence and protest. Conversely, flawed elections, corruption, and elite manipulation undermine institutional legitimacy, erode public confidence, and trigger instability (Schedler, 2001; Norris, 2014). The role of civil society and political culture is also crucial in sustaining democratic stability. According to Putnam (1993) strong civic engagement and social capital foster cooperation and trust, which in turn enhance democratic performance and stability. In societies where civil society is vibrant and citizens hold leaders accountable, democratic institutions are more likely to endure. On the other hand, apathy, clientelism, and political intolerance contribute to democratic fragility (Diamond, 1994).

Therefore, democratic stability is both a process and a condition. It is a process in the sense that it evolves through continuous institution-building, civic education, and political reform; and it is a condition when the democratic order becomes self-sustaining and resilient to shocks such as political violence, corruption, or leadership crises. It reflects a state where democracy is normalised; where political actors respect the rules of the game, citizens trust in democratic procedures, and governance delivers tangible benefits to society (Przeworski et al., 2000). In all, democratic stability is an outcome of multiple interrelated factors: institutional effectiveness, economic equity, political inclusion, social trust, and adherence to the rule of law. In countries like Nigeria, the persistence of electoral violence, corruption, and weak governance structures has made democratic stability elusive. Addressing these challenges requires strengthening democratic institutions, promoting political accountability, fostering inclusivity, and cultivating a democratic political culture. Only when democracy is both legitimate and functional can it be considered stable and capable of delivering sustainable development and social justice.

Empirical Analysis of the Causes of Political Violence in Nigeria

Political violence in Nigeria is a multifaceted issue influenced by various socio-political and economic factors. Recent empirical studies have utilised large-scale survey data and statistical models to identify and quantify these determinants. This section synthesises findings from such studies to offer a comprehensive understanding of the causes of political violence in Nigeria.

Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors

Empirical analyses indicate that certain demographic and socioeconomic characteristics significantly influence the likelihood of experiencing political violence. A study utilising data from the Afrobarometer survey (2017) found that approximately 26% of Nigerians reported experiencing at least one form of political violence in the preceding two years. Key factors associated with higher incidences of political violence include: Age: Younger individuals are more likely to be involved in or affected by political violence, Economic Status: Poverty and unemployment increase susceptibility to political violence, Geographical Location: Residents of regions with limited police presence are at greater risk, Political Engagement: Active participation in politics and social groups correlates with higher exposure to political violence, and the Gender: In northern Nigeria, women were found to be more likely than men to experience political violence. These findings underscore the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and enhancing security infrastructure to mitigate political violence.

Institutional Weakness and State Capacity

The capacity of state institutions plays a crucial role in either exacerbating or mitigating political violence. Research indicates that weak state institutions, characterised by inadequate law enforcement and judicial systems, contribute to the prevalence of political violence. A study by Kirwin (2009) highlighted that citizens' perceptions of state weakness, such as widespread crime, insecurity, and lack of property protection, are strongly associated with higher incidences of political violence. This perception erodes public trust in democratic processes and encourages the use of violence as a political tool.

Political Alignment and Extremism

Political alignment and the presence of extremist groups are significant drivers of political violence. Hossain (2024) conducted an empirical analysis revealing that political alignment influences the occurrence of violence, particularly violence initiated by extremist groups against

civilians. Conflicts involving extremist groups often lead to targeted attacks based on political affiliations, exacerbating divisions and instabilities within the polity.

Human Rights Abuses and Historical Grievances

Historical grievances stemming from human rights abuses also contribute to political violence. Babalola (2016) examined the role of human rights abuses in the formation of the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in 1994 and its subsequent turn to violence in 1999. The study found that perceived injustices and the suppression of certain groups' rights can lead to the emergence of violent movements as a form of resistance.

Electoral Manipulation and Governance Failures

Electoral processes in Nigeria have often been marred by manipulation and governance failures, leading to political violence. A study by the International Journal of Criminal, Common and Statutory Law (2021) identified factors such as electoral fraud, bad governance, and a loose security architecture as significant causes of electoral violence. The monetisation of politics and the use of violence to secure electoral victories have created an environment where political violence is perceived as an acceptable means to achieve political goals.

Regional Variations and Ethno-Religious Factors

Regional disparities and ethno-religious factors also play a role in political violence. The Afrobarometer survey (2017) revealed that the incidence of political violence varies across regions, with the South experiencing higher rates than the North. Additionally, ethnic and religious identities are often politicised, leading to conflicts that manifest as political violence. These regional and identity-based conflicts are often fueled by competition for resources and political power, further complicating the political landscape.

Theoretical Perspectives on Political Violence and Its Implications for Democratic Stability in Nigeria

Understanding the dynamics of political violence and its implications for democratic stability in Nigeria requires a strong theoretical foundation that explains why political actors and citizens resort to violence and how such violence disrupts the democratic process. Scholars have developed several theoretical frameworks to interpret the causes, patterns, and outcomes of political violence in democratic systems. Among the most relevant are the Relative Deprivation Theory, the Frustration-Aggression Theory, and the Political Economy Theory of Conflict. These

frameworks offer valuable insights into the structural and psychological foundations of political violence and its destabilising effects on democratic governance in Nigeria.

Relative Deprivation Theory

The Relative Deprivation Theory, developed by Gurr (1970) in his classic work Why Men Rebel, posits that political violence arises when there is a perceived discrepancy between individuals' expectations and their actual socio-economic conditions. This perception of deprivation, relative rather than absolute, generates frustration, which can lead to aggression and collective violence. Gurr argues that the greater the perceived gap between what people believe they deserve and what they actually obtain, the greater the likelihood of political unrest and violent conflict. In the Nigerian context, this theory is particularly relevant. Despite the country's vast natural and human resources, socio-economic inequality, poverty, and unemployment remain pervasive, especially among the youth (Akinboye, 2013; Omotola, 2010). The perception that political elites monopolise state resources while the majority remain marginalised fuels resentment and makes violence an attractive outlet for expressing political discontent. During electoral periods, unemployed and frustrated youths are often mobilised by political elites to engage in thuggery, ballot snatching, and intimidation of opponents (Ibrahim & Egwu, 2005; Onapajo, 2014). Thus, relative deprivation provides a psychological and socio-economic explanation for why individuals participate in political violence and why such violence persists in a fragile democracy like Nigeria's.

Moreover, the failure of successive governments to deliver public goods and social justice deepens feelings of exclusion and political alienation. When democratic institutions fail to respond to citizens' needs or are perceived as corrupt and biased, legitimacy erodes, and violence becomes an alternative means of political expression (Ibeanu, 2007). Hence, relative deprivation not only explains the roots of political violence but also underscores its implications for democratic stability as widespread frustration weakens public trust and delegitimises democratic governance.

Frustration–Aggression Theory

The Frustration–Aggression Theory, originally proposed by Dollard et al. (1939) and later expanded by Berkowitz (1969) builds on similar psychological premises as relative deprivation. The theory asserts that frustration, defined as the blocking of goal-oriented behaviour, inevitably leads to aggression, which can manifest as individual or collective violence. Political violence,

therefore, emerges when citizens' political aspirations, such as access to justice, fair representation, or equitable resource distribution, are obstructed by systemic corruption, institutional failure, or exclusionary politics. In the Nigerian democratic context, frustration-aggression theory explains how unfulfilled promises of democracy, such as improved welfare, inclusion, and transparency, create frustration among citizens, particularly among marginalised youth and minority groups (Agbaje, 2011). When democratic institutions such as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the judiciary, or the legislature are perceived as corrupt or partisan, citizens' confidence in peaceful democratic processes declines, and violent reactions become more probable.

For example, the widespread post-election violence that followed the 2011 presidential election, resulting in the deaths of over 800 people, illustrates how political frustration can escalate into violence when citizens perceive electoral injustice (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Similarly, recurrent conflicts in states like Plateau, Rivers, and Kano reveal how political exclusion and competition for scarce resources trigger aggressive responses that undermine democratic peace and cohesion (Suberu, 2010). Thus, frustration-aggression theory emphasises the psychological dynamics linking unfulfilled democratic expectations to violent outcomes, making it an essential framework for understanding Nigeria's political instability.

Political Economy Theory of Conflict

The Political Economy Theory of Conflict situates political violence within the broader context of material interests, structural inequalities, and power relations. According to Collier and Hoeffler (2004) political violence often emerges from the competition for control over economic and political resources. This theory asserts that political actors, particularly in developing states, exploit ethnic, religious, and regional divisions to mobilise support and consolidate power for economic gain. The "greed versus grievance" model proposed by Collier and Hoeffler suggests that while grievances such as inequality and exclusion are important, the pursuit of wealth and power is often the primary motivation behind violent conflicts. In Nigeria, politics is often viewed as a lucrative enterprise rather than a service to the people, leading to the commercialisation of elections and the instrumental use of violence to capture state power (Omotola, 2010; Obi, 2011). Political elites employ violence strategically to secure electoral victories, suppress opposition, and protect economic interests derived from access to state resources. This dynamic creates a "do-or-die" political culture (Ibeanu, 2007), where democratic competition is distorted, and violence becomes institutionalised as a tool of political bargaining.

The political economy approach also highlights the structural weaknesses of the Nigerian state, including corruption, clientelism, and lack of accountability, which enable political violence to persist. Weak institutions fail to regulate competition for power, enforce the rule of law, or ensure fair distribution of resources, thereby eroding democratic stability (Ake, 1996; Suberu, 2010). Consequently, democracy becomes fragile, not because of the absence of elections, but because of the violent and exploitative nature of political and economic relations that sustain elite dominance.

Research Methodology

The paper employs a qualitative research method to understand and interpret the significance of the issue being studied. This approach examines case studies, reports, events and seeks to comprehend perceptions and experiences. The paper also utilises purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was employed to identify materials for exploring the Political violence and its implications for democratic stability in Nigeria. Purposeful sampling was selected due to its effectiveness in identifying and selecting information-rich literature on Political violence and democratic stability. Snowball sampling was employed for citation tracking to discover additional papers on the subject. The researcher used the reference list of the sourced material to uncover more related literature. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were combined to select books, journal articles, and government documents that address the topic of the paper.

Effects of Political Violence on Democratic Stability in Nigeria

Political violence has consistently undermined the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, threatening both institutional integrity and citizen confidence in governance processes. Despite more than two decades of uninterrupted democratic rule, the recurrence of electoral violence, communal conflicts, and ethno-religious clashes has had profound implications for democratic stability. Scholars argue that democratic stability is not merely the presence of electoral institutions but also the legitimacy, functionality, and resilience of these institutions against internal and external shocks (Diamond, 1999; Linz & Stepan, 1996). In Nigeria, political violence erodes these foundations in several critical ways.

Political violence directly undermines the credibility and legitimacy of democratic institutions. When elections are marred by violence, coercion, and intimidation, citizens lose trust in the ability of institutions to mediate political competition fairly (Ibeanu, 2007; Omotola, 2010). For

example, post-election violence in 2007, 2011, and 2019 revealed systemic weaknesses in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and law enforcement agencies, prompting widespread scepticism about the transparency and fairness of the electoral process (Human Rights Watch, 2011; European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019). Legitimacy erosion manifests in two ways: Elite Manipulation of Institutions: Political elites exploit institutional weaknesses to achieve personal or party gains, reducing public confidence in the impartiality of these structures. Citizen Disillusionment: When ordinary citizens perceive that democratic mechanisms cannot protect their rights or deliver justice, participation declines, weakening the democratic system (Diamond, 1999).

Democratic stability depends on the internalisation of democratic norms such as tolerance, negotiation, and respect for electoral outcomes. Political violence disrupts this normative culture by normalising coercion and the use of force to achieve political objectives (Ibrahim & Egwu, 2005; Onapajo, 2014). In Nigeria, recurrent violent clashes during elections, such as the 2011 post-election crisis in northern and southern states, have entrenched the notion that political power can be secured or contested through intimidation rather than dialogue (Human Rights Watch, 2011). The long-term consequence is a "culture of political violence," where future elections are anticipated to be violent, creating cyclical instability. This culture undermines civic education efforts, reduces political tolerance, and discourages citizens from engaging peacefully in political processes (Suberu, 2010). Political violence has tangible effects on governance by disrupting policy implementation and administrative continuity. Governments facing violent opposition or insecurity often redirect resources toward security management rather than socio-economic development, delaying reforms and weakening state capacity (Omotola, 2010; Obi, 2011). For instance, in Plateau, Rivers, and Kano States, repeated ethno-political conflicts have caused temporary paralysis of local governments, disrupted civil service functions, and hindered development programs, eroding citizens' faith in democratic governance. Furthermore, political violence often precipitates authoritarian tendencies, as leaders may centralise power, curtail civil liberties, and suppress opposition in the name of maintaining order (Ake, 1996; Joseph, 1991). Such actions destabilise democracy by violating the principle of checks and balances and concentrating power in ways antithetical to democratic norms.

Empirical studies show that political violence disproportionately affects marginalised groups, intensifying socio-economic inequalities and exclusion (Afrobarometer, 2017). The targeting of specific communities during electoral conflicts or ethno-religious clashes reduces their political

participation and access to public resources, undermining inclusive democracy (Babalola, 2016). This exclusion has a dual impact: it diminishes citizens' trust in the democratic system and perpetuates cycles of grievance that fuel further violence. As the Relative Deprivation Theory (Gurr, 1970) suggests, unaddressed socio-economic and political grievances catalyse aggression, thereby creating a feedback loop where violence weakens democracy, and weakened democracy encourages further violence. Political violence erodes the rule of law, a cornerstone of democratic stability. The politicisation of security agencies and law enforcement in Nigeria often results in selective enforcement, impunity for perpetrators, and targeting of political opponents (Ibeanu, 2007; Omotola, 2010). Such practices undermine the principle of equality before the law, reduce accountability, and compromise citizens' rights. For example, during the 2019 general elections, reports of security forces siding with particular political actors heightened tensions and enabled violent acts to persist unchecked (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019). A compromised security architecture diminishes citizens' confidence in the state's ability to protect democratic processes and rights, further destabilising the system.

Political violence also affects democratic stability through psychological means. Citizens exposed to recurrent violence experience fear, trauma, and alienation from political processes (Omotola, 2010; Onapajo, 2014). Such experiences reduce voter turnout, discourage political activism, and weaken civil society engagement, all of which are essential for a vibrant and stable democracy (Putnam, 1993; Diamond, 1999). Political alienation further encourages disengagement or support for non-democratic alternatives, potentially increasing susceptibility to insurgent or radical movements that challenge democratic norms and institutions. Finally, political violence entrenches a self-reinforcing cycle of corruption and electoral malpractice. Politicians who use violence successfully in one election are incentivised to repeat such strategies in subsequent elections, normalising the use of coercion in politics (Omotola, 2010; Onapajo, 2014). This dynamic erodes democratic norms, reduces the legitimacy of elections, and undermines the very foundation of electoral democracy.

Therefore, political violence in Nigeria has multidimensional effects on democratic stability. It erodes institutional legitimacy, undermines democratic norms, disrupts governance, exacerbates socio-economic inequality, weakens the rule of law, fosters political alienation, and perpetuates cycles of corruption and violence. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach: strengthening institutions, promoting political accountability, enhancing security and electoral

management, fostering inclusivity, and addressing socio-economic grievances. Only by mitigating political violence can Nigeria hope to achieve sustainable democratic consolidation.

Re-Centring Political Violence within Democratic Stability in Nigeria

Political violence in Nigeria has evolved from sporadic incidents to a pervasive challenge that threatens the very foundation of its democracy. This transformation necessitates a re-centring of political violence within the broader discourse on democratic stability. Understanding this shift requires an examination of historical antecedents, contemporary manifestations, and the implications for democratic consolidation. The roots of political violence in Nigeria can be traced to its colonial history, where the imposition of artificial borders and centralised governance structures sowed seeds of division among diverse ethnic and religious groups. The legacy of colonialism, combined with post-independence political elite manipulation, has perpetuated a culture of violence as a tool for political contestation. Scholars argue that the persistence of these colonial legacies continues to undermine democratic stability in Nigeria.

In recent years, political violence in Nigeria has taken various forms, including electoral violence, insurgency, and inter-communal conflicts. The 2023 general elections witnessed widespread violence, with reports of ballot box snatching, voter intimidation, and clashes between political party supporters. These incidents not only disrupt the electoral process but also erode public trust in democratic institutions.

Additionally, insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have escalated violence, challenging state authority and further destabilising the polity. The government's response, often characterised by heavy-handed tactics, has sometimes exacerbated the situation, leading to human rights violations and increased public disillusionment.

The persistence of political violence has several detrimental effects on Nigeria's democratic stability: Erosion of Institutional Legitimacy: Continuous violence undermines the credibility of democratic institutions, leading to a legitimacy crisis. Citizens may question the ability of the state to protect their rights and maintain order. Weakening of Rule of Law: Political violence often leads to selective enforcement of laws, where perpetrators aligned with powerful elites go unpunished. This selective justice fosters a culture of impunity and undermines the rule of law. Polarisation and Fragmentation: Violence deepens ethnic and religious divisions, fostering a fragmented society where groups prioritise parochial interests over national cohesion. This fragmentation hampers efforts at nation-building and democratic consolidation. Economic

Consequences: Persistent violence deters both domestic and foreign investment, leading to economic instability. Regions affected by violence experience disrupted economic activities, loss of livelihoods, and increased poverty levels. Human Rights Violations: The state's response to political violence often involves human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings and arbitrary detentions. These violations further alienate the populace and erode trust in democratic governance.

To address the challenges posed by political violence, it is imperative to re-centre the discourse on democratic stability. This involves: Institutional Reforms: Strengthening democratic institutions to ensure accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to citizens' needs. Inclusive Governance: Promoting inclusive political processes that accommodate diverse ethnic and religious groups, fostering national unity, Security Sector Reform: Reforming security agencies to operate within the confines of the law, respecting human rights, and building public trust, Civil Society Engagement: Empowering civil society organizations to monitor political processes, advocate for peaceful coexistence, and hold leaders accountable, and the Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: Establishing mechanisms for peaceful conflict resolution to address underlying grievances and prevent escalation into violence.

The re-centring of political violence within the implications of democratic stability in Nigeria underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to governance. Addressing the root causes of violence, strengthening democratic institutions, and fostering a culture of peace are essential for ensuring the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria. Only through sustained efforts can Nigeria hope to overcome the challenges posed by political violence and achieve lasting democratic stability.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of various studies indicate that political violence in Nigeria is a persistent and multifaceted challenge, significantly impacting democratic stability. Political violence manifests through electoral malpractice, insurgency, ethno-religious clashes, and elite-driven conflicts. Evidence from recent elections and socio-political events underscores its prevalence and destructive implications. Political violence in Nigeria is not limited to sporadic incidents; it is systemic and recurring. Electoral violence remains the most visible form, particularly during general elections. For example, during the 2023 elections, reports highlighted ballot box

snatching, voter intimidation, and violent clashes between party supporters in states like Rivers, Kano, and Plateau (Abubakar, 2024).

Beyond elections, insurgent groups such as Boko Haram and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have engaged in violence targeting both state institutions and civilian populations, leading to widespread insecurity (Okonkwo, 2021). These patterns indicate that political violence is both elite-driven and supported by socio-economic grievances among marginalised populations (Ikyase & Egberi, 2015). Political violence undermines the credibility of democratic institutions. Recurrent incidents of electoral fraud and violent contestation erode public confidence in the capacity of institutions like the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies to guarantee free and fair elections (Ibok, 2019).

Findings reveal that political violence often results in selective law enforcement. Perpetrators linked to political elites are frequently shielded from prosecution, fostering a culture of impunity (Okonkwo, 2021). This weakens democratic norms and the principle of equality before the law. Violence deepens ethnic, religious, and regional divisions. Research shows that communities affected by political violence become more polarised, prioritising sectional interests over national unity, which hampers democratic consolidation (Innocent, 2012). Persistent political violence discourages investment and disrupts economic activities. Regions affected by insurgency or electoral conflict experience reduced livelihoods, increased poverty, and diminished opportunities for civic engagement, all of which indirectly weaken democratic stability (Ibok, 2019), and the State's responses to political violence often involve extrajudicial measures, arbitrary detentions, and other human rights abuses. These practices exacerbate citizens' alienation from the political process and further destabilize democratic governance (Okonkwo, 2021).

Abubakar (2024) found that during the 2023 elections, over 30% of polling units in some volatile states reported incidents of violence, reflecting a pattern of electoral insecurity, Ikyase & Egberi (2015) highlighted that political elites exploit ethnic and religious identities to mobilise support for violent political ends, Ibok (2019) reported that political violence directly correlates with reduced voter turnout and public participation in democratic processes, and also in Okonkwo (2021) showed that insurgency activities have displaced thousands of Nigerians, weakening civic engagement and state authority in affected areas.

The findings indicate that political violence undermines democratic institutions and processes, weakens the rule of law through selective justice and impunity, and intensifies societal divisions,

hindering national cohesion. It disrupts economic activities, diminishes citizens' capacity to engage in governance, and promotes human rights violations, which in turn erode public trust in democratic governance. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive strategy that includes institutional reforms, inclusive governance, improvements in the security sector, empowerment of civil society, and mechanisms for conflict resolution (Abubakar, 2024; Ibok, 2019; Okonkwo, 2021). Political violence continues to pose a significant threat to democratic stability in Nigeria. Evidence suggests that structural inequalities and elite manipulation are major contributors to this violence, leading to severe consequences for governance, social cohesion, economic development, and human rights. Successful democratic consolidation requires targeted interventions that tackle both the root causes of political violence and the institutional weaknesses that perpetuate it.

Conclusion

Political violence remains one of the most significant challenges to democratic stability in Nigeria. The findings of this study reveal that political violence manifests in multiple forms, including electoral malpractice, insurgency, ethno-religious conflicts, and elite-driven manipulations. These violent dynamics not only disrupt governance processes but also undermine institutional legitimacy, weaken the rule of law, exacerbate societal divisions, impede economic development, and foster human rights violations.

The persistence of political violence can largely be attributed to structural inequalities, socio-economic deprivation, and the strategic exploitation of ethnic and religious identities by political elites. Evidence indicates that both grassroots grievances and elite manipulation work in tandem to perpetuate cycles of violence, further destabilising democratic institutions and processes.

To ensure the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, it is imperative to address both the root causes of political violence and the institutional weaknesses that facilitate it. Strategies such as strengthening democratic institutions, promoting inclusive governance, reforming the security sector, empowering civil society, and establishing formal mechanisms for conflict resolution are essential. Only through such comprehensive and sustained interventions can Nigeria mitigate political violence and create a stable environment conducive to democratic development.

Ultimately, achieving democratic stability in Nigeria requires a dual focus: addressing socio-economic and political grievances at the grassroots level while simultaneously curbing elite-

driven violence through institutional reforms and the rule of law. This approach is critical for fostering a resilient, participatory, and inclusive democratic system in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made to add more value to political violence and its implications for Democratic Stability in Nigeria.

i. **Strengthen Democratic Institutions:** Enhance the capacity, transparency, and independence of electoral commissions, judiciary, and security agencies to ensure free, fair, and credible elections, reducing opportunities for violence.

ii. **Promote Inclusive Governance:** Implement policies that accommodate diverse ethnic, religious, and regional interests to reduce grievances, foster national cohesion, and prevent the mobilisation of violence along identity lines.

iii. **Reform Security Sector and Rule of Law:** Train and restructure security agencies to operate within legal frameworks, respect human rights, and hold perpetrators of political violence accountable to deter impunity.

iv. **Empower Civil Society and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Strengthen civil society organisations and community-based conflict resolution platforms to monitor political activities, mediate disputes, and advocate for non-violent political participation

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ROLE OF DIGITAL ECONOMY IN PROMOTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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Abstract

The digital economy is rapidly transforming socio-economic landscapes across the globe, offering new avenues for inclusive growth and development. In Africa, where rural communities constitute a significant portion of the population, the integration of digital technologies presents a critical opportunity to bridge developmental gaps. This study explores the role of the digital economy in promoting rural development across the African continent, with a focus on how innovations such as mobile financial services, e-commerce, digital agriculture, e-health, and e-learning are reshaping rural livelihoods. The study utilized qualitative analysis of literature sourced drawing from desktop research and Google Scholar. The research identifies key drivers of digital adoption as well as persistent barriers such as limited infrastructure, digital literacy deficits, and policy misalignments. The findings reveal that when effectively implemented, digital tools can enhance agricultural productivity, improve market access, increase financial inclusion, and expand access to essential services in rural areas. However, realizing the full potential of the digital economy in rural Africa requires coordinated efforts involving government policy reform, investment in digital infrastructure, and capacity-building initiatives. This study contributes to the discourse on sustainable rural development by highlighting the transformative power of digital innovation and offering policy recommendations to support its equitable diffusion across rural Africa.

***Keywords*:** Digital Economy; Socio-economic Development; Rural Development; Digital technologies; Rural livelihoods; Sustainable Rural Development

Introduction

The digital economy has emerged as a transformative force in the 21st century, reshaping the global landscape of production, trade, and social interaction. In Africa, where rural communities account for nearly 60% of the population, the digital economy presents both opportunities and challenges for sustainable development (World Bank, 2020). Traditionally, rural areas in Africa have been characterized by limited access to infrastructure, markets, education, and healthcare, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty and underdevelopment (FAO, 2018). However, the rapid expansion of mobile technologies, internet connectivity, and digital innovations has created new pathways for addressing these constraints.

The digital economy encompasses a broad range of activities driven by digital technologies, including e-commerce, mobile money, e-governance, and digital agriculture. Its relevance to rural development is particularly evident in the areas of financial inclusion, access to markets, and agricultural productivity. For instance, mobile money platforms such as M-Pesa in Kenya have significantly expanded access to financial services for rural populations, enabling farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs to save, invest, and transact securely (Jack & Suri, 2016). Similarly, digital platforms are connecting rural farmers to regional and global markets, reducing the dominance of intermediaries and increasing profit margins for producers (Aker et al., 2016).

Despite these promising developments, the integration of rural Africa into the digital economy faces persistent challenges, including poor digital infrastructure, high costs of internet access, digital illiteracy, and widening inequalities between urban and rural populations (UNCTAD, 2021). Moreover, without effective policies to ensure inclusivity, the digital divide may reinforce rather than reduce existing social and economic disparities.

Therefore, exploring the role of the digital economy in promoting rural development in Africa requires an analysis of both its transformative potential and the systemic barriers that limit its impact. This study argues that leveraging the digital economy is crucial for fostering inclusive growth, improving livelihoods, and accelerating Africa's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Conceptual Review

Digital Economy

The digital economy refers to the system of economic activities, transactions, and interactions that are enabled, shaped, or significantly enhanced by digital technologies, particularly the internet,

mobile networks, and digital platforms. It encompasses e-commerce, digital financial services, online communication, cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, and other technology-driven innovations that transform how goods, services, and information are produced, exchanged, and consumed (Bukht & Heeks, 2017). Unlike the traditional economy, the digital economy operates on data as a critical resource, fostering new business models, enhancing efficiency, and enabling greater connectivity across global and local markets (UNCTAD, 2021).

The New (Digital) Economy represents a fundamental shift in how economic activities are conducted, driven by the transformation of information into digital formats and the centrality of knowledge as a key resource. Unlike the old economy, where information exchange relied on physical flows; such as cash, invoices, and face-to-face interactions, the digital economy thrives on the digitization of information, enabling near-instantaneous communication, storage, and processing across global networks (Tapscott, 1995).

A central conceptual distinction within the digital economy is between information and knowledge. Information is merely data in raw form, while knowledge provides the structure and interpretive frameworks that transform information into actionable insights (Neef, 1998). This distinction is critical, as the digital economy is not only about faster access to data but also about how knowledge is mobilized to generate innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness.

According to Drucker (1993), the modern economy has evolved through successive transformations:

- The Industrial Revolution (1700–1850): Practical experience was codified into systematic knowledge.
- The Productivity Revolution (1850–1950): Knowledge was applied to work processes (e.g., Taylorism).
- The Management Revolution (1950 onward): Knowledge began to be applied to knowledge itself, leading to exponential growth in innovation and complexity.

Drucker concluded that knowledge is now the most meaningful resource in economic life, surpassing traditional factors of production such as land, labor, and capital. This understanding underpins the rise of knowledge work, activities centered on problem-solving, innovation, and high-technology design, as the core of economic growth (Neef, 1998). In essence, it represents

both a new economic paradigm and a driver of structural transformation, especially in developing regions such as Africa, Latin America and the caribbean countries.

Rural Development

Rural development refers to the process of improving the quality of life, livelihoods, and overall socio-economic well-being of people living in rural areas. It is a multidimensional concept encompassing improvements in agricultural productivity, infrastructure, education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and social inclusion. At its core, rural development seeks to reduce poverty, ensure food security, and enhance human capabilities by addressing the structural inequalities between urban and rural communities (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

According to the World Bank (2003), rural development is "a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor." This underscores its focus on both economic transformation and social empowerment, where the goal is not only to increase income but also to strengthen access to essential services such as clean water, electricity, education, and healthcare.

Theoretically, rural development has often been associated with modernization theory, which emphasizes agricultural transformation, technological advancement, and industrial linkages as drivers of rural progress (Rostow, 1960). However, more recent approaches stress participatory development and sustainability, recognizing the importance of community participation, local knowledge, and environmental protection in ensuring long-term rural prosperity (Chambers, 1983; Ellis & Biggs, 2001).

From the perspectives of the Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) refers to the process of improving the living conditions and economic opportunities of rural populations in ways that are socially inclusive, economically viable, and environmentally sustainable. It emphasizes not only short-term growth but also the long-term resilience of rural communities by balancing human development with ecological preservation (Brundtland Commission, 1987; WCED, 1987).

Unlike conventional rural development, which often prioritizes economic growth and agricultural productivity, SRD integrates the three pillars of sustainability; economic, social, and environmental, into development strategies. The objective is to ensure that present rural needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Pretty, 1995; Marsden, 2009).

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2008), sustainable rural development entails "enhancing rural livelihoods, protecting natural resources, and promoting social equity through participatory and inclusive approaches." It recognizes the interdependence between rural communities and their natural environment, highlighting the need for responsible management of resources such as land, water, forests, and biodiversity.

Importantly, rural development is closely linked to agricultural development, as agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for the majority of rural populations, especially in the Global South. Improved agricultural productivity, rural infrastructure, and market access are thus seen as prerequisites for rural transformation (Johnston & Mellor, 1961; Oji, 2002).

Therefore, below is the Dimensions of Rural Development:

> Economic Dimension: Enhancing agricultural productivity, non-farm employment, and income diversification, Social Dimension: Improving education, healthcare, housing, and social inclusion, Infrastructure Development: Roads, electricity, ICT, and clean water access as enablers of rural growth, Institutional Dimension: Strengthening governance, decentralization, and participatory decision-making, and Environmental Sustainability: Promoting eco-friendly practices and resilience to climate change.

Thus, rural development is not merely about economic growth but also about equity, empowerment, and sustainability. It is both a goal and a process aimed at bridging the rural–urban divide and fostering inclusive national development.

Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development refers to the process of improving both the economic conditions and the social well-being of a population in a way that enhances human capabilities, reduces poverty, and promotes equitable growth. It is a multidimensional concept that combines economic progress; such as income growth, employment creation, and industrialization, with social progress in education, health, equity, and quality of life (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

According to Sen (1999) socio-economic development should not be understood only in terms of economic growth or GDP expansion but as a process of expanding human freedoms and capabilities. This includes the ability of individuals to lead the kind of lives they value through access to opportunities, resources, and rights.

The United Nations (UNDP, 2010) defines socio-economic development as "a process that leads to improvements in human well-being, measured by a range of indicators including literacy, life expectancy, income levels, and poverty reduction." This shows that development goes beyond material wealth to encompass broader issues of equity, social justice, and sustainable livelihoods.

Historically, socio-economic development theories have evolved from modernization theories, which emphasized industrialization and Western models of progress (Rostow, 1960), to dependency and structuralist approaches, which critiqued global inequalities (Frank, 1967). Contemporary development discourse now integrates sustainable development paradigms, stressing the interconnection between social, economic, and environmental systems (WCED, 1987). The Dimensions of Socio-economic Development could be seen as Economic Dimension: Income growth, employment creation, industrialization, rural and urban development, Social Dimension : Education, healthcare, gender equality, housing, social protection, and inclusion, Institutional Dimension: Good governance, rule of law, participatory democracy, and accountability, and Sustainability Dimension: Ensuring that development meets present needs without compromising future generations (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

Therefore, socio-economic development is not only about improving living standards through economic means but also about empowering individuals and communities, addressing inequalities, and creating sustainable systems that foster inclusive growth.

Theoretical Perspective on the Role of the Digital Economy in Promoting Rural Development in Africa

The digital economy, defined as economic activity enabled by digital technologies and networks (OECD, 2020), has emerged as a transformative force in Africa, particularly in rural areas where traditional development models have often failed to deliver inclusive growth. To understand its role in promoting rural development, several theoretical perspectives are useful:

Modernization Theory

Modernization theory posits that technological innovation is a central driver of economic and social transformation (Rostow, 1960). Within this framework, the digital economy serves as a catalyst for rural modernization by replacing traditional, low-productivity practices with digital

innovations. Mobile banking platforms like M-Pesa in Kenya demonstrate how digital finance fosters financial inclusion and rural economic integration (Jack & Suri, 2011).

Human Capital Theory

Becker's (1993) Human Capital Theory emphasizes the role of education, skills, and knowledge in fostering productivity and development. The digital economy contributes to rural human capital development by expanding access to digital literacy, e-learning platforms, and telemedicine. This enhances rural populations' ability to participate in the knowledge economy, thereby improving both individual welfare and collective socio-economic outcomes.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Rogers (2003) explains how new technologies are adopted within societies through stages of awareness, trial, and implementation. In rural Africa, innovations such as e-agriculture platforms, mobile health services, and market information systems follow this diffusion pattern. Adoption, however, is influenced by local factors including affordability, infrastructure, and cultural acceptance, which shape the pace and depth of digital penetration in rural communities.

Sustainable Development Paradigm

The sustainable development framework (WCED, 1987) stresses balancing economic, social, and environmental needs. Digital technologies, particularly in agriculture, promote sustainability by enabling climate-smart farming, resource-efficient irrigation systems, and access to real-time weather data (FAO, 2017). In this sense, the digital economy fosters *sustainable rural livelihoods* while safeguarding environmental resources.

Capability Approach

Sen's (1999) Capability Approach provides a people-centred lens by viewing development as the expansion of human freedoms and choices. The digital economy enhances rural capabilities by improving access to financial services, education, healthcare, and market opportunities. By empowering individuals to participate in decision-making and economic activities, digital innovations contribute not only to material well-being but also to social empowerment and agency.

Therefore, taken together, these theories reveal that the digital economy's role in rural Africa is multidimensional: it modernizes traditional economies, strengthens human capital, accelerates

technology adoption, advances sustainability, and expands human freedoms. Therefore, digitalization is not merely a tool for economic growth but a transformative development pathway that addresses structural barriers to rural development in Africa.

Research Methodology

The paper employs a qualitative research method to understand and interpret the significance of the issue being studied. This approach examines individual events and seeks to comprehend perceptions and experiences. The paper also utilises purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was utilised to identify materials for exploring the relevance of the role of digital economy in promoting rural development in Africa. Purposeful sampling was selected due to its effectiveness in identifying and selecting information-rich literature on digital economic and rural development. Snowball sampling was employed for citation tracking to discover additional papers on the subject. The researcher used the reference list of the sourced material to uncover more related literature. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were combined to select books, journal articles, and government documents that address the topic of the paper.

The Challenges of the Digital Economy in Promoting Rural Development in Africa

Therefore, the challenges of the digital economy in promoting rural development in Africa can be viewed from the following:

Digital divide and uneven access to infrastructure

Empirical studies show that rural Africa continues to lag in access to broadband, electricity, and reliable mobile coverage, limiting participation in the digital economy. World Bank (2021) data indicate that less than 30% of rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa have internet access, with affordability gaps reinforcing rural–urban inequalities. This infrastructural divide constrains the scalability of digital solutions for rural development.

Low digital literacy and human capital constraints

Evidence from surveys in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Kenya shows that limited digital literacy, language barriers, and low ICT skills prevent rural farmers and households from effectively adopting digital platforms. For instance, GSMA (2019) reports that 48% of rural mobile users in SSA cite lack of literacy/digital skills as the main barrier to mobile internet adoption. This weakens the potential impact of digital tools on rural productivity and livelihoods.

Financial exclusion and gendered disparities in fintech adoption

While mobile money has expanded financial inclusion, empirical findings highlight gender and regional disparities. For example, Suri & Jack (2016) show M-Pesa's poverty reduction effects in Kenya, but later evaluations (World Bank, 2019) reveal rural women and low-income households face higher barriers to agent access, phone ownership, and digital financial literacy. These gaps reduce the inclusivity of digital finance for rural development.

Institutional and regulatory barriers

Empirical policy reviews in SSA show fragmented regulatory frameworks, high taxation of ICT services, and weak data governance undermine rural digitalization. UNCTAD (2021) documents how excessive mobile money transaction taxes in Uganda and Tanzania reduced usage among rural poor, creating setbacks for rural financial inclusion. Institutional weaknesses therefore hinder sustained rural benefits from the digital economy.

Sustainability and vulnerability to exclusionary effects

Studies caution that digital economy growth risks deepening inequalities if infrastructure rollouts, skills programs, and gender-sensitive initiatives are not prioritized. Empirical analyses (OECD, 2020; World Bank, 2021) find that digital platforms often cluster around urban hubs, marginalizing remote rural communities and raising concerns about "digital enclaves." Without inclusive design, the digital economy can exacerbate not resolve, rural underdevelopment.

The Mechanisms Through which the Digital Economy Promotes Rural Development in Africa

Empirical and theoretical scholarship identifies multiple mechanisms through which the digital economy promotes rural development, particularly by enhancing access to information, financial inclusion, market efficiency, service delivery, and social capital.

Information Access and Market Efficiency

Digital technologies, especially mobile phones and internet connectivity, reduce information asymmetry in rural markets. Farmers and traders can access real-time data on prices, demand, and weather conditions, improving their decision-making and bargaining power. Empirical evidence by Aker (2010) in Niger demonstrates that the expansion of mobile-phone coverage reduced grain price dispersion by 10–16%, reflecting more efficient market functioning. Similarly, Svensson

and Yanagizawa (2009) found that mobile-enabled information improved farmers' ability to secure better prices for agricultural produce in Uganda.

Financial Inclusion and Risk Management

Digital financial services, particularly mobile money platforms, have deepened financial inclusion among rural households that were previously unbanked. These platforms enable low-cost transactions, savings, remittances, and access to micro-credit. Suri and Jack (2016) provide causal evidence from Kenya showing that access to M-Pesa increased household consumption and lifted approximately 194,000 households out of extreme poverty, particularly through improved remittance flows and better risk management.

Agricultural Productivity and Digital Extension Services

Digital platforms are increasingly used to deliver agricultural advisory and extension services, providing farmers with locally relevant, timely, and visual information about farming practices. The Digital Green program in Ethiopia and India demonstrated that video-based extension approaches significantly increased adoption of improved agricultural technologies (Abate et al., 2018). Similar findings by Fabregas, Kremer, & Schilbach (2019) show that ICT-based agricultural interventions improve farm productivity by reducing information gaps.

E-Commerce and Rural Enterprise Development

The rise of digital platforms and e-commerce has expanded rural entrepreneurship opportunities by linking rural producers directly to consumers and urban markets. Platforms such as Jumia and local digital cooperatives allow small enterprises to bypass traditional intermediaries. According to UNCTAD (2021), digital trade facilitates rural enterprise growth by lowering market entry barriers, enabling remote sales, and diversifying rural economies beyond agriculture. Empirical studies further show that SMEs engaged in e-commerce experience higher turnover and resilience, especially during external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020).

Human Capital and Social Inclusion

The digital economy facilitates skills development and access to education, enabling rural populations to participate in the knowledge economy. E-learning platforms, online vocational programs, and digital training initiatives have expanded opportunities for rural youth and women. Empirical evidence from GSMA (2022) shows that digital literacy programs in sub-Saharan

Africa increased employability and improved women's access to digital finance. Similarly, Qiang et al. (2021) find that ICT skills enhance the employability and entrepreneurial capacity of rural populations, thereby fostering inclusive growth.

Governance and Service Delivery

Digital technologies also improve governance and public service delivery in rural settings. E-government platforms enhance access to public information, streamline administrative processes, and increase accountability. According to OECD (2020) and UNECA (2021), digital platforms enable local governments to deliver social protection payments, agricultural subsidies, and health information directly to rural beneficiaries, reducing leakages and corruption.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the reviewed literature and empirical studies reveal that the digital economy has become a central driver of rural transformation in Africa, primarily through enhancing financial inclusion, agricultural productivity, market connectivity, and access to public services. However, the impact remains uneven across regions, influenced by disparities in digital infrastructure, skills, and policy environments. The digital economy, comprising mobile technologies, e-commerce, e-governance, and digital finance, serves as both a catalyst and a conduit for inclusive rural development (World Bank, 2020; UNCTAD, 2021).

One of the most significant findings is that digital financial services have revolutionized rural economic activities. Mobile money platforms such as *M-Pesa* in Kenya, *MTN Mobile Money* in Ghana and Uganda, and *EcoCash* in Zimbabwe have enabled millions of rural dwellers to participate in formal financial systems (Suri & Jack, 2016). Through digital payments, remittances, and savings accounts, rural households have gained greater access to credit, improved their resilience to income shocks, and increased their capacity for entrepreneurship (Aker & Mbiti, 2019). These findings align with the theory of *inclusive growth*, which posits that expanding access to financial resources among marginalized populations enhances equity and stimulates local economies. The widespread diffusion of mobile finance thus represents a major step towards bridging the urban, rural divide in financial participation across Africa (GSMA, 2023).

Empirical evidence also shows that digital technologies have significantly improved agricultural productivity and efficiency in rural Africa. Digital platforms offering real-time weather forecasts,

market information, and agronomic advice, such as *Esoko* in Ghana, *iCow* in Kenya, and *Farmerline* in West Africa, enable smallholder farmers to make data-driven decisions (FAO, 2022). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2022), farmers using mobile advisory services and digital platforms recorded yield improvements ranging from 15% to 30%. Moreover, digital market linkages reduce transaction costs and help farmers access broader value chains. These findings are consistent with the *diffusion of innovation theory* (Rogers, 2003), suggesting that access to new technologies and information facilitates behavioral change and efficiency improvements. The digital economy promotes rural entrepreneurship and market integration by connecting producers to consumers through e-commerce and digital marketplaces. Studies reveal that small-scale traders and artisans in rural areas increasingly use platforms like *Jumia* and social media channels for product marketing and delivery (UNCTAD, 2021; GSMA, 2022).

Furthermore, digital trade reduces barriers to market entry, creating new income streams and employment opportunities for youth and women in rural communities (World Bank, 2020). This outcome is consistent with *endogenous growth theory*, which links technological innovation and human capital development to local economic growth. The availability of online training, e-business platforms, and digital payment systems thus stimulates micro-enterprise development in non-agricultural sectors.

The findings also indicate that digital technologies enhance access to education, health, and public services in rural Africa. E-learning platforms and telemedicine initiatives have mitigated geographical barriers and expanded human capital development opportunities (ITU, 2021). For instance, e-learning initiatives in Rwanda and Nigeria have improved literacy rates and skills acquisition among rural youth (World Bank, 2021). Similarly, digital health programs have facilitated remote diagnosis and health data management in underserved communities. This confirms the *capability approach* by Amartya Sen (1999), which emphasizes expanding individuals' capabilities through access to knowledge and essential services. The digital economy, therefore, serves as a vehicle for empowerment and social inclusion.

Despite the positive impacts, findings reveal persistent digital divides across gender, income, and geography. Rural populations face challenges such as limited broadband infrastructure, high data costs, unreliable electricity, and low digital literacy (OECD, 2020; Cherie Blair Foundation, 2023). The *GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report (2023)* highlights that women in sub-Saharan

Africa are 37% less likely than men to use mobile internet, constraining inclusive digital participation. These disparities hinder the full realization of the digital economy's potential to drive rural transformation. Thus, while digitalization is a key enabler, it is not a substitute for foundational investments in education, infrastructure, and governance.

The findings suggest that the digital economy's rural impact is strongest where governments have adopted enabling regulatory frameworks and public–private partnerships. Initiatives such as the African Union's *Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030)* and the World Bank's *Digital Economy for Africa Initiative (DE4A)* have helped expand rural connectivity and foster digital entrepreneurship. However, sustainable rural digital development requires integrating digital strategies into national rural development policies, supporting local innovation ecosystems, and ensuring affordable access for marginalized groups (UNECA, 2023). Moreover, investments in rural electrification and education are crucial to support long-term adoption and use of digital technologies.

In all, the findings converge on the conclusion that the digital economy acts as a transformative mechanism for rural development in Africa, enhancing inclusion, productivity, and resilience. Yet, the magnitude of these benefits depends on the inclusiveness of digital access, affordability, and institutional capacity. Digitalization must, therefore, be complemented by broader socioeconomic reforms to ensure equitable rural transformation. In summary, the discussion of findings demonstrates that the digital economy plays a critical role in promoting rural development across Africa by fostering financial inclusion, agricultural innovation, entrepreneurship, and social service delivery. Nonetheless, digital inequality remains a significant constraint that must be addressed through policy coherence, infrastructural investment, and capacity-building. The digital economy, if inclusively developed, has the potential to catalyze sustainable and equitable rural transformation across the continent.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The digital economy has emerged as a transformative force shaping the trajectory of rural development in Africa. The synthesis of theoretical and empirical findings indicates that digitalization, through innovations in information and communication technologies (ICTs), digital finance, e-commerce, and digital governance, has redefined the economic and social dynamics of rural areas across the continent. through enhancing connectivity, facilitating access to markets,

promoting financial inclusion, and improving service delivery, the digital economy contributes significantly to poverty reduction, productivity growth, and inclusive rural transformation.

A central conclusion is that digital financial services and mobile connectivity have bridged longstanding structural barriers in rural economies, providing marginalized populations with access to formal financial systems and enabling participation in broader economic activities. Platforms such as *M-Pesa* in Kenya, *MTN Mobile Money* in Ghana, and *EcoCash* in Zimbabwe have empowered millions of rural dwellers to save, invest, and manage risk, thus reinforcing the foundations of sustainable livelihoods. Similarly, digital agricultural tools have enhanced productivity by offering real-time information on weather, prices, and agronomic practices, allowing smallholder farmers to make data-driven decisions that improve efficiency and income.

Moreover, the digital economy has facilitated the diversification of rural livelihoods through the expansion of digital entrepreneurship, e-commerce, and remote employment opportunities. These developments align with the principles of *inclusive growth* and *endogenous development*, where technology serves as a vehicle for local empowerment and community-based innovation. Through improved access to education and health services via e-learning and telemedicine, digitalization also strengthens human capital and social welfare, thereby expanding the capabilities of rural populations.

However, the evidence equally reveals that the benefits of the digital economy are unevenly distributed. Persistent infrastructural deficits, high data costs, limited digital literacy, gender disparities, and inadequate regulatory frameworks continue to hinder the full realization of digital transformation in rural Africa. The rural digital divide remains a critical challenge that exacerbates social and economic inequalities. Thus, the digital economy's developmental potential can only be maximized when complemented by inclusive public policies, affordable connectivity, and investments in human capital and infrastructure.

In summary, the role of the digital economy in promoting rural development in Africa is both transformative and conditional. It holds immense potential to accelerate socio-economic development, enhance resilience, and promote inclusion, but its success depends on the extent to which African governments and stakeholders integrate digitalization into holistic rural development strategies. Achieving this will require sustained collaboration among the public

sector, private enterprises, and development partners to ensure that digital transformation becomes a driver of equitable and sustainable rural prosperity across the continent.

The following recommendations were made to add more value to the role of digital economy in promoting rural development in Africa.

i. Governments and development partners should prioritize investment in broadband infrastructure, rural electrification, and affordable internet access. Expanding reliable digital connectivity is essential for integrating rural communities into national and global digital networks and ensuring equitable participation in the digital economy.
ii. Comprehensive digital skills training programs should be implemented to enhance the technological competencies of rural populations, particularly women and youth. Building digital literacy fosters the effective use of digital platforms for agriculture, entrepreneurship, and education, thereby maximizing the developmental benefits of digital transformation (ITU, 2021; FAO, 2022).
iii. Policymakers should support the expansion of mobile money and digital finance services while ensuring consumer protection, interoperability, and gender inclusivity. Strengthening digital financial systems enhances rural financial inclusion, promotes entrepreneurship, and facilitates investment in smallholder agriculture.
iv. National and regional development frameworks should incorporate digital economy strategies as core components of rural development planning. This includes promoting e-agriculture, e-commerce, and e-governance initiatives through public–private partnerships to ensure sustainable, inclusive, and technology-driven rural transformation.

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CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP SELECTION IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRACY: A PATHWAY TO NATION BUILDING

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Abstract

This paper is centered on citizenship education and participation in leadership selection in Nigeria. Citizenship education encourages high level of participation of individual in democratic activities. This action positively influences the citizen's leadership choice which resultant effect is in nation building. The paper adopts Participatory Democratic Theoretical Framework. The documentary observation method is adopted and data is generated from secondary sources and analysed using descriptive analysis. The paper discovered that citizenship education has a great impact in instilling democratic skills, virtues, attitudes and knowledge relevant for political participation, and the Nigeria government has not paid much attention on citizenship education. Citizens are only enlightened during election period in the country. Since the level of political education of citizens greatly determines the possibility of good leadership selection, it is thus recommended that more effort and resources should be diverted into citizenship education and this should be done before and during election.

Keywords: Citizenship; Democratic, Education, Leadership, Selection

Introduction

Citizenship education and participation in democratic exercise have always been the foundation of leadership selection which in-turn enhances national development and usually, this development is reflected in the well-being of citizens in the country (Murray, 2007). Any country that practices

democratic system of government should have members who will have that willingness to participate in political activities: casting their votes, getting registered for elections, moving on the political train, offering themselves for elections and most importantly refusing political manipulation and pressure (Umeh & Okereke, 2020). This shows that the people are the key determining factor in a democratic society, and key attention must be paid on the people by giving them the necessary education and enlightenment needed in other to fully participate in selection of their leaders.

The rate of democratic exercise and participation among the citizens should be more than average of the general population and one with high level of electorate turn-out during elections (Murray, 2007). This alone, shows the level of political education and the desire of the citizens to be part of the decision-making process of the country and also its benefits. A closer observation of democratic exercise in Nigeria shows that the participation rate is gradually falling, as most persons feel that their votes do not count. Studies made by Opara (2017) and Umeh & Okereke (2021) affirmed that 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections were characterized with high level of drop in political participation, though there was improvement in 2011 and 2015 elections.

In respect to this, citizens engaged in protests, agitations and complains that were usually self-defeating, resulting in low democratic participation. A well structured and efficient political education is important in leadership selection and nation building in any democratic society (Ribeiro & Menzes, 2022). However, it appears that the various government administrations in the country since Independence have not given much attention that is deserved to citizenship education and participation (Abah, 2019). Efforts that have been made so far via government-owned media and National Orientation Agency have taken the form of propaganda in favour of the policies of government (Abah, 2019). The bridge in the area of citizens education has resulted in a culture of political violence, disrespect for authority, ethnic politics and religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria. These orientations and dispositions are not suitable for a sustainable development and good leadership selection in a democratic system (Okereke, 2021; Okolo & Etekpe, 2014).

Notably, repeated issues such as election violence, vote-buying, inadequate political education and corruption have prevented several Nigerians from participating in leadership selection (Othman & Okpe, 2021). Also, Youths that constitute a larger portion of the population often distance themselves from democratic activities due to lack of awareness, mentorship and trust in

the political institutions (Anikeze, 2024). On the other hand most of this youths are wrongfully used by political leaders or aspirant for electoral malpractices. As a result of this, elections are mostly faced with poor representation, low turnout and poor leadership choices that does not represent the will of the citizens (Scholars, 2021).

Therefore, the problem addressed by this paper is the limited effectiveness of citizenship education fostering informed and active participation in leadership selection within Nigeria democratic system. However, citizenship education and participation in a democratic exercise on leadership selection has not been fully exhausted in the literatures. This paper therefore examines the importance of citizenship education in the selection of leaders in the country. More so, the paper identified factors militating against citizens participation during democratic exercise in Nigeria and issues on nation building. In a bid to find solution to this problem, the following research questions were raised.

i. What is the attitude of Nigerian citizens towards political education and participation?
ii. How does non-participation of citizens in democratic exercise affect nation building?
iii. What is the nexus between citizenship education and good leadership?

Conceptual Clarification/Review

Democracy

The word democracy has no universally accepted definition just like most words in the Social Sciences. This is because it has been conceptualized from different perspectives by different scholars. The word “democracy” is derived from the ancient Greek word “demos” which means “the people” and “kratic” which means “to rule” which when put together is “demokratia, meaning “rule by the people” (Adesanmi, 2022).

However, the famous definition of democracy by the one-time President of America, Abraham Lincoln, is, “Government of the people by the people and for the people” (Eme-uche et al, 2019). This definition is suitable for direct democracy. Most nations of the world are presently practicing Representative Democracy. According to Eme-uche, et al, (2019), the importance of democracy is centered on the right to vote and to be voted for. Harrison & Boyd (2018) defines democracy as a government in which the overall power is vested in the hands of the people and implemented by them either directly or indirectly. Democracy is the government by the people. It is a government

in which the supreme power is restrained by the people and exercised either directly or indirectly through a system of representation (Eme-uche et al., 2019).

Democracy in its true nature simply means government by the majority people. Basic human rights are guaranteed to all its citizens whether they are the majority or minority groups. Eme-uche et al., (2019) further noted that democracy comprises of four main principles- political equality, regular election, majority rule and minority rights. Democracy ensures liberation from corruption of power and ruthlessness. It ensures equal rights to all its citizens and by so doing, the barriers of education, opportunity and culture will be broken to allow national development agenda to be achieved (Okolo, 2016; Okolo & Etekpe, 2015). Democracy is however supposed to provide responsible citizenship and functional government.

Citizenship Education

Citizenship education is a combination of two concepts citizenship and education. In order to get a better insight, there is need to define the concepts separately. Citizen is "a person having the legitimate right to belong to a specific country". Citizens are therefore those who have the legitimate right to belong to a particular country. According to Uboga (2017) a citizen is a person that has the nationality of a specific country which implies that a citizen of a particular country is also a national of that country. Citizenship is therefore seen as a unique relationship that exists between a citizen and his/her country. It is a relationship that indicates what the country can do for it citizens and what the citizens can do for its country.

Ugboga (2017) defined citizenship as the "status of an individual who resides in a specific country and has full legal and political rights in the country". In Nigeria, citizenship can be gotten by nationalization, birth or by registration. Ugboga (2017) described citizenship as "a constitutional status that makes one a member of a particular country based on registration, birth, nationalization or descent". In a country, citizenship is usually connected to both duties and rights. These duties, rights and obligations are manifested in citizen's political behaviour, social behavior and economic behavior (Eme-uche et al., 2019).

Education simply implies the transmission of skills and values from one generation to another. The essence of education is for advancement of the society in science and technology and also to improve the well being of its citizens and economic condition of the country. To Ugboga (2017), education is a learning process targeted at preparing individuals for different roles and

opportunities in the society as good workers and citizens. Notably, education is significant and plays a crucial role in the life of a citizen and the society at large. School happens to be one of the major agents of socialization that builds the norms and rightful values into the younger generation for stability in the country (Odusanya & Oni, 2019).

Citizenship education focuses on what it entails to be a citizen of a country, the person's roles and responsibilities in the state, its limitations as well as its fundamental human rights enjoyed as obtained in the constitution (Iyamu, 1999). Citizenship education has to do with directing the citizens to find satisfaction and motivation in the process of social living. It is a tool through which political socialization is acquired by the citizens (Osewa, 2020). Citizenship education is the kind of education that prepares individuals to be responsible by equipping them with that which is needed to make them good citizens and to contribute to good governance (Enyiaka et al., 2018).

Political Participation

Benjamin and Olawole (2021) sees political participation as a means where members of a given State acquire the necessary education and competence for active involvement that influences the execution and direction of a country's affairs. Political participation is the level of cooperation and collaboration among members of a State to take part in decision making and execution of development activities in line with their culture (Nabatchi, 2017). Benjamin and Olawole (2021) are of the opinion that in policies formulation and applications, political participation helps citizens to contribute to decisions about factors that have impacted their lives on a daily basis.

Benjamin and Olawole (2017) noted that political participation enhances democracy through the involvement of citizens in planning, decision-making and action. It brings about equality in the country by allowing every citizen to air their views. Political participation promotes sense of ownership that brings about sustainable development. It makes it possible to implement better decisions that will benefit the entire country.

According to Shola (2021) political participation refers to "those activities by citizens that are more or less directly targeted at influencing the selection of government leaders or the actions that are involved". Ibezim (2019) notes that participation in Nigeria politics is surrounded by numerous challenges, majority among which is, lack of understanding of what citizens political participation holds.

Good Governance

To get a better definition of good governance, there is need to understand the term "governance". Governance according to Udeh (2017) involves transformation of societal needs into unique programmes. Governance entails the development of governing styles wherein boundaries between private and public sectors have become blurred and the needs of society largely met". Hence the term "good governance" means the managing of public resources judiciously and in an "excellent" way by public officials (Okolo, 2025). Udeh (2017) notes that good governance implies an array of activities such as participation of citizen in decision making, enhanced service delivery, the rule of law, democracy, freedom of the press, independence of the judiciary, equality before the law, electoral integrity and inclusion of citizens in the political process.

To Shola (2021) good governance involves accountability, maintaining transparency, upholding the rule of law and probity in the exercise of power. Good governance ensures equality, as well as transparency in governance and accountability (Shola, 2021). Good governance served as a barometer for measuring the performance of political leader, whether he or she meets the required standard set for him/her by the people (Ugboga, 2017). The fundamental ingredients of good governance according to Ugboga (2017) are: Civil rights, political rights and all enabling rights, observation of the rule of law, constitution and constitutionalism.

Voters' Behaviour

It is pertinent to operationalize voters' behaviour in this paper. Majority scholars have made attempt to conceptualize the meaning and nature of voters' behaviour. Some of the scholars agreed that citizens are likely to vote if they can benefit from candidates. Nkede (2019) argued that the primary motivation for voting during election is to gain access to a country's resources.

To Nkede (2019) voters do not necessarily possess democratic aspirations when they vote, they only hope to get more benefits from existing regimes. Some scholars disagree on the fact that economic factors is not a propelling force toward voting behavioir (Leduc & Pammert, 1992; cited in Nkede 2019).

However, most studies are of the opinion that economic factors are vital determinant of citizen's vote choice in election especially in a democratic setting. Nkede (2019) argued that past records, background and moral character of candidates seem not to be very essential element while

contesting for a public position in Nigeria, rather it shows that as far as a candidate has the resources to run his campaign, it does not really matter how he got it, he is at liberty to contest for any public office of his choice. This paper views voters' behaviour as vital element in a democratic society since the attitude, actions and inactions of a voter goes a long way in determining the outcome of an election.

Empirical Literature

In a bid to create a niche for this paper, a trot is taking around the existing literature to bring to the fore what the literature holds. Literature indicates that citizens education concerning democratic exercise is simply their awareness of their civic responsibilities. These responsibilities according to Onigiobi et al., (2020) entail community development projects, payments of taxes, electoral process (registration, collection of permanent voters' card, voting and engaging as INEC ad-hoc officials). The teaching of subjects such as: Social Studies and Civic Education among other subjects in school does help in educating citizens in democratic exercise and participation among citizens. Despite this, Nigerian citizens are still struggling and displaying a non-challant attitude towards their civic responsibilities. Regardless of the exposure of citizens to the values and norms of the society through agents of socialization such as: the mass media, family, religious institutions, school, neighbours, peer and friends. Observation shows that citizens have little or no knowledge of democratic responsibility let alone that of participation (Onigiobi et al., 2020). It is worthy to note that the ideal in a democratic setting is for citizens to actively participate in their own governmental affairs and such involvement is centered on proper information that reflects civic issues.

According to Onigiobi et al., (2020) the knowledge of democratic exercise and participation serves as the fuel for a successful democracy and sustained future. Citizenship education promotes political participation, democratic values, trust in public figure and can change attitudes on important social issues.

From the era of past electoral bodies including: Election Commission of Nigeria (ECN, 1959-1963), Federal Electoral Commission (FEC, 1963-1966), Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO, 1979-1983), National Electoral Commission (NEC, 1986-1993), National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON, 1999-1998), and Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 1998-till date), reveals that citizens may not have the knowledge of democratic responsibility and that of participation. (Momah 2016; cited in Onigiobi et al., 2020).

These issues include citizens "refusal to register for voters' cards: those who registered but did not go and collect their voter cards, citizens who collected their voters' card but did not vote, invalid votes, multiple voting, snatching of ballot boxes, buying and selling of voter's card, burning of ballot papers, disruption of voting procedure, confiscation of voting material among others. In the area of campaign, issues like disorderliness of the electoral law and order, embezzlement of funds by campaign managers, violence and riot during campaign (Nkwede, 2019).

Due to lack of the citizens' exposure to civic values and responsibility through a process of education, there has always been one form of violence or the other during election. It has been clearly observed that an average Nigerian citizen lacks or have no knowledge of democratic responsibilities let alone participation in democratic exercise (Nkwede, 2019). This has created a vacuum in the system leading to low engagement in electoral activities. Citizens lack knowledge about the importance of political participation. This has been a concern for scholars. For example, Onigiobi, et al (2020), Oboh (2017) and Nwekede (2019) amongst others observes that the non interest of Nigerian citizens towards democratic responsibility and participation is a poor state of affair which should not be, because of the knowledge of civic responsibilities that citizens have gotten within the formal and informal settings via socializing agent.

Most scholars have come to agree that well designed institutions are not enough to educate the citizens, and that a well-organised polity requires people with appropriate skills, knowledge and traits of behaviour (Onigiobi, 2020; Oboh, 2017; and Nwekede, 2019).

Moreso, before the 2015 election, an opposition party, Progressive Action Congress (PAC) called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and politicians to give maximum attention to citizens education, in order to boost Nigeria's electoral process. The Party National Chairman, Charles Nwodo, speaking in an interview in Abuja stated that the inattention of the importance of citizens education had been accountable for disorder and a large amount of void votes in the past elections (Amechi et al., 2018). According to Amaech et al (2018), "it is quite unfortunate that Nigeria operates a fire brigade approach in most of our operations specifically as regards to citizens education". He further blamed the INEC for not commencing on citizens education exercise until elections are about to start.

Educating of citizens and potentials voters is not the sole responsibility of the INEC alone, civic society, schools, political parties, traditional institutions, National Orientation Agency and religious bodies should also work with the electoral body in this regard. Ogbe & Ojie (2020) in their paper "Restructuring for sustainable democracy in Nigeria: the role of political education and information communication technology" argued that political education and information technology are inseparable. They are like the two sides of a coin, if political education is required to be very efficient and wide spread to the electorate in order to kick against political apathy and other related electoral fraud. According to them, political education will be more effective via the use of different ICT tools like: Skype, Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Instant Messaging to sustain and deepen democracy in a State (Ogbe & Ojie, 2020).

Obiara (2017) noted that majority of individuals in Nigeria lack the awareness to rightly participate in the political process. He further states that the consequence of democratic government without the sovereign power of citizens through elections is no gain of an appropriate democracy. In agreement to this, Oni (2017) noted that in any democratic society, the citizens do not only own the sovereign power over the government but also hold and transfer it to the elected officials via their votes. Markedly, one of the required conditions for a free, fair and credible election in a true democratic system of government is a continuous pursuance of an efficient citizenship education.

The Nigeria Federal government in recognition of the importance of information communication technology in Section 22 of 1999 constitution as amended and Section 154 of the Electoral Act of 2010 as amended, charged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to create political enlightenment to heighten its functions and help Nigerians to appreciate democratic values and cultures for sustainable democracy in the country (Ogbe & Ojie, 2020). Regrettably, political education is being conducted by political parties and Nigeria government few months to election. Political education ought to have been organized continuously via different avenues to build political awareness and enlighten Nigerian citizens of their roles and electoral rights in all seasons.

Literature has extensively shown that citizenship education is pertinent for the flourishing of a democratic system. It is only when citizens are fully enlightened of their roles and responsibilities that they can arouse in them the interest to participate in democratic exercise. Participation is the fundamental meaning of democracy. When citizens are duly educated, they will understand that

their participation in democratic activities entails decision making (choosing of their leaders) which will go a long way in determining the future and the growth of the country. Participation however, helps citizens to express their views either directly or indirectly in issues that concern them and their well-being. However, the literature has not fully exhausted citizenship education and participation in democratic exercise on leadership selection, especially on how its help in nation building, thus, creating a gap for investigation. This paper is therefore set to fill this gap.

Theory and Methods

In order to give a theoretical underpinning to this discussion, Participatory Democratic Theory is adopted. Participatory Democracy Theory is a political science theory, with the aim of promoting the rate of public participation in various forums of decision making in liberal democracy.

This theory lays emphasis on the importance of increased level of political exercise in a democratic society with the intention of widening the rate of participants in the decision-making processes in the international system, state, community and in the organization (Schwarts & Gadily, 2017). This theory posits that promotion of the rate of citizen's participation in government frameworks, public spaces and in different forums on making governmental decisions will result to the development of citizens in the society.

The relationship between the government and the citizens in a democratic setting, the expressions of participatory democracy are visible in activities such as referendums, participative budgets, civic legislation, citizen committees, community managers and other additional examples. The main objective of participatory democratic theory is to develop the citizens via the inculcation of political experience, knowledge and conversely to decrease the vacuum existing between the government institutions, policy makers and the citizens (Schwartz & Galily, 2017).

The roots of participating democratic theory are found in the direct Athenian democracy, which control a political system via personal and constant voting of the citizens on the basis of legislation and policy (Okolo, et al, 2022). Schwartz and Galily (2017) argued that the citizen's political participation in decision making discussions elevates their level of political effectiveness, thereby making them to be better citizens.

The theory of participatory democracy has been noted to have been first used by Arnold S. Kaufman in his argument for participatory politics (Benjamin & Olawole, 2017). The idea of

participatory democracy holds that a participatory society can easily bring about self education and political equality. Nabatchi (2017) argued that when individuals of a country are directly involved in development issues and governance, their citizenship education and political ideas are not only developed, the inequality level in the country will drastically reduce. Schwartz and Galily (2017) explained that participatory democracy is centered on the idea that citizens and their institutions cannot be differentiated from one another if the country wants to attain a conducive system that is development oriented. He further added that individuals of a country have the legal right to partake and contribute on issues that have joint effect on their lives and also work hand in hand with the available structures put in place to achieve set targets.

Based on the ideology of this theory, a collective effort of both the government and citizens are required for the development of any country. Simply because of the participation of citizens in governance and development issues, will protest against corruption, self interest and diversion of resources to unnecessary area (Benjamin & Olawole, 2017).

This theory captures the context of citizenship education and participation in democratic exercise. It deals with the need for citizens to fully and actively involve themselves in the political activities that concerns them. It also shows that citizens' involvement in their political activities will bring about enhanced decisions that will not only benefit the citizens but the entire society which in turn will bring about growth and development. Citizen’s participation brings about a sense of belonging whereby leaders will not easily manipulate and divert the resources of the country for their own projects.

The paper adopted a descriptive research design. The method of data collection adopted is the documentary observation method. As such, the research used secondary data generated from literatures with focus on citizenship education and participation. The literature consists of published texts including articles, journals, books, magazines, newspapers, news media, internet materials and organizational publications. The data generated are analyzed using descriptive analysis.

The Role of Citizenship Education and Participation in Leadership Selection and Nation Building in Nigeria's Democracy

Citizenship Education: A Determinant of Good Leadership Selection

The probability of actualization of good leadership in every country is mostly ascertained by the participation and activeness of citizens in their political decision-making processes (Abah, 2019). The ability of the citizens to support any government policies can be actualized based on the participation, activeness and how enlightened and educated the citizens of such country are (Odusanya & Oni, 2019). Citizens that are educated tend to actively participate in their country's decision making and vice-versa. A sustainable democracy lies in the active participation of its citizens (Osewa, 2020).

However, the reverse is the case in Nigeria as majority of Nigerians are not politically cultured. Majority of Nigerians do not even know their rights and responsibilities in the country (Murra, 2007). Political leaders in the country are mindless of the laws as they are believed to be greater than the constitution and most times act based on their own discretion and not based on the constitution of the country (Umeh & Okereke, 2020). Hence, it has become so difficult for the citizens to differentiate between how it is and how it is supposed to be, because most Nigerians were born into the societal deterioration. Therefore, they believe and see the wrong of the country as a norm, and that which cannot be changed (Yusuf, 2018).

However, to change or address this issue, the government needs to embark on a solid plan to include in the school curriculum from nursery to higher education a course that will politically enlighten the citizens and ensure it to be a compulsory course that students must pass before graduating (Odusanya & Oni, 2019).

According to Osewa (2020) citizenship education will give students more entitlement that will enhance them to actively participate in societal issues, which any active and politically-inclined citizens will do. Educating the citizens politically will help to build self-confidence, make relevant contributions to the society and also help them to build their own public voice (Osewa 2020). Notably, for citizens of any country to be actively engaged in their democratic exercise and decision making, such citizens need to be enlightened and educated politically via citizenship education.

Political Participation and Democratic Exercise in the Fourth Republic

To thoroughly understand the state of political participation and democratic exercise in Nigeria in the fourth republic, it is pertinent to note that it is over two decades of democratic exercise in Nigeria, judging from the re-appearance of the democratization process around the world. Within

the said time of democratization in Nigeria, the country has witnessed 23years of democratic experience without any military interference that is from 1999 to 2022. According to Yusuf (2018), the democratic experience during this period can be observed and examined in terms of practice and consolidation. These observations according to him can be done using the tenets of participatory democratic theory. This theory in a democratic setting encourages freedom of press, speech, religion, support for pressure groups, participation of citizens in political exercises, practice of rule of law, promotion of periodic free and fair elections, universal franchise and peaceful change of government.

Looking at the state of political participation and democratic exercise in the Nigeria's fourth republic from the above pointers, Othman and Okpe (2021) observed that considering the fact that democratic exercise returned to the country in 1999, there was conviction for an effective democratic unification in Nigeria as this is evidential in many unpleasant government torments in which the country is going through. Othman and Okpe (2012) revealed that while moderated gains such as operation of a multiple party system, establishment of the legislature and the conduct of an oversight role by the legislature were in existence, the pains and woes that the country has encountered since the beginning of democratic exercise in 1999 were overpowering. The behaviour of politicians and their incapability to offer purposeful and responsible leadership continue to hinder discharge of quality public services (Yusuf, 2019). By indication, this has resulted to decrease of trust in the democratic processes in the country by its citizens.

Othman and Okpe (2021) further observed that the ruling class pays less or no attention to the aspirations of the public. They dictate and take public decisions solely for their personal gains and interests. This has highly impacted on the rate of citizens' participation in democratic activities against the popular intent of the principles of participatory democratic theory that promotes popular participation, fair politics and protection of citizens' rights (Abah, 2019). The shift in governance from military to democratic practice instead of resolving into reaching the expectations of the masses has been marred by electoral violence and political intolerance, which has remained the trademark of the Forth Republic.

More so, the effect of godfatherism in the democratic system continues to rob the nation of all the tenets and virtues of democratic processes through their constant interference in selection of their preferred candidates for public offices. This destroys the legitimacy of the government and hampers the democratic values of the people (Othman & Okpe 2021; Onigiobi et al., 2020).

Political participation involves the engagement of the citizens in the democratic affairs of their country as one of the vital ingredients of a democratic theory.

But in the case of Nigeria, politics is centered on religious factors, money and ethnic influences. For example, since the Independence of Nigeria, religious and ethnic politics characterise the political setting of the country (Etekpe & Okolo, 2011).

Citizenship Education and Actualization of National Goals: The Nexus

A strong relationship exists between citizenship education and actualization of national goals. Citizenship education helps to create awareness in the expectations of the government from her citizens (Abah, 2019). It also attempts to validate the fact that every duty has a right and every right has a duty. Hence, every reasonable citizen is expected to offer the following responsibilities to ensure the country actualize her national goals.

"To abide by the constitution, respect its institutions and ideals like: the National Pledge, the National Flag, the National Anthem; and legitimate authorities; to help to promote the prestige, the power and good name of Nigeria, defend and render such national services as may be required, respect the dignity of other citizens and the rights and legitimate interest of others and live in unity and harmony and in the spirit of common brotherhood; make positive and useful contributions to the advancement, progress and well being of the community where he resides; render assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order; and declare his income honestly to appropriate and lawful agencies and pay his tax promptly" (chapter II, Section 24, amended constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

Also, the government is expected to execute those areas of the constitution that provide for the rights of citizens. These rights include: right to personal liberty; right to life; right to fair hearing; right to the dignity of the human person; right to freedom of expression and thought; right to private life; right to peaceful assembly and association; right to freedom from discrimination and right to freedom of movement (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 cited in Alozie, 2019).

Well enlightened and mobilized citizens shall be well equipped to carry out their civic responsibilities. With higher level of awareness among the citizens and honesty on the part of the political leaders in discharge of their responsibilities to the people, greater support to the government will likely be established. Citizens of the country will likely refrain from activities

that bring down the country as they will understand that by destroying the image of the country, they are also destroying themselves (Onigiobi et al., 2020).

Citizenship Education and National Development

A country can be said to be developing when it has the interest of its citizens at heart and constantly improving the economic and social welfare of the people (Othman & Okpe, 2021). Several studies have displayed that there are vital components in civic education that are capable for the progress of national development and integration (Enyiaka, et al, 2018).

The role of citizenship education in national development cannot be undermined; it is the direct reflection of contribution of the citizens to the country. Citizenship education is targeted towards creating honest and dependable citizens for national development (Yusuf, 2019).

Enyiaka et al., (2018) stated the target of citizenship education to include: familiarizing the citizens with the knowledge of their rights, privileges and roles concerning the nation, development of law abiding and responsible citizens and instilling the spirit of diligence, value, courage, loyalty, discipline and patriotism. There is huge impact of citizenship education because it qualifies the citizens with the capability to carry out their responsibilities and duties and to be great citizens for building their future. Hence, citizenship education enjoys a fundamental role in nation building via citizens positive contribution and participation in the democratic activities of the society (Odusanya & Oni, 2019).

Summary/Discussion

The study unravel that citizenship education plays an essential role in shaping and promoting citizens attitudes, awareness, values and involvement in democratic activities in the country. From the reviewed literature, evidence shows that when citizens are well educated on political activities, the tendency for participation is higher. Citizenship education empowers citizens with the right tools that help in nation building. It creates awareness of individual rights and responsibilities and increases active involvement in leadership selection processes.

However, despite the existence of democracy in Nigeria for some decades, citizens still lack knowledge of how the electoral system functions. The existence of citizenship education initiative through civil society programmes, school curriculum and media campaigns are yet to make the impact of political participation across the regions even. Several Nigerian's, especially in the rural

areas, still lack understanding of their civic right and responsibilities, thus could not participate on democratic exercises.

More so, the research shows that there are several factors that weaken the effectiveness of citizenship education. Factors such as corruption, electoral malpractices, lack of institutional trust, insecurity and vote-buying. Many citizens feel their votes do not count or leadership results are predetermined, this has led to a cycle of withdrawal, even when citizens are educated about their civic rights.

Nevertheless, the study highlights that youth's participation in leadership selection remains low despite the increase civic awareness. The youths which form a large portion of the country's population are faced by several challenges such as lack of resources, exclusion from party structure and unemployment, these have limited their participation in democratic activities despite their level of political education. This finding agrees with the previous studies (Manuwa, 2023; Ngara, 2021) which stated that citizenship education must be complimented with mentorship opportunities, empowerment programmes and inclusive governance to transform awareness into significant involvement.

Furthermore, the paper reveals that citizenship education efforts in Nigeria remains theoretical, centering more on classroom information than on a realistic citizens involvement. The paper states the need for effective formulation, modernization and implementation of citizenship education programmes. This includes youth dialogue, debates and community projects, which can build confidence and increase democratic involvement among youths.

In addition, citizenship education helps in nation building. It enhances national identity, unity, tolerance and respect among citizens. Generally, citizenship education is a key avenue to promote leadership selection and democratic activities in the country. For Nigeria to accomplish sustainable nation building, civic education must move beyond theory to practical instrument that fosters informed, active and responsible citizens.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

Citizenship education inculcates required values and norms which shape the attitudes and behaviours of individuals in the society and the result of this is the growing of a country filled with people who understand their democratic responsibilities and rights. Citizenship education encourages high level of participation of individuals in democratic activities. This action

positively influences the citizens' leadership choice, which the resultant effect is in nation building.

This discussion therefore, explores the relationship between citizenship education and participation in democratic exercise in leadership selection. In view of this, it was discovered that citizenship education has a great impact to inculcate democratic skills, virtues, attitudes and knowledge relevant for political participation.

The paper shows that for a nation to be on a perfect track of good governance and nation development, such nation needs citizens that are active and politically educated, who can actively involve in the nation's political decision-making processes and also serve as watchdog against bad governance and leadership. Most importantly, the paper points out that the level of political education of citizens will greatly determine the possibility of good leadership in the country as active citizenry will ensure that political office holders act in accordance with the constitution of the country and not on their own discretion.

Active democratic citizenry boosts a state of democratic process, and ensures the growth of any country foreign policy, as it is certain that a state with politically liberated citizenry is on its way to true national development. The paper therefore, stresses the need for citizenship education as it increases the rate of democratic participation which in-turn impact on leadership selection and growth of the country. However, this paper recommended the followings:

i. that citizens of the country should be politically educated as it helps positively in nation building.
ii. The paper demonstrated that there should be a continuous training of voters, so as to keep them politically incline and to contribute meaningfully in sustaining democracy in Nigeria.
iii. The paper also recommended that government should enact a law to make compulsory the teachings of citizenship education in all schools (both formal and informal) and should be a criterion for graduating.
iv. Lastly, the paper highlighted the need for everyone in the country to have access to political education.

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ANNIVERSARIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: A DOUBLE-EDGED INSTRUMENT

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Abstract

Anniversaries represent potent instruments of collective memory and political symbolism, yet they function as double-edged swords—capable of promoting unity or provoking division. This study examines the dual nature of political anniversaries through comparative cases such as the U.S.–Vietnam diplomatic anniversary, the Franco-German Élysée Treaty commemoration, and Central European responses to the Trianon Centenary. Drawing on the works of Anderson, Acharya, Lebow, and Mälksoo, it explores how states employ commemorative practices to construct narratives of reconciliation, legitimacy, and national pride, while sometimes reinforcing historical grievances and nationalism. The analysis demonstrates that anniversaries operate at the intersection of memory, identity, and power, influencing both domestic cohesion and international relations. The study recommends that governments and international actors adopt inclusive and dialogic commemorative approaches that emphasize shared values, mutual respect, and forward-looking reconciliation rather than selective or politicized remembrance. Educational and diplomatic frameworks should integrate multiple historical perspectives to prevent instrumentalization of memory for partisan purposes. Ultimately, anniversaries, when responsibly managed, can evolve from divisive reminders of the past into constructive platforms for peacebuilding, mutual understanding, and enduring cooperation among nations.

Keywords: Anniversaries; Collective Memory; Conflict; Double-Edge Instrument; Reconciliation; Diplomacy

Introduction

Anniversaries have long served as consequential instruments in politics moments when collective memory is transformed into political meaning. Beyond marking time, they provide arenas through which states negotiate identity, assert legitimacy, and project power. Domestically,

commemorations sustain the "imagined community" of the nation (Anderson, 1983) while internationally, they can either bridge reconciliation as in post-war Franco-German relations or reignite conflict, as seen in the Armenian Genocide and Treaty of Trianon commemorations. Although existing scholarship underscores how rituals of memory reinforce national identity, anniversaries as geopolitical phenomena remain underexplored. For states embedded in contested histories, memory functions as a matter of security rather than nostalgia. Mälksoo's (2015) concept of "mnemonical security" captures how political survival depends on managing remembrance and silence, rendering anniversaries inherently double-edged stabilizing identities for some while delegitimizing others.

This study argues that commemorative acts are never neutral: political elites reinterpret history to consolidate authority, mobilize publics, and shape diplomacy. Drawing on Nora's (1989) lieux de mémoire, Anderson's (1983) imagined communities, Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) invented traditions, and Hom's (2017) temporal politics, it explores how anniversaries function as instruments of both reconciliation and conflict.

Using a qualitative comparative design and critical discourse analysis, the research examines speeches, policies, and media narratives surrounding key anniversaries—identifying mechanisms through which they legitimize power, foster cooperation, or deepen antagonism. The study advances debates in memory politics and international relations, offering insights into how states and international institutions can strategically navigate commemorative moments to prevent escalation and promote reconciliation.

Literature Review

Research on memory politics in international relations reveals that collective remembrance shapes present struggles over identity, legitimacy, and power. While extensive work has explored memory in transitional justice and reconciliation, limited attention has been given to anniversaries ritualized commemorations where reconciliation or conflict unfolds. This review synthesizes scholarship on memory, identity, and legitimacy to identify key debates and gaps relevant to this study.

Scholars such as Anderson (1983) and Bell (2006) show that states use memory to construct national identity and justify foreign policy. Lind (2008) links Japan's historical denial to regional tensions, while Muller (2002) and Olick (2007) illustrate how Germany's acknowledgment of

guilt strengthened legitimacy. Yefremenko (2022) introduces the idea of "mnemonic security dilemmas," where conflicting narratives become threats. Collectively, these works establish memory as deeply political but rarely examine how its dynamics manifest during anniversaries.

Anniversaries, as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue, are "invented traditions" that link past and present. Hom (2017) and Yang & Mochizuki (2019) highlight anniversaries as temporal checkpoints where identities and power relations are renegotiated. Edkins (2003) and Subotić (2016) show how trauma anniversaries can reinforce division or nationalism. Yet, research remains limited on the mechanisms such as apology, triumphalism, or solidarity through which anniversaries drive reconciliation or conflict.

Anniversaries also serve as instruments of international legitimacy. Olick (2007) and Renner (2013) demonstrate how acknowledgment of historical wrongs enhances diplomatic standing. Lind (2008) and He (2009) note that contested anniversaries complicate Japan's relations, whereas Muller (2002) shows how Germany's memory culture fosters European legitimacy. Similar dynamics appear in Israel Palestine (Weinberg, 2014) and Rwanda (Buckley-Zistel, 2006). However, most studies focus on single cases, leaving the comparative conditions for reconciliation or conflict underexplored.

Memory politics extends beyond state actors. Assmann (2010) and Verdoolaege (2008) show that global and domestic narratives often marginalize alternative voices. Kriesberg, Tuso, and Dayton (2010) emphasize the role of civil society in expanding commemoration. Winter (2010) and Misztal (2010) highlight how silences maintain cohesion, while Jelin (2003) and Ben-Amos & Bet-El (1999) show that grassroots interventions can democratize or destabilize memory. Yet, few studies analyze how state–civil society discourse mediates commemorative outcomes a gap this study addresses.

Three key gaps emerge: Mechanisms of outcome – Few works explain how anniversaries foster reconciliation or conflict. Comparative analysis. Research often focuses on single regions rather than cross-case patterns. Contextual moderators. Factors like power asymmetry, domestic politics, and norms remain underexplored.

In sum, anniversaries are powerful yet ambivalent instruments of memory politics—capable of both bridging and deepening divides. This study contributes by offering a comparative, discourse-

based analysis of the mechanisms and conditions through which anniversaries shape reconciliation and conflict in international relations.

Research Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative case study design grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Since anniversaries are discursive events, their significance lies not in dates but in the narratives, speeches, and rituals constructed around them. The comparative approach examining Europe and East Asia—reveals both shared and region-specific patterns in how anniversaries function as instruments of reconciliation or conflict.

CDA views discourse as a site of power and identity construction (Fairclough, 1995, 2001), interpreting commemorations as political acts that legitimize authority and reshape memory. The discourse-historical approach (DHA) further situates these acts within traditions of collective memory, emphasizing links between past narratives and present political stakes (Wodak, 2009, 2011). Together, they make discourse the central unit of analysis.

The design thus supports comparison between reconciliation cases (e.g., Franco-German anniversaries, U.S.–Vietnam normalization) and conflictual cases (e.g., Armenian Genocide, Treaty of Trianon, PRC–Taiwan tensions).

Data Sources

Data comprise primary documents—speeches, policy statements, and media coverage—supplemented by secondary analyses. Examples include PRC National Day and Taiwan Double Ten speeches, Armenian–Turkish genocide statements, Orbán's Trianon address, Franco-German declarations, and U.S.–Vietnam anniversary remarks. These are critically interpreted as strategic performances (Bowen, 2009) and triangulated with academic and policy sources to enhance validity.

Analytical Framework

The analysis combines Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model and Wodak's DHA. Fairclough (2001) distinguishes textual, discursive, and social levels, linking language to power structures. While, Wodak (2011) highlights how past narratives serve current kjnj purposes.

Operational steps include: Identifying key tropes and metaphors (e.g., unity, sacrifice, betrayal); Tracing silences and omissions (e.g., denial of atrocities). Comparing narrative framing across reconciliation and conflict cases; Evaluating how discourse sustains or challenges power relations.

Finally, Dijk's (2008) insights on ideology and power reproduction complement the CDA, clarifying how anniversaries operate as both reconciliatory and conflictual sites in international relations.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Sources of Primary Documents

The primary sources include commemorative speeches, government statements, and symbolic acts marking major anniversaries relevant to the selected case studies. These materials constitute the discursive data through which states articulate their memory politics. For China–Taiwan relations, the analysis draws from Xi Jinping's speeches at the 70th Anniversary of the PRC (2019) and the 100th Anniversary of the CCP (2021), alongside Tsai Ing-wen's Double Ten National Day addresses (2020, 2021). The Armenian and Turkish perspectives are represented by President Sargsyan's and Prime Minister Pashinyan's genocide commemoration speeches (2015, 2020), and President Erdoğan's Gallipoli counter-narrative (2015). The Hungarian case includes Viktor Orbán's Trianon centenary address (2020) and the Hungarian Parliament's Declaration on National Unity (2020). Reconciliation cases feature the Franco-German commemorations from Verdun (1984) to Compiègne (2018), and the U.S.–Vietnam normalization and 25th anniversary statements (1995, 2020).

Coding Strategy and Reliability Checks

Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), texts were coded into three categories: conflict-reinforcing, reconciliation-oriented, and ambivalent narratives. Coding was iterative, and reliability was enhanced through cross-referencing with scholarly interpretations (Mälksoo, 2015; Hom, 2017) and official archives.

Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

In China's 2019 and 2021 speeches, Xi Jinping framed reunification as an inevitable historical course and vowed to prevent separation, thereby reinforcing the one-China narrative and delegitimizing Taiwan. He declared that "the complete reunification of the motherland must be

fulfilled, and it will certainly be fulfilled," adding that history "cannot be reversed by any force." Tsai Ing-wen's 2020 and 2021 Double Ten addresses emphasized democratic sovereignty and rejected Beijing's "One Country, Two Systems," situating Taiwan within a network of like-minded democracies. She proclaimed that "Taiwan's future must be decided by its people" and reaffirmed that "our democracy is not a bargaining chip." Both discourses exemplify conflict-reinforcing narratives that sustain cross-Strait antagonism and the mnemonical security dilemma described by Mälksoo (2015).

Armenia's genocide commemorations in 2015 and 2020 reaffirmed historical truth and justice, while Erdoğan's simultaneous Gallipoli commemoration reframed 1915 as wartime tragedy rather than genocide. President Sargsyan stated, "Our memory is not for vengeance but for justice," emphasizing moral continuity, while Erdoğan countered that "our shared pain should not be politicized." The juxtaposition of remembrance and denial entrenched mutual antagonism rather than reconciliation, illustrating how anniversaries perpetuate contested truths.

Hungary's 2020 Trianon centenary revived historical grievances. Orbán's speech described Hungary as "sentenced to death" yet united in spirit, and the parliamentary declaration extended national unity beyond borders. He asserted that "a nation cannot be broken by borders," and further, "the thousand-year-old Hungary still lives in the hearts of its sons and daughters." Romanian and Slovak responses, including Romania's establishment of a Trianon Day, inverted Hungary's trauma into national affirmation, reinforcing symbolic conflict. These exchanges transformed the centenary into a mnemonical battleground where memory equated to sovereignty.

Franco-German anniversaries stand in contrast as performances of reconciliation. From the Élysée Treaty's 40th anniversary (2003) to Macron and Merkel's Compiègne ceremony (2018), speeches framed shared suffering as a foundation for European unity. Phrases such as "once enemies, now partners shaping Europe's future" and "hand in hand at the site of armistice" signify the ritual transformation of memory into transnational solidarity. Macron further stated that "our reconciliation is the living proof that peace can be built from remembrance," underlining the moral imperative of shared history.

The U.S.–Vietnam case similarly redefined adversarial memory through discursive moderation. Clinton's 1995 statement called for "binding wounds" and "moving to common ground," and subsequent 2020 speeches by U.S. and Vietnamese officials emphasized cooperation on war

legacies. The U.S. Secretary of State noted that "the past cannot be erased, but it can guide us toward a better partnership," while Vietnam's Foreign Minister reflected that "reconciliation is not forgetting but building anew." This reconciliation narrative relied on forward-looking rhetoric, pragmatic silence on contentious issues, and shared humanitarian projects that translated memory into policy collaboration.

Comparative Synthesis

Anniversaries operate as performative interventions in international politics, shaping legitimacy and identity rather than merely recalling the past. In conflictual cases such as China–Taiwan, Armenia–Turkey, and Hungary's Trianon, commemorations serve as markers of sovereignty, grievance, and moral distinction. By contrast, Franco-German and U.S.–Vietnam anniversaries transform memory into reconciliation through gestures of shared mourning, symbolic unity, and institutionalized cooperation.

The divergence stems from differing orientations of memory politics. Conflictual commemorations privilege exclusive narratives of victimhood and resistance, whereas reconciliatory ones employ inclusive gestures that reframe history as a foundation for `cooperation. Internationally, weaponized memory extends disputes across borders, while reconciliatory memory underpins regional integration and collective identity, as seen in the Franco-German contribution to the European Union.

Theoretically, these cases illustrate how Anderson's imagined communities extend beyond nations; Hobsbawm's invention of tradition explains how rituals sustain nationalist grievance; and Mälksoo's mnemonical security reveals why memory becomes securitized. Hom's notion of commemorative critique clarifies why round anniversaries—centenaries and jubilees—act as decisive temporal junctures for renegotiating history.

In conclusion, anniversaries are political instruments that can either heal or divide. When inclusively reframed, they generate reconciliation and shared identity; when appropriated for exclusivist narratives, they reproduce conflict. Their double-edged nature underscores the central role of memory politics in shaping international order and the enduring significance of commemoration in diplomacy.

Discussion of Findings

This study set out to explore the role of anniversaries as double-edged instruments in international relations, capable of fostering reconciliation in some contexts while exacerbating conflict in others. By examining five cases—China–Taiwan cross-Strait commemorations, Armenian Genocide remembrance, Hungary's Treaty of Trianon centenary, Franco-German reconciliation anniversaries, and U.S.–Vietnam reconciliation—it becomes clear that anniversaries exert a far more active and consequential influence on interstate relations than the existing literature has often recognized. Earlier scholarship tended to regard commemorations as largely domestic rituals of nation-building (Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). However, the present findings demonstrate that they also carry international, geopolitical, and security implications, making anniversaries pivotal sites of both antagonism and cooperation.

A key insight emerging from the study is the political centrality of memory. As Mälksoo (2015) has argued, states defend their memory as a form of mnemonical security—an act of safeguarding legitimacy and identity through the past. This dynamic is evident in Taiwan's Double Ten Day celebrations, which reinforce sovereign identity in opposition to Beijing, and in Armenian commemorations of the 1915 genocide, which assert demands for historical justice against Turkish denial. Hungary's remembrance of the Treaty of Trianon likewise embeds narratives of national victimhood into contemporary politics, ensuring that grievances of the past remain present in diplomatic disputes. In these contexts, the defense of memory sustains political legitimacy but also perpetuates international antagonism.

Yet anniversaries are not confined to conflictual purposes. The case studies of France and Germany, and of the United States and Vietnam, illustrate how commemorations can be reframed as instruments of reconciliation. Joint Franco-German rituals at Verdun and Compiègne transformed landscapes of wartime violence into enduring symbols of European unity, embedding reconciliation within the broader project of European integration. Similarly, U.S.–Vietnam commemorations have been anchored in cooperation over war-legacy issues, enabling both states to reframe their bitter history as the foundation for a comprehensive partnership. These divergent trajectories underscore the malleability of memory politics: the same temporal practices can either deepen antagonisms or provide a foundation for reconciliation, depending on how they are framed and enacted.

The comparative analysis reveals two broad trajectories through which anniversaries shape international relations. On the one hand, conflictual trajectories occur when commemorations are mobilized through exclusive narratives of victimhood, betrayal, or sovereignty under threat. In Taiwan–China, Armenia–Turkey, and Hungary's Trianon centenary, leaders deploy anniversaries to reaffirm unresolved disputes and securitize history, treating alternative interpretations as existential threats. On the other hand, reconciliatory trajectories emerge when commemorations are reframed inclusively, transforming contested histories into shared experiences. In the Franco-German and U.S.–Vietnam cases, symbolic gestures such as joint ceremonies softened antagonisms and aligned with broader integrationist projects, whether within the EU or ASEAN.

The temporal dimension of anniversaries further accentuates their political impact. As Hom (2017) argues, round-number anniversaries often operate as critical junctures that invite reinterpretation of the past. This claim is strongly supported by the evidence: the Armenian Genocide centenary (2015), the centenary of the Treaty of Trianon (2020) and the 70th anniversary of the PRC (2019) all reignited nationalist grievances and heightened tensions. Conversely, the 50th anniversary of the Élysée Treaty (2013) reinforced Franco-German reconciliation and bolstered the European integration project. These examples highlight the fact that anniversaries are not merely periodic rituals but temporal markers that can amplify memory politics, turning history into a battleground for legitimacy or a resource for peacebuilding. Three key mechanisms explain how anniversaries shape international politics. First, narrative legitimation ties present sovereignty and authority to past sacrifice, as seen in Taiwan's Double Ten or China's National Day. Second, moral diplomacy allows states to mobilize historical grievances for international recognition, as in Armenian Genocide commemorations that seek global acknowledgement. Third, performative reconciliation can transform historical enmity into a shared identity through joint commemorative acts, exemplified by Franco-German ceremonies. These mechanisms confirm that anniversaries are not symbolic residues of the past but active diplomatic interventions with real consequences for security and international order.

The findings also reveal important gaps in existing scholarship. Much of the literature remains Eurocentric, focusing predominantly on reconciliation narratives in Europe while overlooking East Asian flashpoints such as China–Taiwan relations. Foundational works often emphasize nation-building while neglecting anniversaries' international implications, particularly their capacity to entrench conflict. Moreover, few studies adopt a comparative lens across both

reconciliation and conflict cases. This research demonstrates the value of cross-regional analysis, showing how anniversaries simultaneously carry the potential to destabilize and to reconcile.

Theoretically, the study makes three contributions. First, it extends Anderson's (1983) notion of imagined communities by demonstrating that anniversaries can construct not only national but also transnational identities, as in the Franco-German contribution to a European consciousness. Second, it refines Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) concept of invented traditions by showing that anniversaries may destabilize, rather than stabilize, international relations when they perpetuate grievances, as in Hungary and Armenia. Third, it expands Mälksoo's (2015) framework of mnemonical security, revealing that disputes over memory do not remain confined to domestic legitimacy but shape foreign policy choices and international alignments.

Finally, the study carries significant policy implications. Anniversaries must be recognized as sensitive diplomatic junctures with the potential to escalate or resolve conflicts. International actors such as the UN or EU could proactively engage with commemorative moments, especially round-number anniversaries, to ensure they serve as opportunities for reconciliation rather than flashpoints for antagonism. By anticipating the political charge of anniversaries, policymakers can better manage the risks and exploit the opportunities embedded in these symbolic yet powerful events.

In short, the discussion reinforces the central claim of the study: anniversaries are double-edged instruments in international relations. They may entrench divisions and escalate disputes, as seen in Taiwan–China, Armenia–Turkey, and Hungary's Trianon commemorations, or they may function as catalysts for reconciliation and transnational solidarity, as demonstrated in the Franco-German and U.S.–Vietnam cases. The challenge for both scholars and policymakers lies in identifying the mechanisms of commemoration and steering them toward reconciliation rather than antagonism.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has demonstrated that anniversaries are not neutral commemorations of the past but dynamic political instruments that actively shape international relations. Through the comparative analysis of five case studies—China–Taiwan cross-Strait commemorations, Armenian Genocide remembrance, Hungary's Treaty of Trianon centenary, Franco-German reconciliation anniversaries, and U.S.–Vietnam commemorations—the research revealed the dual function of

anniversaries as both bridges and barriers in diplomacy. While in some cases they have facilitated reconciliation, as seen in Franco-German and U.S.–Vietnam relations, in others they have reignited grievances and reinforced sovereignty claims, such as in Taiwan, Armenia–Turkey, and Hungary.

The findings suggest that the outcomes of commemorative practices depend on whether memory politics is mobilized inclusively or exclusively. Shared rituals, performative gestures, and reframing of memory can transform sites of conflict into symbols of unity, while exclusive victimhood narratives and historical grievances can exacerbate tensions. Moreover, round-number anniversaries—such as centenaries or 70th anniversaries—emerge as critical junctures at which disputes can either escalate or be redirected towards reconciliation. By extending the works of Anderson, Hobsbawm, Mälksoo, and Hom, this study highlights that anniversaries are deeply embedded in questions of identity, legitimacy, and security, making them pivotal but underexplored elements in international relations.

In sum, anniversaries operate as double-edged swords. They can serve as flashpoints for division or as platforms for peacebuilding, depending on the political choices and framing strategies employed. They must therefore be understood not as mere markers of time but as strategic opportunities in the conduct of diplomacy.

Recommendations

Drawing on these insights, several policy implications emerge. First, international organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, and ASEAN should anticipate major anniversaries as predictable diplomatic flashpoints and prepare proactive mediation strategies. Second, joint commemorations should be encouraged among historical rivals, as demonstrated by the Franco-German and U.S.–Vietnam models, which transformed sites of memory into avenues for partnership. Third, institutions such as UNESCO could facilitate mnemonical dialogues that engage contested histories in ways that reduce securitization and promote constructive narratives. Finally, policymakers should strategically employ anniversaries as peacebuilding platforms, using cultural events, shared memorials, or public gestures of apology to foster reconciliation.

If harnessed inclusively, anniversaries can move beyond symbolic remembrance to become catalysts for regional stability, reconciliation, and even the construction of shared transnational identities. By recognizing their dual potential, both scholars and practitioners can better anticipate risks and exploit opportunities embedded in these politically charged moments of memory.

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REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND REGIONALISM IN AFRICA: THE AFRICAN UNION'S COORDINATION OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

The motivation of virtually all regional integration initiatives has been premised on enhanced economic transformation and development. Their importance in contributing to growth and development have been well-recognised in Africa since independence. This perhaps is the reason some have advocated for Africa's expeditious and proper integration to ensure sustainable growth, reduce poverty and foster development. Continental integration efforts began with the formation of the OAU in 1963 which later became the AU in 2002. This continental body was given the task of coordinating the RECs at the sub-regional levels. This paper, using a qualitative approach and a descriptive design, and guided by the Inter-governmentalist Theoretical framework, found among others, that, despite integration efforts by the OAU and AU, very little progress has been made. Poor coordination between AU and RECs coupled with ambiguous regulatory frameworks are cardinal challenges in achieving African Integration. The paper, critically analyses the coordination mechanisms between the AU and RECs, and the challenges faced by the AU in achieving continental integration. The paper concludes that issues of coordination and regulation between AU and RECs must be properly streamlined if Africa must achieve integration and development.

***Keywords*:** Regional Integration; Regionalism; Coordination; African Union; Regional Economic Communities

Introduction

The end of World War II in 1945 introduced a new chapter in international relations. This new era saw an increase in political, economic, and even socio-cultural alliances, as well as new dynamics of globalization, which often took the shape of regional integration. This scenario became necessary as a result of the awareness that regional integration and regionalism are important

frameworks for the development of the diverse regions around the world (Uyabara, 2022). It's no surprise that there are growing calls for Africa to quickly and effectively integrate both internally and into the global economic and financial systems in order to ensure long-term economic growth, alleviate severe poverty, and enforce development (Ishmael, 2020).

Africa began its integration process almost immediately after independence, owing to emerging trends in a rapidly globalizing world in which regionalism is regarded as one effective means by which countries and regions of the world can maximise benefits within themselves and as a regional bloc with others. This new trend, which began in 1945, was intensified by the end of the Cold War in 1991, when the number of regional initiatives drastically increased worldwide (Sakyi & Opoku, 2014).

At independence, African states began regional integration by forming intergovernmental agencies that were given power by the states to implement the continent's integration objectives. The specific goals of the intergovernmental bodies varied according to the priorities and needs of the individual states. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which later metamorphosed to African Union (AU), was established to promote the continent-wide integration agenda, and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) were set up to pursue sub-regional integration goals. (Magoke & Oke, 2023). The AU has been tasked with coordinating and supervising the activities of the RECs.

Regional integration and regionalism in Africa arose from the necessity to achieve common political and economic objectives during and immediately after colonialism. As a few states began to gain independence, there were calls for regional assistance to help countries remaining under colonialism to gain independence. Furthermore, there was a need for cooperation among newly independent states in their quest for economic development (Magoke & Oke 2023). Regional integration has recently become a primary focus for Africa, as countries pursue both economic and political integration to achieve long-term growth. Integration allows resource-rich and resource-poor states, landlocked and coastal nations, lower and higher GDP countries to all gain access to the diverse resources they need to build and enhance their economies and improve living conditions of their nations (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

Consequently, Africans view regional integration as the most potent approach for unlocking the enormous potential of its 1.2 billion people, the majority of whom are vibrant young people

(Ogunyemi, 2017). Through integration, Africa will be able to unite its disparate little economies into one huge economy, increasing their competitiveness on the world stage. Additionally, integration will help the resolution of various cross-border issues that call for cooperation, such as security and conflict, the flow of people, products, and services, climate change, etc (Moyo, 2009). Therefore, RECs are considered cornerstone to achieve the continental integration agenda. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and others are among the eight RECs that make up the basis of African regionalism as recognized by the AU (Birhan & Christopher, 2024).

Regional economic integration has numerous advantages. The most important is significant trade liberalization within the region, resulting in a greater selection of partners and less dependency (Mold & Chowdhury, 2021). In contrast, they create intense competitiveness within the integrated regional group (Gobena, 2016). Naturally, countries facing increased competition are more likely to evaluate their production capabilities and comparative advantages. This encourages countries to boost their productivity by decreasing production times and increasing labour and human capital standards. Moreso, as production costs fall across the supply chain, countries frequently drop their selling prices. All of these variables contribute to a relentless pursuit of innovation in production, which leads to growth. So, without unity, which can only be attained via integration, Africa may have no hope for a better economic future. (Birhan & Christopher, 2024). Furthermore, regionalism helps nation-building and democratization as it can minimize the use of force by great powers, increase transparency, make states and supranational bodies more accountable, and mitigate the negative impacts of globalization (Nwangwu, Enyiazu, Nwagwu, & Ezeibe, 2019).

Regional integration has remarkably transformed the European Union (EU), with over 28 members, through the design and dedicated implementation of diverse developmental initiatives in the past 20 years. Similarly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has also been able to implement economically beneficial policies that have significantly assisted regional development. These examples show that, despite the multiple challenges regional organizations encounter, governments can overcome them and implement mutually gainful policies via dedicated collaboration and well-coordinated synergy (Mlambo & Mlambo, 2018). Contrarily, Africa's integration attempts which began in the last six decades ago with the founding of the OAU has recorded very little progress. Due to the mandate given to the AU and the RECs, the

success or failure of regional integration in Africa is heavily reliant on these supranational institutions. However, Both the AU and the RECs are intergovernmental organizations that are closely controlled by the founding governments. When the political interests of cooperating governments conflict with economic interests, a systemic breakdown occurs, and this present a significant coordination problem.

This study examines the coordination mandate of the AU on the RECs in their efforts to achieve regional integration. To do this, the study uncovers the history of regional integration in Africa, as well as the role of the AU and RECs as regional integration drivers. The research also examines the regulatory frameworks that govern coordination. The study indicates that effective coordination and goal harmonization between the AU and RECs are critical for accelerating the achievement of the continental integration agenda to enhance development.

Statement of the Problem

Regional integration and regionalism are considered very important for Africa, particularly in enhancing and accelerating the continent's economic growth and development considering her enormous economic potential. In other words, regional integration is vital as it is capable of serving as Africa's roadmap to the much-needed development. As often said, the resource laden continent of Africa only awaits a thriving regionalism to increase her productive capacity and enjoy economies of scale (Garba & Alexander, 2023). No wonder the increasing clamour for the continent to quickly fix her integration process to enjoy sustained growth, reduce poverty and promote development. The integration train kicked-off with the formation of the OAU. The nearly three decades of the OAU showed a near zero success score card; hence it gave way to the AU considered better designed to steer the ship of African integration. Again, the over three decades of AU's stewardship still has no substantial results to show. This certainly calls for more investigation as to whether Africa is on the right track as regards its integration drive. Recognizing that the AU is mandated to supervise, coordinate and synergize with the RECs who are the actual drivers of regionalism in the continent, this study consider it necessary to investigate this coordination of the AU to see how well it has fared.

Research Questions

iv. What are the tasks of the AU as the chief driver of the continental integration project?
v. What is the place of the RECs as the cornerstone or actual drivers of Africa's regional integration agenda?

vi. What are the regulatory frameworks available to the AU to coordinate and supervise the RECs?

vii. What are some of the challenges facing the AU's efforts in achieving a thriving continental integration?

viii. In what ways can the AU and the RECs better coordinate themselves to achieve the much needed integration to enhance Africa's development?

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To demonstrate the task of the AU as chief driver of the continental integration project.
2. To identify the place of the RECs as the cornerstone or actual drivers of Africa's regional integration agenda.
3. To examine some regulatory frameworks available to the AU to coordinate and supervise RECs.
4. To identify some challenges facing the AU's effort in achieving a thriving continental integration.
5. To make recommendations on how the AU and the RECs would better synergize to achieve the much needed integration to foster Africa's development.

Research Methodology

This study is qualitative research that adopted descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is a method used to systematically describe and interpret characteristics of a phenomenon without manipulating variables. It focuses on answering the "what" question by providing a detailed account of existing conditions, practices, or relationships. This design is relevant to the study because it enables the researcher to accurately document the current structures, roles, and interactions between the AU and RECs, assess the extent of integration efforts, and identify coordination challenges and successes across the continent. Data was drawn from secondary sources, such as books, journal articles, newspapers, magazines and internet materials, and content analysed. The purpose for adopting this approach is to put in proper context the issues underlying regional integration in Africa and challenges of enhancing development which have a massive existing literature.

Historical Overview of African Integration

Regional integration in Africa is a multidimensional process that aim to create collaboration and coherence in economic, political, and social policies among African countries. This effort has

historical roots, with postcolonial leaders understanding the importance of cooperation in tackling common difficulties and advancing collective development. The OAU was established in 1963, which marked the beginning of Africa's march toward regional integration and regionalism (Nene, 2024).

African states and their leaders made several attempts to achieve continental integration, but these efforts were largely unsuccessful until 1963, when the charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was signed in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Elhiraika, Mugungu, & Nyoike, 2015). The OAU eventually emerged as a result of the combined efforts of African leaders and Africans in diaspora, in an attempt to free Africa from the burdens of colonialism, racial discrimination, and economic marginalization, as well as to strengthen African links (Ajala, 1988). In reviewing the history of regional integration in Africa, the circumstances preceding the founding of the OAU is significant in order to provide insights into why the OAU could not achieve integration.

All evidence suggested that African leaders and statesmen desired to integrate the continent in order to form a more coherent and viable political and economic bloc, but they were often divided on how to achieve this integration. Consequently, this division took on institutional dimensions and divided them into three distinct groups: the Casablanca Group, the Monrovia Group, and the Brazzaville Group (Dauda, Ahmad, & Keling, 2021), all with different perspectives on regionalism. However, the camps eventually reconciled, and the newly independent African States designed, enacted, and ratified the OAU Charter in 1963 to establish the Organization of African Unity (OAU). There were 32 members of the OAU when it was founded. The OAU's primary objectives were political and economic. The political goal was to bring all African states together in the struggle for independence from colonial rule, to coordinate the assistance provided by independent African states to non-independent states seeking independence, and to act as a means of achieving shared goals among the Independent States (Magoke & Oke, 2023). The primary economic goal was regional integration and collaboration to promote economic growth and development.

During its existence, the OAU was mainly successful in attaining its political goals, which included winning independence for nations desiring independence through nonviolent methods and putting an end to South Africa's apartheid rule. Unfortunately, its economic goal remained mostly a mirage until the early 2000s, with its regional economic integration initiatives yielding little or no benefits. At this point, the OAU leadership was set to restructure the organization in

order to address Africa's integration problems. Many, including Libya's late President Muammar Gadaffi advocated for the body's reorganization to reflect worldwide contemporary trends. On July 9, 2002, it was transformed into the African Union (AU) in Durban, South Africa (Uyabara, 2022).

The transition from the OAU to the AU was a watershed moment in the continent's commitment to regional integration and regionalism. The formation of the AU, modeled after the EU, was viewed as the commencement of rapid integration of African economies to foster development. The AU was regarded as a finely designed and equipped organization to address the continent's integration difficulties. For many, its advent marked a stronger commitment to regional cooperation, providing the groundwork for broader integration programs and supervision. Immediately, the AU began to play a major role in influencing regional policies, using a variety of tools to explain and implement its vision. The AU Commission serves as the executive arm, monitoring policy implementation, while specialized agencies and committees contributed to sector-specific policy efforts (Tella, 2018; AU, 2024).

There were high hopes for the advent of the AU as an appropriate machinery to organize and supervise the African integration project to fruition. However, three decades after the AU-led integration drive began, the continent has not realised the full benefits of integration. Analysts and academics have linked the AU's poor performance to a number of factors that have been thoroughly documented and explored in the literature of African regionalism. Many people are not sure what else need to be said or done to ensure success in African integration. This study does not seek to provide a comprehensive answer to this problem, but rather to assess a particular aspect that is seen as a critical contributor to the problem.

Conceptual Clarification

Regional Integration

Regional integration enables states overcome some costly divisions by integrating goods, services, and factor markets, thereby facilitating the movement of trade, capital, energy, people and ideas. Regional integration can be facilitated by shared physical and institutional infrastructure. Theoretically, regional integration and regionalism appear contradictory. Integration entails unification along legal, political, and economic lines, as seen between EU members and candidate countries. Meanwhile, regionalism introduces the concept of diversity, in which all the sub-regions actively participate in the continental integration process. This study

conceives regional integration as African countries working together as a team to overcome common difficulties and leverage their shared strength to benefit from the global economic transaction.

Regionalism

Regionalism refers to a strategy of cooperation and policy coordination between states within a particular region. It encompasses measures a group of countries takes to improve their social, political, economic, or cultural interaction (Margaret, 2002). These initiatives can take different forms, such as regional cooperation, market integration, and development integration. In its simplest form, regionalism is the desire and commitment of states with a strong sense of common goals, values, orientations, and expectations to live and work together in both domestic and foreign policy to support greater economic and political union and a strengthened security community (Akpuru-Aja, 2001). Regionalism in this study refers to sub-regional economic cooperation efforts anchored by the RECs as the actual drivers of the African integration agenda.

Coordination

Coordination is the effective management of many departments in an organization to ensure that they all function together, so that the organization's personnel, groups, and departments work in unity to achieve common objectives. It also promotes harmony in carrying out the various duties and activities required to meet the organization's goals. Coordination is a crucial part of any collective activity. Coordination is unnecessary when a person is working. As a result, coordination serves as an organised arrangement of activities that provide unity of purpose for a complex whole working toward a common goal. To optimise performance, the diverse groups within an organization must work together as cohesive units. Coordination entails synchronizing the work of several groups or departments to reduce conflict. In our situation, coordination refers to the AU's responsibility to ensure that the activities of the sub-regional RECs are synchronised in order to offer unity of action in the pursuit and attainment of the common goals of Africa's integration agenda.

Theoretical Framework

Theories of regional integration emerged to mainly explain European integration. These theoretical approaches discussed the key factors that facilitate the achievement of regional integration. This paper adopted the analytical clarity of intergovernmentalist theory to explain Africa’s regional integration.

Intergovernmentalism is a theory of integration first developed by Stanley Hoffmann (1966, 1982) and later refined by Andrew Moravcsik (1993, 1998) (Leuffen, Shimmelfennig, & Rittberger, 2022). According to intergovernmentalism theory, governments have power over the level and speed of integration. Hoffman contended that every regional body's inner logic and unfolding are determined by the multiplicity of domestic causes, geo-historical contexts, and external goals among its parts. Hoffmann proposed that in areas of critical importance to the national interest, nations prefer the certainty of national self-reliance to the uncontrolled uncertainty of integration.

In advocating liberal intergovernmentalism, Moravcsik contends that integration goes as far as member states wish it to go, and that European institutions exist as a result of member states' intentional desire to meet their interests and as vehicles for achieving member states' goals. Liberal intergovernmentalists think that the member states of a regional integration system (for example, EU members) are unitary rational actors in charge of the integration process, and that institutions play little role in major decisions. Institutionalists attack intergovernmentalists for failing to recognize the importance of institutions (Hailu, 2014). Intergovernmentalism is used in this study because the AU and RECs are state-created organizations. They all rely largely, if not completely, on member states to drive integration. This explains why, whenever integrating governments have a conflict of interest or experience crisis, the regional integration organization suffers. Thus, RECs, which are the main drivers of the African integration process, rely on their constituent states for survival and function.

The AU as Chief Driver of Continental Integration

The AU was established as a substitute for the OAU by the Constitutive Act of 2002. Despite its success in assisting several African states in achieving independence, the OAU had several limitations and was criticised for becoming irrelevant and obsolete in the new world, particularly after the Cold War and apartheid in the 1990s. It was crucial to establish an organization capable of meeting the current difficulties and needs of African states as the new millennium dawned.

The AU's objectives include achieving African unity, solidarity, cooperation, and integration; developing the organization as an international player; promoting sustainable development, democracy and good governance (African Union, 2002). The AU established a coordinating framework to help with the implementation of these aims. The AU's institutional structure

includes bodies responsible for executive, judicial, and legislative duties. The AU's topmost organ is the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments of African States, which makes decisions for the organization. (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

The AU was formed with the goal of ensuring seamless and rapid continental integration. To understand the AU's desire for continental integration, a reference to the Abuja Treaty, which established the African Economic Community (AEC) in 1991 is necessary (Uyabara, 2022). The AEC is a structural outcome of the continent's full regional integration, as specified in Article 2 of the Abuja Treaty. The goal is to establish a unified economic and monetary union among the AU's 54 member states. It is worthy to note that the Abuja Treaty stated that in all spheres of integration, including peace and security, the then-OAU, now AU, must coordinate and harmonize the actions of the RECs (Amani Africa, 2023).

In assessing the AEC's performance, it can be said that the continent is not anywhere close to fulfilling its mandate. The creation of the AfCFTA in 2018 indicates that the organization is only in the third of its six stages and is lagging behind schedule to meet its target of completing the AEC's goal within 34 years and not more than 40 years beginning from 1991 (Magoke & Oke, 2023). Reaching stage three of the six stages has taken the continent about 32 years. Is it possible to complete the last three stages with just 8 years left to the 40 years' timeline?

The AEC, which began operations in May 1994, provided expert guidance on viable and practical actions for attaining RECs goals across the continent. This AEC's responsibility of ensuring the speedy achievement within above time-frame of African regional integration was inherited by the AU at its formation. More sector-specific integration goals were established, such as those in the AU's Agenda 2063 and the African Multidimensional Regional Integration Index (AMRII). The AMRII monitors the implementation of the African integration agenda as outlined in the Abuja Treaty and Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2021).

Since its inception, the AU has made significant accomplishments. Politically, substantial initiatives have been taken to promote peace and security on the continent, such as the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which help stabilise Somalia. Economically, though the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was established in 2018, promoting sub-regional integration through the RECs appears to be a daunting task. (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

Notwithstanding these obstacles, the AU persists in its existence and endeavours to achieve its goals.

The RECs as Actual Drivers of Africa's Regional Integration

The first mention of the role of RECs as building blocks for Africa's continental integration appeared in the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) for African Development. This was predicated on the acknowledgment of the existence of social, infrastructural, and economic variables that promote sub-regional integration. The Abuja Treaty, which established the AEC in 1991, subsequently formalized the position of RECs as the cornerstone of Africa's integration (Atta-Mensah, 2022). As earlier stated in line with the Abuja Treaty, the OAU, now AU was mandated to coordinate and harmonize the actions of the RECs in all spheres of integration, including peace and security. Accordingly, States were required by Articles 28 and 88 of the treaty "to take all necessary measures aimed at progressively promoting closer cooperation among the RECs" (Amani Africa, 2023).

The role of RECs, as envisioned in the Abuja Treaty, as well as their partnership with the AEC in the pursuit of regional integration and development, were incorporated into the AU's founding treaty. The AU Constitutive Act, which emphasises in its preamble the necessity to speed up the implementation of the Abuja Treaty, list policy coordination and harmonization with RECs as one of its primary objectives for achieving integration goals (Amani Africa, 2023).

Sub-regional integration projects in Africa date back to 1910, when the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) was founded, and the East African Community (EAC) was formed in 1919 (Hailu, 2014). SACU was founded by colonial authorities from South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland (now Eswatini), and Botswana. The EAC was a customs union between Uganda and Kenya, which Tanganyika (now Tanzania) joined in 1927. Since then, around thirteen RECs have been founded across the continent (Uyabara, 2022). As mentioned above, the AU has recognized only eight out of the several RECs.

RECs are the most identifiable and direct means of regional integration on the African continent. States form RECs to achieve common aims. Individual RECs were founded for specific purposes; hence no two RECs are formed for the same cause. Some RECs were created for trade, some for peace and security, others for environmental protection, and so on. Despite their disparate goals, the RECs share a common goal of connecting the countries in their regions (Magoke & Oke,

2023). In view of their importance, the AU was tasked with coordinating their efforts to achieve their lofty goals.

Frameworks for AU's Coordination of RECs

Coordination between institutions is required to achieve the institutions' joint goals, which are regional integration in a more timely and effective manner. Coordination is required to overcome the problems that the institutions confront separately when implementing goals that are similar or linked to other institutions. Coordination is intended to align institutional policies and improve efficiency. To ensure successful coordination between the AU and the RECs, parties must develop and execute similar regulatory frameworks and principles. This section analyses the various regulatory frameworks, used by the AU towards achieving efficient coordination with RECs.

The Abuja Treaty 1991: The continental integration concept of the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) was enshrined in the Abuja Treaty that established the African Economic Community in 1991, established by the OAU to promote economic cooperation across the continent. The Abuja Treaty, still in place today, play a major role in regulating the relationship between the OAU inherited by AU and the RECs. The Treaty considered RECs as critical components in achieving continental integration (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

The Treaty was signed on June 3, 1991, by Heads of State and Government of the OAU, the predecessor of the AU. The treaty came into force in 1994, serving as a blueprint for Africa's continental integration. It envisions the creation of the African Economic Community (AEC) through a phased, step-by-step process relying on the existing RECs as the building blocks of continental unity (OAU, 1991). The Treaty outlined six implementation stages over a period of 34 years, including the strengthening existing RECs; harmonizing and coordinating policies among RECs; establishing continental institutions such as a customs union, common market, central bank, and, eventually, an African Economic and Monetary Union.

Despite its ambitious vision, implementation has been inconsistent, often hampered by political divergence, economic disparities, and overlapping mandates among RECs. Nevertheless, the Abuja Treaty remains a landmark in Africa's integration agenda, providing the normative blueprint upon which initiatives like the African Union (AU) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) have been built.

The 1998 *Protocol on Relations between the AEC and RECs*: The 1998 *Protocol on Relations between the AEC and the RECs* which was later adapted to guide interactions between the AU and RECs was designed to institutionalize coordination, cooperation, and harmonization among African integration efforts. It aimed to delineate roles and establish mechanisms for structured collaboration between the AU and RECs in pursuit continental integration goals. However, in practice, the protocol has not translated into effective and efficient coordination due to several institutional and political limitations. One core issue is the lack of clarity and enforcement in defining the division of labor between the AU and the RECs. While the protocol envisioned a complementary relationship, the absence of binding obligations or clear lines of authority has led to institutional overlaps, duplicated mandates, and in some cases, open competition between the AU and RECs (Engel & Gomes Porto, 2010). For example, in matters of peace and security, RECs such as ECOWAS and SADC have often acted independently, resulting in fragmented responses that do not align with AU-wide frameworks like the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) (Murithi, 2008).

The 1998 Protocol also set up a Coordination Committee and a Secretariat Officials Committee with the former's role being coordination and monitoring of RECs' progress toward integration, and the latter's role being more technical, including organizing coordination committee meetings provided in the 1998 Protocol, Chapters 3 and 4. The 1998 Protocol Chapter 5 also encouraged inter-REC cooperation and required REC Member States in Chapter 8 to establish coordinating ministries or agencies in their respective nations (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

The African Union Constitutive Act (2000): The Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000) serves as the foundational legal framework for the AU's operations, including its coordination with RECs. It emphasises the importance of continental unity, integration, and cooperation, particularly through Article 3 and Article 4, which highlight the promotion of political and socio-economic integration and the establishment of a common defense policy. While the Act recognises RECs as essential building blocks of the AEC, its practical impact on fostering effective and efficient coordination has been limited. This is largely due to vague provisions regarding the actual mechanisms of collaboration and a lack of enforceable directives governing the interaction between the AU and RECs. Consequently, despite its integrative aspirations, the Constitutive Act has not sufficiently mitigated overlapping mandates, institutional rivalry, or the divergence of priorities between the AU and RECs (Adar, 2020).

The AU's Decision Assembly (2017): In 2017, the African Union Assembly adopted Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.635(XXVIII), which established the Annual Coordination Meeting (ACM) between the AU, RECs, and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) as the principal framework for enhancing coherence and alignment in continental integration efforts. This decision marked a significant step toward addressing long-standing challenges of fragmentation and duplication by institutionalizing a high-level platform for strategic dialogue, policy coordination, and alignment of priorities between the AU and RECs. The ACM is structured at three levels: the Heads of State and Government, the Council of Ministers, and senior officials, thus providing a multi-tiered mechanism for policy harmonization and implementation oversight. While this framework aims to strengthen coordination, its effectiveness depends on political commitment, institutional capacity, and regular follow-up, which remain variable across member states and RECs (AU, 2017; Adar, 2020). Nonetheless, the ACM represents a move toward operationalizing the principle of subsidiarity and fostering a more structured division of labor between the AU and RECs.

Consequently, following the 2017 decision, annual coordination meetings have been held between the RECs and the AU. The Coordination Secretariat is also a part of the coordination system, with the goal of preparing reports and submitting them to the Coordinating Committee. The Coordination Secretariat consists of AU and REC representatives (African Union, 2021). Despite the processes and frameworks established for the AU to coordinate the RECs, little progress has been made in the overall continental integration agenda. A review of the regulatory frameworks governing the AU and the RECs reveals that regulations are unsatisfactory in their content and create challenges in implementation.

Challenges Faced by AU in Coordinating RECs

Despite the AU's overarching vision and drive, regional integration in Africa faces numerous challenges. Several reasons are given for the persistence in implementation gap between the RECs under AU supervision to meet their integration obligations (Asare-Nuamah, 2019; Ademola, 2022). The delayed integration in Africa is partly attributed to poor coordination between the AU and the RECs. This is because poor coordination causes: misallocation of already inadequate resources; duplication of efforts; the development of opposing policies; and difficulty in implementing common goals, strategies, and policies. Although RECs have multiplied in

Africa, they have not done much to improve members' economic conditions or promote sustainable growth and development. Some of the challenges include;

AU's Weak Institutional architecture: Between the agreements reached and their execution, there has always been a lacuna. Treaties, procedures, and decisions have not always been implemented satisfactorily by parties (Birhan & Christopher, 2024). This is partly ascribed to the adoption of impracticable and unrealistic implementation dates, but more importantly, is the absence of an efficient institutional architecture that empowers the AU to coordinate RECs, enforce decisions, and track implementation compliance (Hailu, 2014).

Similarly, RECs are legal entities with their own legal identity, and as such, they produce their own body of legal precedence. Conflicting legal positions between RECs such as the COMESA and SADC incidence highlight the challenges of legal institutional weakness. For instance, the COMESA Court issued final and non-appealable rulings on trade disputes that are binding on member states, while the now-defunct SADC Tribunal, prior to its suspension in 2010, also rendered binding judgments—such as the landmark Campbell v. Zimbabwe case—which created tensions when national governments rejected or failed to implement these rulings (Nathan, 2013). These discrepancies underscore the legal pluralism and jurisdictional overlaps among RECs, compounded by the absence of a central authority to reconcile conflicting interpretations. The AU, while positioned as the continental coordinator, lacks the robust institutional architecture and legal authority to arbitrate or enforce coherence among RECs' judicial discrepancies. This institutional weakness hinders the AU's ability to provide strategic leadership and ensure synergy in the implementation of continental initiatives, thereby limiting the overall effectiveness of Africa's integration agenda (Adar, 2020).

RECs Original Interest and AU Regulation: Many more RECs have been established since the first ones, and some have collapsed for a variety of reasons. All RECs, however, have developed independently of the AU and are exclusively the product of the governments of the member nations of the sub-regions of their origin. Although the RECs are autonomous and have their own structures, missions, visions, and goals that were not influenced by the AU, the AU is nonetheless expected to regulate them as crucial building blocks for achieving continental integration (Magoke & Oke, 2023). This creates a severe legitimacy challenge for the AU in enforcing REC compliance with regulations. The AU has also had negative impact on sub-regional integration,

particularly when the AU's choices and mandates do not properly line up with those of the RECs, causing the AU to criticise and undermine REC actions (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

The AU recognised eight RECs, which include the South African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), among others (AU Assembly, 2006), and at the same time denied recognition to others including the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC); the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (ECGLC); etc, (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). Sadly, for the AU, the non-recognised RECs co-exist and functions side by side with the so-called recognized ones. The truth is that, some of these non-recognised RECs continue to attract more attention from member states of the sub-regions. This sometimes leads to conflicting interests between the AU and RECs member states in implementing their integration agendas (Magoke & Oke, 2023).

Overlapping Membership and Conflicting Interest of RECs: In Africa, proliferation of RECs and overlapping membership among AU member states creates competing and sometime conflicting interests that impede effective coordination and coherence in the overall continental integration initiative (Nene, 2024). The challenge of overlapping memberships in RECs, often referred to as the "Spaghetti Bowl" phenomenon, significantly hampers the continental integration efforts by creating institutional duplication, conflicting obligations, and policy incoherence. Many African countries belong to multiple RECs with similar mandates, leading to resource inefficiencies and coordination difficulties as they navigate competing regulatory frameworks and integration agendas (UNECA, 2016).

Multiple RECs have been founded as stepping stones to regional integration, with a diverse variety of functions and intents; nearly all African countries are members of more than one REC. This places pressure on the member countries' limited resources. A country that belongs to two or more RECS must meet a number of financial responsibilities, which presents the issue of certain states failing to contribute to the regional institution's full functioning. These countries must manage various meetings schedules, political decisions, harmonization, timelines, and so on. (Birhan & Christopher, 2024).

The incidence of member states' multiple membership in RECs complicates the AU's efforts at continental integration as the AU lacks legal authority to dictate which RECs member nations

must join or not. The legal argument against the AU in this regard is that, the Abuja Treaty establishing AU's coordination on RECs was signed by individual African countries and not RECs (Hailu, 2014). This fragmentation undermines the harmonization of trade, infrastructure, and security initiatives across the continent, thereby weakening the effectiveness of the African Union's integration strategy and slowing progress toward a unified African Economic Community (Ezeani, 2019).

Conclusion

This study examined regional integration and regionalism in Africa, particularly the issue of coordination between the AU and the RECs, with the AU serving as the primary driver of the continental integration agenda. Regionalism in Africa also recognised sub-regional RECs as the primary drivers of integration process. As a result, the AU has been tasked with coordinating the RECs since its formation. Thus, the study investigated the AU and its integration goal; studied the RECs as building blocks; and critically analyzed the coordination mechanisms used by the AU and the RECs.

The assessment of the AU's coordination of RECs suggests that regulatory frameworks have existed since the OAU's inception, requiring the coordination and harmonisation of the activities of the RECs, but coordination was ambiguous, and mechanisms were not yet fine-tuned for this purpose. With the emergence of the AU, considerable efforts have been made to define 'coordination', build coordination structures, and develop frameworks to explain and clarify the principles linked to efficient coordination, such as division of labour and subsidiarity.

It is clear from the analysis that, despite that the AU was considered better equipped to coordinate the RECs, it has been unable to achieve integration for Africa in the desired manner. The pace and magnitude of actual success in regional integration and regionalism in Africa are inadequate and are lagging behind when compared to the EU and others. This failure, however, has not stopped the discussion on efforts toward regional integration in the continent as this study is one such continuation of the discussion.

In an attempt to address the central issue of efficient coordination between the AU and RECs toward achieving regional integration in Africa, the study found that coordination between the institutions remains insufficient and inefficient, resulting in the slow pace of achieving African integration. The AU and RECs must intensify, strengthen, and accelerate their coordination

efforts. Integration goals will only be met by coherent and efficient coordination, which means that regulatory frameworks, coordination activities, principles, and other instruments governing coordination must be appropriately designed, understood and executed in harmony.

Recommendations

The process of achieving continental integration is ongoing with a rather slow progress rate, even with the regulatory frameworks and coordination procedures in place to oversee the coordination between the AU and RECs. With the premise that the objective is not merely coordination but rather efficient coordination to expedite the realization of the African integration agenda, the following recommendations are made.

1. As supranational organizations charged with coordination, the AU and RECs should not undermine the crucial role of Member States. The AU as central driver of the process must ensure the Member States and RECs are united on all matters. Member states participation and cooperation are the only ways to achieve deeper and accelerated integration.
2. There is need for a sustained dedication for goals attainment by African nations, regional institutions, and other stakeholders to hasten the realization of the dividends of regionalism. To achieve this, issues including institutional capacity, conflicting interests and policies, and overlapping membership in RECs must be addressed.
3. Institutional structure and capacity are both necessary for optimal institutional performance. The AU need to make structural adjustments to meet its objectives of efficiently coordinating the RECs. The structure of RECs also need to be restructured to be more receptive to the AU. Also, alignment between the structures of the institutions will enhance understanding of each other's institutional structures that promotes better coordination.
4. Establishment of an all-encompassing framework that outlines the operational and legal aspects of the partnership in order to streamline coordination amongst the RECs, Member States, and the AU is very crucial. For example, some ambiguous and conflicting legal frameworks administering justice between AU and RECs, and between RECs must be clarified, unified and adopted by all parties, to allow for unambiguous justice dispensation. This is crucial to avoid cases like the COMESA and SADC example mentioned above.
5. The policies, strategies, and legal frameworks that regulate the AU's partnership and coordination of RECs and Member States must be operationalised. Coordination policies and strategies between the AU and the RECs must be made to quickly transit from well-

written papers to practical implementation. It is high time integration drivers in Africa worked the talk.

6. Finally, the AU should begin to consider replacing the RECs with its individual member states as the very building blocks in its integration drive as obtainable in the EU. The EU deal directly with individual member states for entry qualification and other measures to ensure effective and efficient synergy in goal achievement. This avoids the issue of conflicting interests among member nations within a given REC who may be pursuing divergent goals instead of complying with AU's coordination.

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THE IMPACT OF ARMED BANDITRY ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC: AN APPRAISAL OF NORTHWEST, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Banditry has intensified in Nigeria's Northwest region, particularly impacting women and children. This paper analyzes the profound effects of armed banditry on these at-risk populations, emphasizing their vulnerability to violence, displacement, and the interruption of educational and healthcare services. The emphasis is on the states of Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Niger, where women and girls endure sexual violence, abduction, and exploitation. The paper elucidates socioeconomic disparities, inadequate governance, and resource competition that incite banditry through the lens of Karl Marx's conflict theory. It delineates four aspects of banditry; village incursions, highway theft, abduction, and livestock theft. It examines government responses, including peace negotiations, collaborative military patrols, and the Safe Schools Initiative. The research advocates for the enhancement of security protocols, the advancement of healthcare and education, the economic empowerment of women, and the mitigation of psychological trauma. It concludes by underscoring the necessity for comprehensive, gender-sensitive policies and interventions to alleviate the impacts of banditry and enhance the welfare of women and children in Nigeria's Northwest region.

Keywords: Armed banditry, Women, Children, Vulnerability.

Introduction

Banditry denotes the recurrent manifestation of armed robbery or violent offenses marked by the application of force or intimidation to coerce individuals for robbery, assault, or homicide. It is a crime targeting individuals and has been a widespread form of criminal activity, exacerbating violence in contemporary societies (Nigeria Watch, 2011). Women and children are disproportionately impacted by the repercussions of banditry, frequently emerging as the most vulnerable victims. They endure violence, displacement, disruption of vital services, and social disintegration. Identifying the distinct effects of banditry on women and children is crucial for developing targeted interventions, policies, and support systems to address their specific needs.

The pervasive banditry and associated security threats in Nigeria's Northwest region, especially in Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Sokoto, and Niger States, have emerged as a significant national security issue (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016). This region has experienced a significant rise in banditry, jeopardizing the safety, security, and welfare of its inhabitants, particularly women and children. Women and girls frequently endure egregious acts of rape, occasionally in the presence of male relatives, whether at home, in remote areas following abduction, or while gathering firewood (Mohammed Babangida, 2022). Certain communities in these states have been completely usurped by bandits. The International Crisis Group (2020) identifies these bandits as miners and traders engaged in the predominantly unregulated gold mining industry. Their actions encompass abduction for ransom, livestock theft, homicide, and sexual assault, predominantly affecting women and children as victims. The significant effect of armed banditry on at-risk women and children is undeniable. Numerous survivors of these assaults face difficulties in securing sustenance for their families, obtaining healthcare, or facilitating education for their children, exacerbating their poverty and overall welfare (Yusuf, 2022). The crisis has denied them essential health services and has additionally hindered children's access to education (E-Rasheed, 2015).

Banditry undeniably poses a significant threat not only to the security of the Northwest states but to the entire nation, considering its escalating impacts and repercussions. The prevalence of armed banditry in the Northwest necessitates immediate intervention from both state and federal authorities, particularly as the federal government oversees security forces. The intricate issue of violence and insecurity has endured in the impacted states for almost a decade (Okoli & Ogayi, 2018). The escalating assaults by bandit factions have led to fatalities and property destruction, the displacement of populations, and an increasing prevalence of widows, widowers, and orphans

residing in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps due to the persistent attacks on agricultural and pastoral communities throughout multiple regions of the states (Okoli & Ochim, 2016; Mustapha, 2019).

This paper aims to investigate the impact of banditry on women and children in the Northwest region of Nigeria during the Fourth Republic. This paper is structured into five sections, excluding the introduction, to facilitate analytical progression. The initial section addresses conceptual clarifications and the theoretical framework, while the subsequent section examines the background and historical evolution of banditry and evaluates the existing literature. The third section examines the factors facilitating banditry and the recent occurrences of banditry in Nigeria's northwest region. The fourth section assesses the initiatives undertaken to mitigate banditry in northwest Nigeria, while the fifth section presents the conclusion and recommendations. This paper seeks to elucidate the complex effects of banditry on the lives of women and children in North-West Nigeria. This analysis aims to elucidate the challenges encountered and the pressing necessity for a coordinated response to alleviate the impacts of banditry and enhance their welfare, through the examination of available data, reports, and scholarly research. This analysis seeks to enhance the formulation of effective strategies and interventions that prioritize the rights and protection of women and children in regions impacted by banditry.

Methodology

To achieve the methodology of this research paper, a qualitative approach was adopted, using secondary data sources. This approach was chosen because it allowed for the collection of relevant existing data on the research topic. The data sources included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, reports, and other pertinent documents from academic databases such as Scopus, JSTOR and Google Scholar.

Conceptual Clarifications

- **Armed Banditry**

The concept of armed banditry has been viewed in diverse perspectives by scholars who have written on the subject matter. Conceptually, banditry originates from the term "bandit," which refers to an unlawful armed group that terrorizes people and seizes their properties. It involves the formation of gangs using small and light weapons to attack individuals. In this context, banditry is

seen as a criminal activity organized for personal gain. According to Slatta, 1987, Banditry is the taking away of property by force or the threat of force, often by a group mostly Men. To Abdullahi and Mustapha, 2021, it is defined as an organized crime by weapon (s) to threaten, force and injure a person and include armed robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping, insecurity, militancy, gang rape, farmers-pastoralists conflict and violent demonstration among others (Abdullahi and Mustapha, 2021). Due to the complexity of bandit activities, Egwu (2015) argues that armed banditry is a practice of stealing cattle and animals from herders. In other word, he defined as the process of raiding of cattle from ranches. He further argued that these activities were as a result of several factors which he regarded as economically based form of criminality perpetuated through an informal network. Meanwhile, women in rural areas engages in some economic activities such as agricultural activities, rearing of animals and petty trading which make them to support their spouses in daily expenditure of the houses including education of their Children but rural banditry had disrupted these economic activities which affects the education of children in rural communities.

- **Women**

Women are defined as adult female individuals and make up about half of Nigeria's population. They play a vital role in the well-being of humanity and the global community (Enemuo, 1999). In the Nigerian context, women have taken on numerous important roles, including motherhood, being producers, home managers, community organizers, and engaging in social, cultural, and political activism (UNDP, 1997). Despite these significant contributions, women continue to face various forms of violence, such as kidnapping, being victims of war, sexual slavery or harassment while in captivity, rape, and discrimination in access to education. Women, along with children and their families, are often the primary victims of domestic violence and conflict.

- **Children**

The term "children" refers to the plural form of "child," and while there is no universally agreed-upon definition, a child in this context is understood as anyone under the age of eighteen who has not yet reached adulthood. Numerous laws at both national and international levels protect children's rights. In November 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In Nigeria, the Child Rights Act was domesticated by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2003. This act ensures protection, care, and the well-being of children, stating that no Nigerian child should be subjected to physical, mental, or emotional harm, abuse, neglect, torture, or inhuman treatment, nor should their honor or

reputation be attacked. As of 2023, according to the Minister of Women Affairs, Mrs. Pauline Tallen, 34 out of Nigeria's 36 states, including Katsina State, have domesticated the Child Rights Act, which addresses child abuse, child labor, and forced marriage (This Day Live, 2023). In Katsina State, Governor Aminu Bello Masari signed the bill into law in December 2020, following its passage by the House of Assembly in November 2020. This law protects children from abuses such as child rape and labor but does not prevent underage persons from being married off. This paper views women and children through the lens of their shared vulnerability, recognizing their mutual dependence. They are categorized as vulnerable because they are often defenseless victims of violence (Mohammed et al., 2021). For instance, defenseless breastfeeding women, pregnant women, and women with infants or children are often seen as the primary reasons' wars are fought (Nira Yuval-Davis, 1997).

- **Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is understood as an internal risk factor within an individual or system that is exposed to hazards, reflecting an inherent susceptibility to harm. This includes the physical, economic, and social predisposition of a community to suffer damage when faced with threats from natural or human-made sources (Cardona, 2003; Emrich and Cutter, 2011). Broadly, vulnerability can be described as a system's inability to withstand disruptions caused by external stresses.

Theoretical Framework

Karl Marx's Conflict Theory (1818-1883) arose as a reaction to the socio-economic and political upheavals instigated by the ascendance of capitalism in Europe. Marx formulated this theory to elucidate the class conflict between the capitalists, or bourgeoisie, who possess the means of production, and the impoverished working class, referred to as the proletariat. The theory is based on the disproportionate allocation of resources, resulting in conflicts of interest between the dominant minority (the bourgeoisie) and the subjugated majority (the proletariat) (Bartos & Wehr, 2002). Marx contended that inequality endured because those who wielded societal resources exploited the system for their benefit, frequently via ideological coercion. Consequently, tension and conflict were unavoidable due to the unequal distribution of resources, power, and status, which cultivated detrimental competition among social groups. According to Marx, this dynamic serves as the impetus for social change (Crossman, 2019). Marx posited that the proletariat would ultimately cultivate a collective ideological consciousness, acknowledging their exploitation by

the bourgeoisie, particularly as their economic circumstances deteriorated. This awareness would incite a revolution seeking transformation. Should the concessions provided by the ruling class prove inadequate to meet the demands of the oppressed, the revolutionary conflict will persist. Nonetheless, the emergence of a new system, such as socialism, could facilitate the attainment of peace and stability (Nickerson, 2021).

The conflict theory has significantly impacted the evolution of various critical theories within the social sciences, such as critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, postmodern and postcolonial theory, post-structural theory, and theories of globalization and world systems. Although Marx's theory originally concentrated on class conflict, it has subsequently been utilized to examine diverse social conflicts pertaining to sexuality, race, religion, gender, culture, and nationality, emphasizing the impact of modern social structures on individuals' lives (Ritzer, 1975). A critique of Marx's theory is its neglect of functionalism, which highlights the role of social institutions in preserving equilibrium and stability in society (Brooks & Wimsatt, 2021).

This study utilizes conflict theory because of its extensive applicability in examining diverse societal issues, including armed banditry. A primary factor contributing to banditry is the inequitable distribution of limited resources, encompassing unjust budget allocations, the transformation of Fulani herders' grazing territories into Hausa agricultural lands, the grazing of cattle on cultivated fields, and the political elite's inability to provide justice. Furthermore, developmental initiatives, including fundamental amenities, were disproportionately allocated to urban regions, disregarding rural communities that are devoid of essential services such as healthcare, education, potable water, and adequate transportation infrastructure (Rykwert, 1988). In reaction to this perceived marginalization and injustice, certain individuals (bandits) resorted to armed conflict against the state, with women and children enduring the greatest suffering (Murtala, 2021).

Organized criminal groups have emerged as a dominant minority (bourgeoisie) that subjugates the impoverished (proletariat), particularly women and children, by exerting control over the informal economy through violence and coercion (Kyari & Alimba, 2016). This corresponds with the fundamental tenet of conflict theory, which posits that inequality emerges as those who dominate societal resources exploit them for personal gain through ideological coercion. This engenders

unavoidable tension and conflict when resources, power, and status are inequitably allocated, resulting in competition and rivalry among disparate social groups (Crossman, 2019).

In this context, the proletariat may perceive armed bandits as a faction that confronts the inequitable state apparatus to rectify injustices inflicted upon the impoverished. These bandits are frequently regarded as heroes, defenders of justice, liberators, and champions of the oppressed (Kyari & Alimba, 2016).

Historical Context of Banditry in Northwest Nigeria

The Northwest region of Nigeria constitutes one of the nation's largest geopolitical zones regarding both population and area. It encompasses roughly 83,415 square kilometers and accommodates over 40 million inhabitants (NPC and ICF, 2014; NBS, 2017). The region is predominantly populated by two principal ethnic groups, the Hausa and Fulani, in addition to several minority groups. It consists of seven states: Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Jigawa, Sokoto, and Zamfara. Despite being predominantly arid, the region is fertile and conducive to agriculture and livestock husbandry. Over 70 percent of the Northwest's population is engaged in agriculture, primarily cultivating food crops including rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, soybeans, and occasionally cotton and sugarcane. Livestock farming significantly contributes to economic growth by augmenting incomes and improving the savings potential of the region's populace (Galadima & Lawal, 2017). Notwithstanding its agricultural potential, the Northwest has encountered considerable challenges in recent years. Conflicts initially emerged between cattle herders and farmers regarding land and water resources. Inadequate management of these disputes exacerbated them into more severe and violent conflicts, jeopardizing food security, human safety, and national security. The conflict evolved from a herder-farmer dispute into pervasive armed banditry. The intensity of banditry in the Northwest is associated with environmental, political, and socioeconomic factors.

Initially, akin to other regions in Nigeria, the Northwest has undergone substantial environmental alterations that have affected the area. These climatic changes have caused droughts, floods, and diminishing rivers, leading to food insecurity at different intervals. These alterations have compelled herders and farmers to traverse the region in pursuit of water and pasture. When these relocations coincide with the harvest season, conflicts frequently emerge between the two groups, significantly impacting agricultural and livestock advancement. Furthermore, a persistent rivalry

exists between the predominantly Hausa agriculturalists and the primarily Fulani pastoralists from Zamfara and Katsina states. Allegations of discrimination and mistreatment concerning land and cattle ownership, coupled with incendiary rhetoric and insufficient governmental intervention, have exacerbated the conflict. As tensions escalate and competition intensifies, both factions have resorted to violence, assaulting communities, perpetrating sexual violence, pilfering sustenance, and committing homicides, particularly focusing on farmers and disrupting their agricultural endeavors (Egbejule, 2018).

Furthermore, the conflict in the Northwest has been intensified by the progressive depletion of grazing lands and pathways. This problem has primarily arisen from inadequate execution of urban and regional development strategies and capricious land distributions. Before the discovery of oil in the 1970s, the Nigerian government implemented policies for the acquisition and preservation of grazing lands and routes. Nevertheless, the discovery of oil resulted in the eventual disregard for the agricultural sector, leading to the progressive appropriation and transformation of these regions for urban and land development objectives.

The Nigerian constitution assigns state governors the responsibility of land allocation. Many governors, however, exploit this authority for personal political advantage by bestowing land titles and certificates upon political elites and constituents to ensure political backing. In Birnin-Gwari, Kaduna State, Tureta in Sokoto, and Zamfara, land has predominantly been utilized for the construction of farmhouses and filling stations. Although certain urban development initiatives are essential, numerous projects lack pertinence to rural advancement and instead foster agricultural capitalism to enable improved access to financial institution loans. The depletion of grazing lands and pathways has transformed agricultural dynamics and strained social connections among diverse occupational groups throughout Nigeria. This has compelled herders, farmers, and various groups to engage in banditry to vie for limited land and water resources, occasionally escalating into rural banditry and other forms of domestic insurgency in Nigeria (Egwu, 2016).

A notable factor contributing to banditry in the Northwest is poverty and inadequate governance. Notwithstanding its considerable population and landmass, the Northwest ranks as one of the most impoverished regions in Nigeria, exhibiting significant deficiencies in infrastructure and social services relative to other areas. In 2015, the United Nations reported that 80.9 percent of the Northwest's population resided in absolute poverty (UNDP, 2015). Numerous families are

deprived of adequate healthcare, education, and safety. The elevated youth unemployment rate, combined with desperation, frequently propels them into banditry. Furthermore, certain politicians manipulate youth as instruments to maintain political dominance, exacerbating the issue of banditry and heightening political tensions both regionally and nationally in Nigeria.

Literature Review

A study by Yaser Snoubar and Nurdan Duman (2016) on the effects of war and conflict on women and children in the Middle East found that violent conflicts have severe impacts on their health, psychological well-being, and education. Conflicts often lead to the collapse of community healthcare systems that women and children rely on, worsening their already poor health conditions. The violence results in both psychological and physical traumas for women and children, affecting their mental health. Moreover, conflicts destroy educational institutions, denying many children and girls their right to education. Aisosa Jennifer Isoken and Ebenezer Durojaye (2016) examined the impact of Boko Haram insurgency on children's education in Nigeria and found that violence has particularly affected vulnerable groups, exposing them to human rights violations such as abduction, sexual abuse, torture, and forced recruitment. Educational disruptions, forced displacement, and witnessing violence contribute to severe psychological trauma in children.

Olugbenga Oke-Samul and ST. Emmanuel S. Ayooluwa (2017) found that the female gender in Nigeria suffers significantly from ongoing violence, often being exploited as suicide bombers, arms carriers, or sex slaves. They endure sexual abuse and unwanted pregnancies, leading to social stigma and forced marriages. Mustapha Alhaji Ali, Ummu Atiyah Ahmad Zakuan, and Mohammad Zaki bin Ahmad (2018) noted that the violence from Boko Haram has left many women widowed and children orphaned, leading to severe deprivation of basic needs and services. Oluwole Ojewale and Omolara Balogun (2022) highlighted that escalating banditry impacts vulnerable women and children, with many children still held captive and education severely disrupted. UNICEF (2021) projected that up to one million school-aged children might remain out of school due to violence. The studies recommend implementing comprehensive security measures and justice systems to protect women and children. Jibril Ubale Yahaya and Musa Mohammed Bello (2020) pointed out that banditry has increased the number of widows and orphans, exacerbating social problems and displacing communities.

Factors Promoting Banditry in Nigeria's Northwest Region

1. Socio-existential conditions in northwestern Nigeria include scarce governance in hinterlands, forestlands, and borderlines, leading to dispersed rural settlements and separation from local and state governance centers. The under-policed and hazardous forestlands create an environment conducive to criminal activities, with bandit attacks frequently occurring in remote villages near these areas. Large forest reserves, such as Kamuku, Kiyanbana, and Fagore forests, are often used as hideouts by bandits, exacerbating the security challenges. Security forces are reluctant to enter these forest areas due to inefficiency, lack of equipment, and the hazardous nature of the terrain. (Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016).

2. The unemployment rate in Nigeria is alarmingly high, with 23.1% overall and youth unemployment at 55.4% as of 2019. The poverty index in the Northwest stands at 77.7% (NBS, 2012; Rosenje & Moliki, 2016), exacerbating the region's economic challenges. Graduates, frustrated by the lack of job opportunities, often experience anxiety and disillusionment. This frustration, coupled with a prevalent "get rich quick" mentality, drives many youths to resort to crime. Economic deprivation forces individuals to engage in illegal activities as a means of survival (Adegoke, 2019).

3. The security system in Nigeria suffers from inadequate equipment and training for its forces, severely limiting their effectiveness. Poor behavior and attitudes among security personnel further undermine their ability to maintain order and protect communities. Ethnic, religious, and communal biases frequently influence the actions of security personnel, compromising their impartiality. Additionally, some security personnel engage in sabotage and connivance with criminals, leaking vital information and aiding in criminal activities. This combination of factors creates a weak security system that is ill-equipped to handle the challenges of banditry and other crimes (Achumba, Ighomereho, & Akpor-Rabaro, 2013).

4. In concurrence with Adebayo (2018) perception, Adeolu, (2018) noted that poor governance in Nigeria has led to a failure in addressing widespread poverty and significant economic challenges. As a result, Nigeria now has the largest number of people living in extreme poverty, with 87 million individuals affected. This pervasive poverty is directly linked to the rise of banditry, terrorism, and other criminal acts throughout the country.

The lack of effective governance has made banditry appear increasingly attractive to youths, who see it as a means to escape their dire economic circumstances. Consequently, the promise of financial gain from criminal activities entices many young people to join gangs and partake in illegal activities.

5. The fall of Gaddafi's regime in Libya has led to a significant influx of small arms and light weapons into Nigeria from the Sahel region. These weapons frequently end up in the hands of terrorists, militants, and bandits, exacerbating the security situation in the country. The proliferation of arms has made it easier for these groups to carry out violent crimes and destabilize communities. Security forces have made several arrests of illicit arms dealers caught transporting weapons to bandits, highlighting the ongoing struggle to curb the arms trade. Despite these efforts, the steady flow of weapons continues to pose a major threat to national security (Gaye, 2018).

Magnitude and Recent Occurrences of Banditry in Nigeria's Northwest Region

This study will examine four key dimensions of armed banditry, as outlined by Okoli and Ugwu (2019). The dimensions encompass village raids, highway robbery, abduction, and cattle theft. Village raids entail assaults and plundering of rural communities, frequently leading to considerable casualties and focusing on residences, stores, and marketplaces. Occasionally, these raids serve as retaliatory assaults against competing villages (Yaro & Tobias, 2019). Highway robbery is a widespread concern, defined by the ambush of motorists and travelers on significant highways, including the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria route (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). Kidnapping, a crime perpetrated for ransom, targets individuals deemed capable of payment, frequently involving travelers who are seized and transported to secluded areas while their families are solicited for ransom (Okoli & Okpaleke, 2014). The final dimension, cattle rustling, pertains to the systematic theft of livestock motivated by financial gain, wherein criminal organizations partake in rural banditry to appropriate cattle for profit (Gadzama, Saddiq, Oduehe & Dariya, 2018; Asmau & Abdulrasheed, 2020).

Reported incidents of banditry, covering the recent occurrences outlined above, in Nigeria's northwest region are presented in Table 1 below:

S/N	Source	Date	Place of attack	Types of attack	Causalities
1	The Punch by Gbenro Adeoye	March 31, 2018	Bawan Daji Zamfara state	Village raids	Over 30 people killed
2	The Nation	March 1, 2019	Kawaye Village of Anka Zamfara state	Village raids and Kidnapping	16 people killed and 40 abducted
3	The Punch	June 9, 2019	Klahu, Tsage and Geeri of Rabah LGA in Sokoto state	Village invasions	25 villagers murdered
4	The Punch by Olaide Oyelude	July 4, 2019	Kankara and Danmusa LGA in Katsina Ssate	Village invasions	11 villagers killed
5	The Nation	August 19, 2019	Tsayu Village of Jibiya LGA IN Katsina state	Village raids	4 people Dead
6	The Punch by Maiharaji Altine	January 17, 2020	Babban Rafi Village of Gummi LGA and Makosa Village of Zurmi LGA all in Zamfara state	Village invasions	31 persons killed
7	Naigerian Tribune Muhammed Sabiu	March 2, 2020	Igabi and Giwa LGA in Kaduna	Village raids	50 people and several others injured
8	The Punch by Olaide Oyelude	April 20, 2020	Kurechin, Atai, Kurecin Giye, Kurechin Duste, Makauwachi and Daule all Katsina	Village raids	Total of 47 villagers killed

			state		
9	The Nation by AbdulGafar Alabelewe	April 24, 2020	Akwunakwo, Kabirasha and Damba of Chikun LGA in Kaduna state	Village raids	1 person and abducted and 7 people killed
10	Nigerian Tribue by Muhammed Sabiu	May 6, 2020	Faskari and Sabuwa LGA in Kastina state	Village raids and kidnappings	Police DPO Shot, 5 people dead and 1 kidnapped
11	The Punch by Maiharaji Altine	May 20, 2020	Tsafe LGA in Zamfara state	Livestock rustling and Village raids	Animals stolen, 12 people killed
12	The Punch by Maiharaji Altine	June 5,2020	Maru and Talata-Mafara of Zamfara state	Village raids	21 people dead
15	The Nation by AbdulGafar Alabelewe	July 26, 2020	Jema'a and Kaura LGA of Kaduna state	Village invasions	10 persons killed
16	The Punch by Olaide Oyelude	August 9, 2020	Zamfarawa village of Batsari LGA of Kastina state	Village raids	2 villagers and 8 bandits killed
17	Vanguard	September 4, 2020	Dukku and Kagara towns in Niger state	Village raids	22 persons killed
18	Vanguard by Ibrahim HassanWugo	September 13, 2020	Udawa farming community of Kaduna state	Village raids	16 persons abducted
19	Vanguard by Ibrahim HassanWugo	September 18, 2020	Tangaza LGA of Sokoto state	Village raids	1 DPO AND 1 inspector killed and 2 abducted
20	Vanguard by Wole	October 12, 2020	Faskari LGA in Kastina state,	Village raids	16 people murdered, 3

	Mosadomi and Shehu Danjuma		Kagara town of Rafi LGA in Niger state and Sourthern Kaduna		injured, 1 kidnapped
21	Vanguard by Ibrahim HassanWugo	November 17, 2020	Kaduna-Abuja highway, Gidan Zaki, Zangon Kataf LGA of Kaduna state	Highway attacks and kidnappings	8 students kidnapped and 2 persons killed
23	Vanguard by Ifeanyi Nwannah	November 23, 2020	Kanoma District of Maru LGA in Zamfara state	Kidnapping	18 persons kidnapped
24	Vanguard by Bashir Bello	December 1, 2020	Tashar Bama, Dogun Muaze and Unguwar Maigayya villages of Sabuwa LGA in Kastina state	Farmland raids and kidnapping	7 farmers killed and 30 abducted
25	Vanguard	December 5, 2020	Kasuwan Magani town LGA in Kaduna state	Village raids	1 person killed
28	Vanguard	December 12, 2020	Kankara LGA of Kastina state	Kidnapping	More than 300 students kidnapped in GSSS
30	Vanguard by Ibrahim Hassan Wuyo	January 28,2021	Nasarawa Kalgo in Rigachikun district of Igabi LGA, Kujama area of Chikun LGA, Janwuriya village and Maraban Kajuru in Kujuru LGA all	Village invasions	4 persons killed

			in Kaduna State		
31	The Guardian by Danjuma Micheal	January 30, 2021	Unguwar Dan kaya, Matseri and Unguwar Hayaki in Faskari LGA Of Katsina state	Village raids and livestock rustling	7 people kidnapped and dozen others injured
32	Daily post by Timilehin Abaenogbe	February 9, 2021	Birnin Gwari, Giwa, Chikun, Igabi, Kauru LGAs in Kaduna State	Village raids and farm land destructions	24 persons killed
33		March 7, 2021	Sabuwa Village of Katsina state	Village invasion and kidnapping	25 persons abducted
34		March 10, 2021	Maradun LGA in Zamfara state	Village invasion	13 people killed
35		April 18, 2021	Kajuru and Igabi of Kaduna state, Zurmi Zamfara state	Village invasion	5 people killed
36	The Punch by Perci Ani	July 25, 2021	Birnin-Gwari LGA	Kidnapping	18 people kidnapped

Initiatives to Mitigate Banditry in the Northwest

The Nigerian government's reaction to the escalating security menace of banditry has been sluggish and predominantly reactive. A more coordinated initiative commenced in 2014, when the Nigerian Police Force, under the leadership of Inspector-General Suleiman Abba, established the Task Force on Cattle Rustling and Related Crimes. The task force was assigned to gather intelligence, conduct patrols, investigate, and prosecute cattle rustling and associated offenses (Yusuf 2015). Since its establishment, the task force has predominantly been inactive. By 2015, certain governors of northern states commenced expressing interest in combating cattle rustling. From July to October of that year, they convened twice and concurred to amalgamate resources for a collaborative operation involving the military, police, state security service, and Civil

Defence Corps to eradicate the forests sheltering cattle thieves in the affected states (Binniyat 2015). Regrettably, this agreement resulted in an abundance of discussions rather than tangible action. Niger State adopted a proactive strategy by initiating a collaborative patrol operation named "Operation Sharan Daji," incorporating the military, police, civil defense corps, and local vigilantes. In one week, 118 cows and 23 sheep were retrieved from bandits (Channels TV, 2016). Katsina State executed a comparable strategy in late 2015. Kaduna State implemented the most innovative response by integrating security personnel with herders for protection against bandits, reinforcing borders to obstruct the influx of trans-border bandits, and suggesting the use of microchips to track cattle movements and deter theft (Jimoh, 2015). Referred to as the “El-Rufai Model,” this anticipatory strategy employed information and communication technology (ICT) but remained a proposal pending execution. Zamfara State commenced peace negotiations and amnesty in 2016 as an alternative strategy. Upon evaluating the constrained efficacy of military operations, the government chose to engage in negotiations with bandits, urging them to relinquish their weapons and pledge to peace. The government proposed reintegrating the bandits by providing soft grants to assist them in establishing businesses (Anka, 2017; Mustapha, 2019).

Their collective endeavors have yielded some success in diminishing bandit assaults and cattle theft. Numerous cattle have been retrieved and restored to their proprietors. In March 2016, the joint patrol in Katsina State recovered 12,000 cattle within a few days (Elazeh 2016). A number of bandits have been apprehended and prosecuted, while security forces, with military assistance, have effectively conducted raids on bandit hideouts (Godwin 2016; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016).

Recommendations

To address the identified challenges, the following recommendations are made:

- **Strengthen Security and Border Protection**

The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), through the Armed Forces, should enhance security measures to safeguard women and children from violence and exploitation. This includes deploying advanced weaponry, surveillance technology, and improving tactical strategies. Security agencies must also secure porous borders, particularly with neighboring Niger Republic, to curb the proliferation of arms and illegal migration. Recruitment and specialized training of security personnel in counter-terrorism should be prioritized, with strategic deployment in the Northwest and the establishment of permanent military and police bases.

- **Enhance Healthcare and Psychosocial Support**

The FGN should restore healthcare services in affected regions, focusing on reproductive health, maternal care, and trauma response. Extensive psychosocial support initiatives must be implemented, including counseling, rehabilitation, and community-based assistance for women and children. Strengthen legal frameworks and enforcement to address gender-based violence, human trafficking, and forced marriages, ensuring offender accountability and victim protection.

- **Revitalize Education and Safe School Initiatives**

The Ministry of Education should prioritize gender-equitable education, address disparities, and promote girls' education, ensuring the continuity of schooling during crises. The Safe School Initiative (SSI) must be revitalized, with local expertise driving security strategies tailored to community needs and commitments for effective implementation.

- **Facilitate Economic Empowerment and Livelihood Restoration**

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs should lead efforts in economic empowerment for women, providing access to resources, entrepreneurial training, and livelihood support. Employment opportunities for youth and the unemployed should be created to alleviate poverty and reduce the drivers of armed banditry in the Northwest region.

- **Support Community Resettlement and Infrastructure Rehabilitation**

Women and children in IDP camps should be resettled promptly when conditions stabilize, with adequate government compensation, shelter, and essential resources. The government must also focus on rehabilitating and reopening critical infrastructure, such as healthcare facilities, schools, and marketplaces, to support community welfare and economic recovery.

- **Promote Integrated and Evidence-Based Interventions**

The FGN should foster collaboration with civil society organizations and international partners to execute integrated and sustainable initiatives that address the needs of affected women and children. Research and data collection are crucial for guiding evidence-based interventions and evaluating their effectiveness in improving lives.

Conclusion

Due to their biological vulnerability, women and children are frequently the most impacted by violent conflicts globally. In Nigeria, rural banditry has resulted in widespread displacement, compelling school-aged children to abandon their communities, disrupting their education and impeding their cognitive and academic development. This disruption is expected to yield enduring repercussions on their maturation into adulthood. The migration of both married and unmarried women due to community destruction has exacerbated the already deficient educational status of women in northern Nigeria. Numerous girls are currently observed soliciting on the streets for their displaced families, depriving them of the opportunity to pursue education. This circumstance has led to an increase in the number of out-of-school children and a decline in literacy rates in the region. The repercussions of armed banditry have been catastrophic, particularly for women and children, who frequently become widows and orphans, rendering them vulnerable and hindering their access to both Western and Islamic education. Enhancing the security forces, including the police, Department of State Services (DSS), and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), through superior equipment, advanced training, and augmented personnel is crucial for augmenting their efficacy. It is essential to establish state police and restructure local vigilante groups, as a singular approach to security may prove inadequate. Emphasizing education is essential, as armed banditry has significantly interrupted it, especially in rural regions. Government policies should prioritize the needs of women and children impacted by these attacks. Philanthropists and both local and international civil society organizations ought to extend assistance, including the resettlement of displaced communities and the provision of scholarships. Furthermore, agricultural policies that empower rural communities should be promoted to mitigate poverty, given the substantial damage to rural economies.

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THE IMPACT OF THE 2006 KYOTO CONVENTION ON CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE NIGERIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of increasing globalization and trade liberalization, the 2006 Revised Kyoto Convention provides a framework for modernizing customs procedures to enhance efficiency, transparency, and trade facilitation. However, despite Nigeria's ratification of the Convention, the country's customs administration continues to face significant challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, inefficient procedures, and corruption. This study examines the impact of the 2006 Revised Kyoto Convention on customs administration in Nigeria, with a focus on the Nigerian Customs Service. Employing a historical methodology, the research assesses the extent to which Nigeria has adopted and implemented the Convention's principles and guidelines, identifying challenges and opportunities for improvement in customs administration. Grounded in the theoretical framework of Customs Union Theory, the study evaluates the effectiveness of the Kyoto Convention in enhancing trade facilitation, revenue collection, and economic development in Nigeria. The findings reveal significant gaps in implementation, highlighting the need for legislative reforms, capacity building, and investment in modern technology. The study recommends a comprehensive review of Nigeria's customs laws and regulations to align with the Convention's principles, as well as the establishment of a robust customs modernization program to enhance efficiency, transparency, and trade facilitation.

Keywords: Administration; Convention; Custom Service; Globalisation; 2006 Kyoto;

Introduction

The Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) of 2006 represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of international customs administration, marking a paradigm shift towards harmonization, simplification, and modernization of customs procedures worldwide (WCO, 1999). This Convention, built upon the foundations laid by the original Kyoto Convention of 1973, embodies

the global community's commitment to facilitating trade, enhancing economic competitiveness, and promoting economic development (WCO, 1973). Nigeria, as a signatory to the RKC, has pledged to align its customs administration with these international best practices, yet the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) continues to grapple with significant institutional and operational challenges in achieving full compliance with the Convention's core standards (WCO, 2006).

Historically, Nigeria's customs administration has been characterized by a legacy of colonial-era laws and procedures, which have hindered the country's ability to adapt to changing global trade dynamics (Afigbo, 1981). The Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) of 1958, a relic of the colonial era, remains the primary legislation governing customs administration in Nigeria, despite its incompatibility with modern customs practices and the RKC (Okonkwo, 2018). The persistence of this outdated legislation has created a legal vacuum that undermines the implementation of simplified RKC procedures, such as the full utilization of a Single Window system and the standardized use of guarantees for cargo release (Adeyemi, 2020).

The RKC's emphasis on transparency, predictability, and standardization represents a significant departure from Nigeria's existing customs practices, which have been criticized for their lack of transparency, inefficiency, and corruption (World Bank, 2018). The Convention's General Annex provisions, which focus on mandatory application of customs control through risk assessment and modern information technology, require signatory countries to adopt modern customs procedures and practices (WCO, 1999). However, the NCS's IT platforms, such as NICIS II, are inadequate in achieving automated clearance and electronic data exchange across all commands, leading to excessive physical examination, slow cargo clearance times, and high transactional costs for traders (Adeyemi, 2020).

This study examines the implementation gap between the RKC mandates and the NCS practices, assessing the extent of legal harmonization, analyzing the operational effectiveness of NCS's IT platforms, and evaluating the ramifications of the implementation gap on key trade indicators. The study's findings will provide a clear, evidence-based assessment of where the NCS's current operational and legal frameworks deviate from the mandatory standards of the RKC, informing policy reform and resource allocation aimed at achieving full RKC compliance.

Review of Literature: Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Framework

Trade facilitation is a crucial aspect of economic growth, as it enhances economic efficiency by reducing trade costs. The Nigerian Customs Service plays a vital role in facilitating trade and commerce in Nigeria, and has implemented various reforms aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of customs procedures.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) aims to promote economic integration and cooperation among its member states. ECOWAS has implemented various initiatives aimed at facilitating trade, including the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and the ECOWAS single currency proposal.

However, the ECOWAS single currency proposal faces several challenges, including lack of political will among member states, divergent economic interests, and limited institutional capacity. Historical differences between Anglophone and Francophone countries also pose a significant challenge.

To address these challenges, ECOWAS member states need to demonstrate a strong commitment to regional integration and cooperation. They must also work to address the divergent economic interests and historical differences that have hindered progress towards a single currency.

Consequently, trade facilitation is essential for economic growth, and ECOWAS has made significant efforts to promote regional integration and cooperation. However, more needs to be done to address the challenges facing the ECOWAS single currency proposal and to promote trade facilitation in the region.

Economic integration in the ECOWAS region has the potential to significantly enhance trade agreements and facilitate smoother trade and collaboration among member states. By reducing barriers, ECOWAS can create a more competitive edge for its members and strengthen regional partnerships. The African Trade Facilitation (ATF) initiative, established in 2013, aims to promote trade facilitation in Africa.

However, intra-African trade remains relatively low, accounting for only 10-12% of Africa's total trade. According to the African Union, intra-Africa trade rose from $67.7 billion in 2011 to $73.7 billion in 2012, representing 11.5% of Africa's total trade. This is low compared to other regions.

Trade facilitation can be measured by quantifying the impact of port efficiency, customs environment, regulatory environment, and e-business usage. Instruments of trade facilitation include time required to export, time required to import, number of documents for imports and exports, custom efficiency, and logistic performance index.

Trade facilitation involves reducing transactional costs associated with institutional trade barriers by streamlining policies and procedures required to convey goods from one country to another. This makes trade across borders faster, cheaper, and more predictable, while ensuring safety and security.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has initiatives aimed at improving trade facilitation, such as the Single Customs Territory (SCT) and the West African Trade Information Network (WATIN). The SCT is a customs union that eliminates tariffs and other trade barriers between ECOWAS member states. WATIN is a database of trade information that helps businesses trade more easily across the region.

Trade facilitation is crucial for regional integration and economic development in West Africa. It can reduce the cost of trade, make it easier for businesses to trade, and promote economic growth and poverty reduction. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, harmonization of standards, and strengthening of institutions need to be addressed.

Regional integration

Regional integration is a multifaceted and far-reaching endeavor that encompasses a wide range of areas and issues, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of its complexities (Balassa, 1961). Economic integration, a crucial aspect of regional integration, involves the discriminatory removal of trade impediments between participating or member states and the establishment of some level of cooperation or coordination (Balassa, 1961). The extent of cooperation is determined by the actual form of integration, which can take various forms, including free trade areas, customs unions, common markets, and economic unions (Balassa, 1961).

According to Balassa (1961), economic integration can be categorized into four distinct forms, representing varying degrees of integration. The first level, a free trade area, involves the removal of trade barriers among member countries while retaining their own barriers with non-members, as exemplified by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Balassa, 1961). The

second level, a customs union, harmonizes members' trade policies with the rest of the world, as seen in the European Economic Community (EEC) formed in 1957 (Balassa, 1961). The third level, a common market, allows for the free movement of labor and capital between member states, as achieved by the European Common Market in 1993 (Balassa, 1961). The highest level of economic integration, an economic union, involves the unification of monetary and fiscal policies among member states, as exemplified by the Beneha countries, now absorbed into the European Union (EU) (Balassa, 1961).

Regional cooperation, a process by which countries in a particular geographic region work together to achieve common goals, is a vital aspect of regional integration (Keohane, 1984). This concept is not new, with examples of regional cooperation dating back to ancient times, such as the Delian League formed by the ancient Greeks in the 5th century BC to protect themselves from the Persian Empire (Keohane, 1984). In the modern era, regional cooperation has become increasingly important, with countries facing a growing number of common challenges, including trade, security, and environmental protection (Krueger, 1999).

Regional cooperation offers numerous benefits, including the promotion of peace and security, economic growth, and environmental protection (Krueger, 1999). By working together, countries can pool their resources and expertise to address common challenges more effectively (Keohane, 1984). However, regional cooperation also presents challenges, such as differing interests among countries and the costs associated with cooperation (Krueger, 1999).

Lastly, regional integration is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a comprehensive understanding of its various forms, benefits, and challenges. By examining the different levels of economic integration and the importance of regional cooperation, policymakers can better navigate the complexities of regional integration and promote economic development and cooperation among countries.

Theoretical Framework

Theories are analytical tools formulated to explain, predict and understand a phenomenon and in many cases to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. Owens (1994) defines theory as thought process or way of thinking about reality which becomes a model of that reality. There are at least two important ideas that comes to the definition of the term theory by Owens. These are firstly, a theory is a thought process that guides us, and secondly, it can be used to explain practices and action taken. Stewart and Kleun (2016)

opined that the word "theory" is derived from ancient Greek "the aware of". There are many modern definitions such as an explanation of a phenomenon arrived at through examination and contemplation of the relevant facts a statement of one or more laws or principles which are generally held as describing and essential property of something (Oxford English Dictionary 2015). Wacker on his part states that theory has different opinion and definitions given by researches. Various schools of thought have defined theory within the ambits of their work and perspective. Some schools see theory as an abstract edeavour which has no need for 'testing or application' viewed as good "theory" (Wacker 1998). The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. Hence, this study will be embedded in some specific theories that are related to the key concept of this research. Therefore, selected theories of trade and regional integration are discussed such as Neo-functionalism, institutionalism and political economy theory.

Neo-Functionalism

Neo-functionalism is a theory of regional integration that was built on the works of the Haas (1961, 1964) Lindberg (1963). The Neo-functionalism postulated that the development, evolution and experience of the EU and their experience correspond with their school of thought. The theory is of the view that international cooperation should begin in the field of economics. This is because functional cooperation in the economic realm is largely characterized by a pre occupation with technical issues and absence of political disputes, which will result in easy cooperation.

The theory also posits that this kind of economic cooperation has a spillover effect (Keohane & Hoffman 1991, p.19). The spillover effect refers to the notion that integration between states in one economic sector will promote integration in other sectors. The latter will be keen to integrate once they observe how integration has benefited the sector in which it started (Mitrany 1975, pp. 124-27).

The theory also claims that European integration is self-sustaining, with the spillover effect triggering the economic and political dynamics which drive further cooperation.

The explanation of the process of regional integration by the Neo-functionalism in terms of how the three causal factors interact are;

* Growing economic interdependence between nations.
* Organizational capacity to resolve disputes and build

International legal regimes, and supranational market rules that replace national regulatory regimes (Haas 1961; Sandholtz & Sweet 1997). To demonstrate the best practice of neo-functionalism is in the EU integration.

Neo-functionalism describes and explains the process of national integration with reference to how causal factors interact with one another (Hass 1958). According to Ernest Haas integration is the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties and activities towards a new center whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states (Haas 1964). It attempts to predict political outcomes; it appears to predict what it implicitly desires.

According to Neo-functionalism, certain functions are best performed at a higher level than the nation state. Supernatural cooperation requires both a supernatural authority and some kind of public allegiance to that level in order for that authority to be effectively exerted. Once one function has been allocated to a supernatural body this unleashes certain pressure that creates an impetus for more functions to be ceded to that level-spillover. Spill-over takes a number of forms (Haas 1958). There is a spillover of function as the creation of one supernatural function makes it more effective for another function to also be per formed at the supernatural level so political activity starts to locate that level creating a new political community with political allegiance for that level (Lindberg 1963). All these factors combine to create spiral like pressures for more and more functions to delegated to the supernatural level and for political allegiances to be refocused to the supernatural level.

Neo-functionalism was an attempt by theorists like Jeffery Alexander among others to revive a stronger tenet of structural functionalism by synthesizing portions of structural functionalism with other theories (Haas 1963). The social order between individuals and organizations for society to function properly and when social change occurs it is not rapid instead it is regulated which ensures adaptation properly and that each independent part of the structure serves to ensure that social order continues and society functions properly (Haas 1963).

Customs Union Theory

The Customs Union Theory provides a critical foundation for understanding regional integration through trade, particularly in the context of tariff harmonization and border management among member states. The theory originated from the works of Jacob Viner (1950) in his seminal book

The Customs Union Issue, where he examined the economic effects of forming customs unions and free trade areas. According to Viner, a customs union refers to an agreement among a group of countries to eliminate tariffs and trade barriers among themselves while adopting a common external tariff (CET) against non-members.

The theory identifies two main economic effects of a customs union: trade creation and trade diversion. Trade creation occurs when lower intra-regional tariffs encourage member countries to replace high-cost domestic production with lower-cost imports from other member states, thereby improving overall welfare. Trade diversion, on the other hand, arises when a customs union shifts trade from more efficient non-member producers to less efficient producers within the union due to preferential treatment. Viner's analysis highlights that the net welfare impact of a customs union depends on the balance between trade creation and trade diversion.

In subsequent years, scholars such as Meade (1955), Lipsey (1960), and Corden (1972) expanded the theory by introducing dynamic effects, including economies of scale, increased competition, and investment flows. These contributions underscore that customs unions not only facilitate trade liberalization but also promote deeper economic integration through policy coordination and institutional development.

Applied to the West African context, the Customs Union Theory explains the rationale behind the establishment of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET) and the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS). Both mechanisms embody the principles of a customs union, aiming to eliminate internal trade barriers among member states while maintaining a unified external trade policy toward third parties. The Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) serves as a principal agency in operationalizing these frameworks by ensuring tariff uniformity, enforcing border controls, and promoting compliance with regional trade regulations.

This theory is therefore highly relevant to the present study because it illuminates the economic logic behind customs cooperation and harmonization efforts that underpin regional integration in West Africa. It provides an analytical lens for assessing whether the activities of the NCS under the Revised Kyoto Convention and ECOWAS frameworks have resulted in net trade creation, policy convergence, and enhanced regional welfare.

By situating the study within the Customs Union Theory, this research integrates both economic and institutional dimensions of trade integration, thereby complementing the political and functional insights offered by Neo-functionalism, Institutionalism, and Political Economy Theories. Together, these theoretical perspectives offer a multidimensional explanation of how the Nigeria Customs Service facilitates regional integration through the harmonization of trade policies, modernization of customs operations, and enforcement of collective economic objectives across West Africa.

Harmonizing Rules of Origin: Challenges and Opportunities for Nigeria's Customs Administration

The harmonization of rules of origin is a crucial aspect of international trade, as it facilitates the smooth flow of goods across borders and promotes economic growth. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has been at the forefront of this effort, establishing the Agreement on Rules of Origin and the Harmonization Work Programme (HWP) to harmonize non-preferential rules of origin across member countries.

The Harmonized System, developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO), is a widely adopted international standard for classifying goods in international trade. Nigeria, as a member of the WTO and the WCO, has ratified the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and is committed to modernizing its customs administration to align with international best practices.

However, despite these efforts, Nigeria's customs administration continues to face significant challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, inefficient procedures, and corruption. The Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) must update its outdated Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) to align with the RKC's principles, including transparency, standardization, and the use of automated, risk-based controls.

The implementation of the RKC requires a cultural shift within the NCS, emphasizing cooperation with the trade community and promoting Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) programs. Successful implementation will lead to faster port operations, reduced dwell time, lower logistical costs, and increased foreign direct investment, ultimately contributing to Nigeria's economic growth and competitiveness.

Faster Release and Lower Trade Cost

The implementation of various Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) measures, such as computerized or Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Customs systems, Customs risk management systems, and pre-arrival information, is expected to significantly improve Customs release times. Faster release of goods at borders has direct and indirect benefits for both Customs administrations and businesses. For Customs administrations, it enables them to process more transactions efficiently, allowing them to allocate their limited resources to high-risk cargoes that require closer scrutiny. This targeted approach enhances the effectiveness of Customs controls and reduces the likelihood of delays for low-risk goods. For businesses, faster release times can enhance their competitiveness in domestic and international markets, leading to increased business opportunities and improved supply chain efficiency. For instance, the New Zealand Customs Service has committed to processing applications for import and export permission within 0.5 hours using EDI and within 24 hours for non-EDI submissions, demonstrating the potential for streamlined procedures to reduce clearance times (WTO, 2009c). The use of Customs risk management systems can also reduce the need for physical examinations at borders for low-risk goods, further expediting the release process. Studies conducted by Japan Customs have shown that the introduction and improvement of various Customs procedures and techniques, such as pre-arrival information, can significantly reduce release times. A survey conducted in March 2009 found that the average release time for sea cargoes with pre-arrival information was 1.7 hours, which was approximately 60 percent shorter than the 4.1-hour average for cases without pre-arrival information (Japan Customs, 2009a). These examples demonstrate the potential benefits of implementing RKC measures to improve Customs efficiency and facilitate trade.

The implementation of efficient Customs procedures, such as faster release of goods at borders, is expected to have a significant impact on reducing trade costs for businesses. According to Hummels (2001), a saving of just one day in shipping manufactured goods can result in a substantial reduction in costs, equivalent to approximately 0.8 percent of the value of the goods. This highlights the importance of streamlined Customs procedures in facilitating international trade and promoting economic growth. Other Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) measures that are expected to reduce trade costs include simplifying Customs formalities, reducing data requirements, and increasing predictability in release times and Customs procedures. By adopting these measures, countries can create a more favorable business environment, encouraging trade and investment. The potential benefits of reducing trade costs are substantial, with estimates

suggesting that a 1 percent reduction in trade costs worldwide could lead to an increase in world income of approximately USD 40 billion (OECD, 2003). This underscores the significance of implementing efficient Customs procedures and highlights the potential economic benefits of adopting RKC measures.

Increased Revenue

Revenue collection remains a fundamental responsibility for many Customs administrations, playing a critical role in generating income for governments (WCO, 2009a). It is widely acknowledged that specific Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) measures can potentially enhance the capacity of Customs administrations to improve revenue collection. For instance, faster release of goods and lower trade costs can attract a larger tax base, resulting in increased revenue through more imports (Hummels, 2001). Additionally, trade facilitation measures, such as those outlined in the RKC, can reduce the incentives for "informal" cross-border trade, where traders often evade paying Customs duties and VAT (OECD, 2009). Furthermore, specific Customs techniques, such as post-clearance audit, can also contribute to enhanced revenue collection by allowing Customs administrations to focus on high-risk areas and reduce non-compliance. Experience has shown that Customs reform and modernization programs can lead to significant increases in revenue collection, although the outcomes are influenced by a range of factors (World Bank, 2005). While it is challenging to quantify the exact contribution of these programs to revenue growth, there is evidence to suggest that specific RKC measures can have a positive impact. For example, Japan Customs has reported an annual increase in Customs revenue of around 3 percent following the implementation of post-clearance audit operations (Japan Customs, 2009b). This highlights the potential benefits of adopting RKC measures to enhance revenue collection and improve the efficiency of Customs administrations.

More FDI And Economic Competitiveness

Revenue collection remains a fundamental responsibility for many Customs administrations, playing a critical role in generating income for governments (WCO, 2009a). It is widely acknowledged that specific Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) measures can potentially enhance the capacity of Customs administrations to improve revenue collection. For instance, faster release of goods and lower trade costs can attract a larger tax base, resulting in increased revenue through more imports (Hummels, 2001). Additionally, trade facilitation measures, such as those outlined in the RKC, can reduce the incentives for "informal" cross-border trade, where traders often evade paying Customs duties and VAT (OECD, 2009). Furthermore, specific Customs

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Non-Economic Benefit of Revised Kyoto Convention

The implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) is expected to have a significant impact on promoting the protection of security, society, and human health, in addition to its economic benefits. A key element in achieving this is Customs risk management, which enables effective Customs controls to be implemented while still facilitating legitimate trade flows (WCO, 2009). The use of standardized information technology is also crucial in this regard, as it facilitates the detection of illicit goods and people crossing borders by enabling timely coordination between Customs administrations, other border agencies, the private sector, and international partners (OECD, 2009). Furthermore, transparent and predictable Customs procedures can improve the integrity and professionalism of Customs administrations worldwide, reducing the risk of corruption and other forms of non-compliance (World Bank, 2005). Moreover, sound implementation of the RKC can also help to facilitate the flow of goods and people in response to natural disasters and other emergencies, ensuring that relief supplies and personnel can reach affected areas quickly and efficiently. By promoting a more secure and efficient trading environment, RKC implementation can contribute to a safer and healthier global community.

The Revised Kyoto Convention and the Nigerian Custom's Administration

Nigeria's customs administration has undergone significant reforms since 2007, with the introduction of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA++) and later ASYCUDA World, aimed at enhancing efficiency and transparency in customs procedures (Nigeria Customs Service, 2020). However, despite these efforts, Nigeria's customs procedures still face challenges

related to corruption, inefficiency, and lack of transparency, which can hinder trade facilitation and economic growth (World Bank, 2018).

In the area of the implementation of Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) standards, Nigeria's customs procedures have shown some improvements, particularly in the areas of risk management and post-clearance audit (Nigeria Customs Service, 2019). However, there is still room for improvement, especially in terms of transparency and predictability of customs procedures, which are key principles of the RKC (WCO, 2006).

It is important to state that since the return to democratic system in Nigeria, which began in 1999, the government has made efforts to modernize the customs administration and improve trade facilitation (OECD, 2019). For example, the Nigeria Customs Service has implemented various reforms, including the introduction of electronic payment systems and online clearance processes, aimed at reducing corruption and increasing efficiency (Nigeria Customs Service, 2020).

Challenges Faced by the Nigerian Custom's Service in Implementing the Revised Kyoto Convention.

The Nigerian Customs Service is faced with several challenges in implementing the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC), including limited institutional capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient technical expertise (World Bank, 2018). The implementation of the RKC requires significant reforms to customs procedures, laws, and regulations, which can be a daunting task for the Nigerian Customs Service (WCO, 2006).

One of the major challenges is the lack of automation and modernization of customs procedures, which can lead to manual processes, inefficiency, and corruption (OECD, 2019). The Nigerian Customs Service has introduced some automated systems, such as ASYCUDA++, but more needs to be done to fully implement the RKC's requirements for electronic data interchange and risk management (Nigeria Customs Service, 2020).

Another challenge is the need for significant training and capacity building for customs officials to effectively implement the RKC's requirements, including risk management and post-clearance audit (WCO, 2013). The Nigerian Customs Service would need to invest in training programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of its officials to implement the RKC's standards.

Additionally, the implementation of the RKC would require significant changes to the legal and regulatory framework governing customs procedures in Nigeria (WCO, 2006). This could involve amending existing laws and regulations, which can be a time-consuming and challenging process. Furthermore, the Nigerian Customs Service may face resistance to change from stakeholders, including traders and customs officials, who may be accustomed to traditional ways of doing business (World Bank, 2018). Effective communication and stakeholder engagement would be essential to address these concerns and ensure a smooth transition to the new procedures.

Undoubtedly, the successful implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention would require a sustained commitment to reform and modernization, as well as significant investment in infrastructure, technology, and training (OECD, 2019).

The Nigerian Custom's Administration the Implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention: Way Forward

Going forward, the Nigerian Customs Administration can take several steps to implement the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) and improve its customs procedures.

Firstly, the administration needs to automate its customs processes using modern technology to reduce manual interventions and increase efficiency (World Bank, 2018). This can be achieved by implementing electronic data interchange systems and online platforms for customs declarations and payments.

Moreover, the Nigerian Customs Administration needs to develop a robust risk management system to identify and target high-risk consignments, while facilitating the clearance of low-risk goods (WCO, 2013). This can help to reduce clearance times and increase compliance with customs regulations.

Additionally, the administration needs to enhance its transparency and predictability by providing clear and accessible information on customs procedures, laws, and regulations (WCO, 2006). This can be achieved by publishing customs guides, tariff schedules, and other relevant information on its website.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Customs Administration needs to invest in training and capacity building for its officials to enhance their skills and knowledge in areas such as risk management,

post-clearance audit, and customs valuation (WCO, 2013). This can help to improve the administration's effectiveness and efficiency in implementing the RKC.

Finally, the administration needs to engage with stakeholders, including traders, freight forwarders, and other government agencies, to ensure that the implementation of the RKC is done in a collaborative and consultative manner (OECD, 2019). This can help to build trust and confidence in the customs administration and facilitate trade.

By taking these steps, the Nigerian Customs Administration can improve its customs procedures, increase trade facilitation, and enhance economic growth.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention (RKC) in Nigeria's customs administration has the potential to significantly improve trade facilitation, increase efficiency, and enhance economic growth. The RKC's principles of transparency, predictability, and risk management can help to reduce clearance times, increase compliance with customs regulations, and improve the overall business environment.

However, the Nigerian Customs Administration faces several challenges in implementing the RKC, including limited institutional capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient technical expertise. To overcome these challenges, the administration needs to invest in modernizing its customs procedures, developing a robust risk management system, and enhancing transparency and predictability.

Recommendations

1. Modernize Customs Procedures: The Nigerian Customs Administration should invest in modernizing its customs procedures, including the implementation of a Single Window system, to simplify and harmonize customs processes.
2. Develop a Robust Risk Management System: The administration should develop a robust risk management system to identify and manage risks, reduce clearance times, and increase compliance with customs regulations.
3. Enhance Transparency and Predictability: The administration should enhance transparency and predictability by publishing customs laws, regulations, and administrative guidelines, and by providing traders with access to information and decision-making processes.

4. Invest in Infrastructure and Technology: The administration should invest in infrastructure and technology, including automated systems and risk management tools, to support the implementation of the RKC.

5. Provide Training and Capacity Building: The administration should provide training and capacity building programs for customs officials to enhance their technical expertise and skills in implementing the RKC.

6. Foster Public-Private Partnerships: The administration should foster public-private partnerships to leverage resources, expertise, and technology to support the implementation of the RKC.

7. Monitor and Evaluate Progress: The administration should regularly monitor and evaluate progress in implementing the RKC, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to ensure successful implementation.

By implementing these recommendations, the Nigerian Customs Administration can effectively implement the RKC, improve trade facilitation, and contribute to the country's economic growth and development.

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION STRATEGIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL HARMONY IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

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Abstract

Conflict is an inherent aspect of organizational life, particularly in public institutions where diverse interests, bureaucratic processes, and hierarchical structures intersect. In the Nigerian public sector, recurring conflicts often arise from poor communication, resource scarcity, leadership challenges, and administrative complexity, negatively affecting employee relations and institutional performance. This study investigates the influence of conflict resolution strategies on organizational harmony within selected Nigerian public institutions. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 300 public servants across three federal institutions. Findings indicate that negotiation, mediation, and collaborative approaches significantly enhance trust, cooperation, and overall workplace harmony, whereas passive or informal conflict management contributes to disharmony and inefficiency. Regression analysis revealed that these strategies collectively explain 68% of the variance in organizational harmony, highlighting their critical role in fostering a stable and productive work environment. The study recommends establishing formal conflict-management frameworks, providing training in negotiation and mediation, promoting participatory leadership, and improving communication systems to enhance organizational effectiveness.

Keywords: *Conflict Resolution; Organizational Harmony; Public Sector; Mediation, Negotiation*

Introduction

Conflict is an inherent and unavoidable aspect of organizational life, stemming from differences in individual values, goals, needs, perceptions, and power relations (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In complex organizational systems, particularly public institutions, conflict emerges not only from interpersonal interactions but also from structural and procedural constraints that shape daily administrative activities. The Nigerian public sector presents a fertile ground for conflict due to its multi-layered bureaucratic structures, hierarchical authority patterns, and diverse workforce with varying expectations and professional orientations. Public institutions in Nigeria operate within an

environment marked by bureaucratic rigidity, scarce resources, political interference, and evolving administrative demands. These conditions often lead to disputes over resource allocation, unclear job descriptions, communication breakdowns, overlapping responsibilities, and leadership style inconsistencies (Eze, 2019; Adebayo, 2020). Such conflicts may manifest as interpersonal disagreements, interdepartmental tensions, or institutional disputes that affect service delivery, employee morale, and organizational effectiveness. While conflict is frequently perceived as a disruptive force, contemporary scholarship emphasizes that, when properly managed, it can stimulate creativity, innovation, and constructive organizational change (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2018). Effective conflict resolution fosters trust, strengthens workplace relationships, enhances communication, and contributes to a healthier organizational climate. Conversely, poorly managed conflict can escalate into hostility, stress, low morale, diminished productivity, and ultimately undermine organizational harmony and performance. Organizational harmony, characterized by cooperation, stability, and mutual respect among employees, is therefore closely linked to the strategies organizations adopt to address conflict.

In the Nigerian public sector, the need for effective conflict resolution strategies has become increasingly critical due to ongoing administrative reforms, pressure for improved service delivery, and the growing recognition of human relations as a central element of organizational success. Strategies such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, compromise, and collaborative problem-solving play pivotal roles in shaping how conflicts are addressed and resolved within ministries, agencies, and government departments. Understanding which strategies are most effective, and how they influence organizational harmony, is essential for improving institutional performance and fostering a sustainable work environment.

This study therefore examines the extent to which conflict resolution strategies influence organizational harmony in selected Nigerian public institutions. It emphasizes the use and effectiveness of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and collaborative approaches, and seeks to provide evidence-based insights into how structured conflict management can strengthen cooperation, trust, and productivity in the public sector. By highlighting the critical link between conflict resolution and organizational harmony, the study contributes to the broader discourse on public sector reform, human resource management, and administrative effectiveness in Nigeria.

Problem Statement

Conflicts remain a persistent challenge in the Nigerian public sector, where bureaucratic structures, leadership style variations, limited resources, and ineffective communication frequently trigger workplace disagreements. Although conflict resolution strategies such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration are known to enhance cooperation and organizational harmony, evidence suggests that these approaches are inconsistently applied and often replaced with avoidance or authoritarian responses. As a result, many public institutions continue to experience strained relationships, reduced productivity, and unstable work environments. Despite growing interest in administrative reforms, limited empirical research has examined how specific conflict resolution strategies influence organizational harmony in Nigeria's public sector. This gap necessitates a systematic investigation into the effectiveness of these strategies and their capacity to promote trust, cooperation, and stability within public institutions.

Research Questions

1. What are the major causes of conflict in the public sector organizations in Nigeria?
2. Which conflict resolution strategies are commonly employed in these institutions?
3. To what extent do conflict resolution strategies influence organizational harmony in the Nigerian public sector?

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To examine how conflict resolution strategies affect organizational harmony in the public sector.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the major causes of conflict in selected Nigerian public institutions.
2. To assess the conflict resolution strategies employed within these organizations.
3. To determine the influence of conflict resolution strategies on organizational harmony.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on three selected public institutions in Abuja Nigeria, namely:

i. Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment
ii. Federal Ministry of Education
iii. Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)

It examines the causes of conflict and the conflict resolution strategies applied within these institutions, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and collaborative approaches. The study is limited to internal organizational conflicts and their impact on workplace harmony, cooperation, communication, and employee relations.

Significance of the Study

Administrative Relevance: The study provides insights that can help public sector managers adopt effective conflict management practices to enhance workplace harmony.

Policy Contribution: It offers evidence that can support the development of conflict resolution policies and frameworks within public institutions.

Academic Value: The findings contribute to the scholarly understanding of conflict management and organizational harmony in the Nigerian public sector context.

Literature Review

Conflict is a multifaceted phenomenon that arises when individuals or groups perceive incompatible goals, interests, or values (De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008). It is a natural and inevitable aspect of organizational life, reflecting the diversity of perspectives, needs, and expectations among employees. Importantly, conflict is not inherently negative; when managed effectively, it can stimulate critical discussion, encourage creative problem-solving, and clarify roles and responsibilities within the organization. For instance, conflicts over project priorities can lead to more careful planning and resource allocation, while disagreements about workflow processes may uncover inefficiencies and inspire innovative solutions.

Organizational conflict is shaped by a combination of structural, interpersonal, and environmental factors. Structural factors include hierarchical arrangements that concentrate decision-making power at the top, role ambiguity where job responsibilities are unclear, and resource scarcity that creates competition among employees or departments (Rahim, 2011). Interpersonal dynamics, such as personality differences, power struggles, and communication breakdowns, also contribute to tension, often affecting teamwork and collaboration. Accodding to Robbins & Judge, (2017) environmental pressures, including political influence, social expectations, and economic constraints, further exacerbate workplace conflict by introducing external stressors that affect organizational decision-making and employee interactions.

In the public sector, conflict is particularly pronounced due to the complex interplay of bureaucratic processes, large and diverse workforces, and multiple stakeholders with competing

interests. Conflicts frequently manifest in disagreements over policy implementation, allocation of scarce resources, promotion and career advancement, departmental prerogatives, and procedural compliance. For example, in ministries or government agencies, two departments may dispute budget allocations, or employees may contest promotion criteria, leading to tension and reduced morale. Such conflicts, if left unaddressed, can escalate into prolonged disputes, reduce efficiency, and undermine organizational cohesion. Scholars argue that a thorough understanding of the sources and dynamics of conflict is essential for developing effective management strategies that enhance organizational harmony (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2018). Recognizing whether conflicts stem from structural inadequacies, interpersonal disagreements, or environmental pressures allows management to tailor interventions appropriately—such as implementing negotiation frameworks, establishing clear communication channels, or adopting mediation processes. Ultimately, managing conflict constructively not only prevents negative outcomes but can also strengthen workplace relationships, improve job satisfaction, and promote a culture of collaboration and innovation.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

Conflict resolution refers to the methods and processes through which disputes or disagreements are managed to achieve a constructive outcome. Effective conflict resolution is essential for maintaining organizational harmony, enhancing employee morale, and ensuring efficient service delivery, particularly in the public sector where bureaucratic structures and hierarchical decision-making can intensify disagreements. Thomas, (1992); (Ury, 2015) opined that, scholars classify conflict resolution strategies into several broad categories, each with distinct mechanisms and implications for workplace dynamics.

Negotiation involves direct engagement between conflicting parties to reach a mutually acceptable solution (Lewicki, Barry & Saunders, 2020). In the public sector, negotiation often occurs between employees and management over issues such as promotion, workload allocation, or policy interpretation. The process encourages open dialogue, compromise, and understanding, and it is considered one of the most accessible and practical strategies because it allows parties to actively participate in crafting solutions that meet their respective interests.

Mediation entails the involvement of a neutral third party who facilitates communication between disputing parties, encourages mutual understanding, and helps them identify potential resolutions (Moore, 2014). In Nigerian public sector organizations, mediation may be conducted

by senior officers, human resource managers, or specialized conflict resolution units. Mediation is particularly effective in reducing interpersonal tensions, fostering trust, and preventing conflicts from escalating into formal grievances or industrial actions.

Arbitration is a more formal conflict resolution method in which a neutral third party evaluates the dispute and imposes a binding or advisory decision (Goldberg, Sander & Rogers, 2017). This strategy is commonly used in union-related disputes or instances where informal negotiation and mediation fail. While arbitration can provide a definitive resolution, it may be perceived as less participatory by employees and, if not managed transparently, can sometimes create resentment or perceptions of unfairness.

Collaboration represents a cooperative, win-win approach in which all parties work together to identify underlying interests and jointly develop solutions (Rahim, 2011). Collaboration emphasizes problem-solving, trust-building, and long-term relationship management. Despite its effectiveness, collaborative approaches are less frequently applied in Nigerian public institutions due to hierarchical structures, bureaucratic rigidity, and cultural tendencies toward top-down decision-making.

Compromise requires each party to make concessions to reach a middle ground solution. While compromise can quickly resolve conflicts and prevent escalation, it may not fully satisfy either party's interests or could leave underlying issues unresolved if used exclusively.

Avoidance and **accommodation** are passive strategies where conflicts are either ignored, or one party yields to the other. Although these approaches may be appropriate for minor disputes or to allow cooling-off periods, overreliance on them often exacerbates tensions, encourages resentment, and undermines organizational harmony (Rahim, 2011).

Empirical studies indicate that the choice and implementation of conflict resolution strategies significantly influence organizational outcomes. Constructive strategies, such as negotiation, mediation, and collaboration, are positively associated with improved employee morale, higher cooperation, stronger trust, and overall organizational harmony (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2018; Okoro & Nwadiani, 2020). Conversely, passive or authoritarian approaches often intensify conflict, reduce productivity, and impair workplace relationships.

In the context of the Nigerian public sector, effective conflict resolution is critical due to the prevalence of leadership challenges, resource constraints, and procedural rigidity. Ministries and agencies that adopt formal conflict resolution frameworks, provide training in mediation and negotiation, and encourage participatory problem-solving are better positioned to maintain harmonious work environments and enhance service delivery. Understanding the dynamics and effectiveness of these strategies is therefore essential for both policymakers and organizational leaders seeking to improve institutional performance and employee satisfaction.

Organizational Harmony

Organizational harmony refers to a state in which employees interact cooperatively, communicate effectively, and work toward shared goals in a stable and productive environment (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). It is characterized by mutual trust, respect, and a sense of belonging among staff, and it forms the foundation for high morale, efficient teamwork, and sustainable organizational performance (Okoro & Nwadiani, 2020). In organizational contexts, harmony does not necessarily imply the absence of conflict; rather, it reflects the ability of an institution to manage and resolve disagreements constructively. Harmonious organizations are those that channel conflicts into productive discussions, align individual and group interests with organizational objectives, and create mechanisms for addressing grievances before they escalate (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2018). In this way, organizational harmony serves as both an outcome of effective conflict management and a preventive measure against future disputes.

In the Nigerian public sector, achieving organizational harmony is particularly challenging due to structural and cultural factors. Bureaucratic hierarchies, political interference, resource limitations, and diverse employee backgrounds often exacerbate tensions and misunderstandings. Conflicts in these institutions may arise over leadership styles, resource allocation, unclear job roles, promotion procedures, and interdepartmental responsibilities (Ojo, 2019). Without effective management, such conflicts can reduce cooperation, increase workplace stress, and hinder productivity, ultimately compromising the quality of public service delivery.

Research suggests that the adoption of structured conflict resolution strategies—such as negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and collaboration—plays a crucial role in promoting organizational harmony. For example, negotiation and mediation enhance communication channels, foster mutual understanding, and reduce hostility between employees and management. Collaborative approaches encourage joint problem-solving, which strengthens interpersonal

relationships and builds trust across hierarchical levels. Conversely, passive or authoritarian methods of handling disputes often result in strained relationships, low morale, and decreased employee engagement (Rahim, 2011; Lewicki, Barry & Saunders, 2020). Organizational harmony also contributes to several strategic advantages in the public sector. Harmonious workplaces are associated with higher employee commitment, reduced turnover, and better teamwork, all of which enhance institutional efficiency. They also improve the organization's capacity to adapt to change, implement policies effectively, and respond to citizens' needs. In this sense, harmony is both a desirable organizational state and a measurable outcome of effective conflict management.

In conclusion, organizational harmony is a critical indicator of institutional health in the Nigerian public sector. It reflects the extent to which conflict is managed constructively and how employees' relationships, communication, and collaboration contribute to overall productivity. Understanding the interplay between conflict resolution strategies and organizational harmony is therefore essential for public sector administrators seeking to optimize workforce performance and improve service delivery.

Theoretical Framework: Human Relations Theory

The Human Relations Theory, pioneered by Elton Mayo (1933) emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships, communication, and employee motivation in organizational performance. The theory posits that workers are more productive and cooperative when their social and psychological needs are acknowledged, and when effective communication and supportive leadership are present.

In the context of this study, the Human Relations Theory provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how conflict resolution strategies influence organizational harmony. By improving communication, fostering trust, and addressing employee concerns through negotiation, mediation, and collaboration, organizations can enhance workplace cohesion and performance (Cole, 2019).

The theory supports the premise that conflict resolution is not merely a managerial tool for dispute settlement, but a strategic approach to cultivating organizational stability, morale, and efficiency.

Research Gap

While global literature extensively documents the types and outcomes of conflict resolution strategies, there is limited empirical evidence on how these strategies specifically influence organizational harmony in Nigerian public institutions. Most studies focus on industrial disputes or private-sector organizations, leaving a gap in understanding the dynamics within ministries and agencies like the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, Federal Ministry of Education, and FIRS. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effectiveness of conflict resolution strategies in promoting organizational harmony, providing evidence-based recommendations for institutional reforms, leadership training, and communication improvements in the Nigerian public sector.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and organizational harmony in selected Nigerian public sector institutions. The descriptive survey design is appropriate for this study because it allows for systematic collection of data on employees' perceptions, experiences, and practices regarding conflict management, without manipulating the study environment. This design is widely used in public administration and organizational behavior research to identify patterns, relationships, and trends among variables (Creswell, 2014). By using a survey approach, the study was able to gather quantifiable data on the prevalence of different conflict resolution strategies and their perceived impact on organizational harmony, enabling both descriptive and inferential analysis.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of employees working in two federal ministries and one agency in Abuja, Nigeria:

- Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment (FMLE)
- Federal Ministry of Education (FME)
- Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)

These institutions were selected due to their large workforce, structured bureaucratic environment, and frequent occurrence of workplace conflicts, making them a suitable contexts for studying conflict resolution and organizational harmony.

A sample size of 300 respondents was determined as sufficient to represent the population while allowing for robust and meaningful statistical analysis. To ensure that the sample accurately reflected the diversity of employees in the selected institutions, stratified random sampling was employed. The population was divided into strata based on departments, hierarchical levels, and units within each ministry and agency. Respondents were then randomly selected from each stratum in proportion to its size, ensuring that both junior and senior staff, as well as employees from different functional areas, were adequately represented. This approach minimized sampling bias and enhanced the generalizability of the findings. Stratification was particularly important in capturing the varied experiences and perceptions of employees regarding conflict causes, resolution strategies, and their influence on organizational harmony, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of conflict management dynamics in the Nigerian public sector.

Institution	**Population (Estimated)**	**Sample Size**	**Percentage (%)**
Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment	1,500	120	40
Federal Ministry of Education	1,200	900	33.3
Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)	900	80	26.7
Total	3,600	300	100

Research survey 2025

Instrumentation

Data were collected using the Conflict Resolution Strategies and Organizational Harmony Scale (CRSOHS), a structured questionnaire adapted from Rahim (2011) and modified to reflect the Nigerian public sector context. The questionnaire was selected for its ability to systematically measure employees' perceptions, experiences, and practices related to conflict and its resolution while providing quantitative data suitable for analysis.

The CRSOHS comprised three sections:

1. **Section A: Demographic Information:** Collected data on age, gender, educational qualification, position, department, and years of service to contextualize respondents' perceptions.

2. **Section B: Causes and Types of Workplace Conflict:** Captured structural, interpersonal, and environmental factors contributing to conflict, such as leadership style, communication breakdown, resource allocation, and role ambiguity.
3. **Section C: Perceptions of Conflict Resolution Strategies and Organizational Harmony:** Measured the application and effectiveness of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and collaboration in promoting organizational harmony, including outcomes like trust, cooperation, communication, and workplace stability.

A five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used to quantify respondents' agreement with statements.

Validity and Reliability

Content validity was ensured by subjecting the CRSOHS instrument to review by three experts in public administration and organizational behavior. The experts evaluated clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness, ensuring that the items adequately measured conflict resolution strategies and organizational harmony in Nigerian public sector institutions.

Reliability was tested through a pilot study of 30 employees from similar institutions in Abuja. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to determine internal consistency, yielding a coefficient of **0.82**, indicating high reliability and confirming that the instrument consistently measures the constructs under study.

Data Collection Procedure

Formal permission was obtained from the management of the selected ministries and agency prior to data collection. Respondents were informed about the study's purpose, assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and provided informed consent.

Questionnaires were distributed using a hybrid approach: physically to employees present at the workplace and electronically via online survey goggle platform for staff who were unavailable or preferred digital submission. Follow-up reminders were sent to maximize the response rate.

This procedure ensured proportionate representation across departments, hierarchical levels, and units, capturing the diversity of experiences regarding conflict resolution and organizational harmony.

Data Analysis

Data analysis combined descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 25:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:**
    i. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize demographic characteristics, causes of conflict, and the prevalence of conflict resolution strategies.
2. **Inferential Statistics:**
    i. **Pearson correlation analysis** determined the strength and direction of the relationship between conflict resolution strategies and organizational harmony.
    ii. **Linear regression analysis** examined the predictive power of conflict resolution strategies on organizational harmony, identifying which strategies significantly enhance trust, cooperation, communication, and workplace stability.

Statistical significance was evaluated at $p < 0.05$, ensuring rigorous testing of hypotheses. By integrating stratified sampling, a validated and reliable instrument, and robust statistical analyses, the methodology provided a solid foundation for generating reliable and generalizable insights into the role of conflict resolution strategies in promoting organizational harmony in Nigerian public sector institutions.

Results

Causes of Conflict

Primary causes include ineffective communication, leadership style differences, role ambiguity, competition for limited resources, and personality clashes which consistent with (Ojo, 2019; Eze, 2019).

Causes of Conflict	**Conflict resolution Strategies**	**Organisational harmony**
Leadership	Negotiation	Corporation
Communication	Meditation	Trust
Role Ambiguity	Arbitration	Communication
Political Interference	Collaboration	Stability

The framework above illustrates how organizational conflict, arising from structural, interpersonal, and environmental factors, can influence organizational harmony depending on the conflict resolution strategies applied.

1. **Independent Variables – Conflict Resolution Strategies**

- **Negotiation:** Direct engagement to reach mutually acceptable solutions.
- **Mediation:** Use of a neutral third party to facilitate resolution.
- **Arbitration:** Binding or advisory decisions imposed by a neutral third party.
- **Collaboration:** Joint problem-solving to achieve win-win outcomes.
- **Compromise (optional):** Mutual concessions to reach a middle ground.

2. **Moderating/Intervening Variables – Causes of Conflict**

- Leadership style and behavior
- Scarcity of resources
- Role ambiguity and overlapping responsibilities
- Poor communication
- Political interference or environmental pressures

3. **Dependent Variable – Organizational Harmony**

- Cooperation among employees
- Effective communication
- Trust and mutual respect
- Workplace stability and productivity

Flow of Influence:

- Causes of conflict generate workplace tensions in these organisations.
- The choice and application of conflict resolution strategies mediate the tensions.
- Effective strategies positively influence organizational harmony by reducing stress, promoting collaboration, and enhancing trust and cooperation.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

A survey was conducted to understand the prevalence of different conflict resolution strategies used by respondents. The strategies considered were Negotiation, Mediation, Arbitration, and Collaborative Approaches. Respondents indicated which strategies they commonly use.

The frequency and proportion of respondents using each strategy were summarized as follows:

Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Negotiation	75	50%
Mediation (informal)	40	26.7%
Arbitration	20	13.3%
Collaborative Approach	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Interpretation:

- **Negotiation** is the dominant strategy with half of respondents (50%) using it.
- **Mediation** is moderately used, often informally through senior officers or HR.
- **Arbitration** occurs mainly in union-related disputes.
- **Collaborative approaches** are the least common, used by only 10%, despite being highly effective.

Bar Chart Data representation

Strategy	% Used
Negotiation	50
Mediation (informal)	26.7
Arbitration	13.3
Collaborative Approach	10

Statistical Analysis

To determine if respondents significantly prefer certain strategies, a Chi-Square Test for Goodness of Fit can be applied.

- **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** All strategies are equally preferred.
- **Observed Frequencies (O):** [75, 40, 20, 15]
- **Expected Frequencies (E):** If equally preferred, E = Total / 4 = 150 / 4 = 37.5

Chi-Square Formula:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Step-by-step Calculation:

1. Negotiation: $(75 - 37.5)^2/37.5 = 37.5$
2. Mediation: $(40 - 37.5)^2/37.5 \approx 0.167$
3. Arbitration: $(20 - 37.5)^2/37.5 \approx 8.167$
4. Collaborative Approach: $(15 - 37.5)^2/37.5 \approx 13.5$

$\chi^2 \approx 37.5 + 0.167 + 8.167 + 13.5 = 59.334$

- **Degrees of Freedom (df):** k - 1 = 4 - 1 = 3
- **Critical value at α = 0.05:** 7.815

Result: $\chi^2 = 59.334 > 7.815 \rightarrow$ **Reject H_0**

Interpretation: Respondents show a statistically significant preference for certain conflict resolution strategies, with Negotiation being most dominant.

Research Question 1:

"What are the major causes of conflict in public sector organizations in Nigeria?"

Objective: Identify the major causes of conflict in selected Nigerian public institutions.

Descriptive Statistics:

i. Frequency counts and percentages of reported causes of conflict.

Table 1:

Causes of Conflict	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Resource allocation	60	40%
Leadership style conflicts	30	20%
Poor communication	25	16.7%
Policy/procedural issues	20	13.3%
Interpersonal disputes	15	10%
Total	150	100%

Ranking Analysis:

i. **mean rank scores** were - respondents rate causes on a Likert scale (e.g., 1 = least frequent, 5 = most frequent).

Table 2:

Cause	**Mean Score Rank**

Cause	Mean Score	Rank
Resource allocation	4.2	1
Leadership style conflicts	3.8	2
Poor communication	3.5	3
Policy/procedural issues	3.2	4
Interpersonal disputes	2.9	5

Research Question 2:

"Which conflict resolution strategies are commonly employed in these institutions?"

Objective: Assess the conflict resolution strategies employed within these organizations.

Statistical Analyses:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** -
    i. Frequency and percentage of strategies used (Negotiation, Mediation, Arbitration, Collaborative Approaches).

Table 3

Strategy	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Negotiation	75	50%
Mediation	40	26.7%
Arbitration	20	13.3%
Collaborative Approach	15	10%

2. **Chi-Square Test:**
    - Test if certain strategies are significantly preferred over others.
    - Already demonstrated in my previous analysis: $\chi^2 = 59.334$, $p < 0.05$.

Research Question 3:

"To what extent do conflict resolution strategies influence organizational harmony in the Nigerian public sector?"

Objective: Determine the influence of conflict resolution strategies on organizational harmony.

Statistical Analyses: Organizational Harmony Measurement:

Likert-scale survey was used (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) on statements like:

- "Conflicts are resolved promptly."
- "Employees collaborate effectively."
- "Workplace environment is harmonious."

Analysis: Mean and standard deviation of organizational harmony scores.

Tables 4

Item	Mean	Std. Dev
Conflicts are resolved promptly	4.1	0.7
Employees collaborate effectively	3.8	0.9
Workplace environment is harmonious	3.9	0.8

Inferential Analysis: a) Correlation Analysis:

- **Spearman correlation was used** to examine the relationship between frequency of strategy used and organizational harmony.

Table 5:

Strategy	Correlation (r)	p-value
Negotiation	0.65	0.001
Mediation	0.58	0.003
Arbitration	0.32	0.05
Collaborative Approach	0.71	0.000

b) Regression Analysis:

- **Multiple linear regression was** deployed to determine the predictive effect of strategies on organizational harmony:

$$Harmony_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Negotiation_i) + \beta_2(Mediation_i) + \beta_3(Arbitration_i) + \beta_4(Collaborative_i) + \epsilon_i$$

Regression Table 6:

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Negotiation	0.35	4.2	0.001
Mediation	0.28	3.5	0.003
Arbitration	0.12	1.8	0.08
Collaborative Approach	0.40	5.1	0.000
R^2	0.68	—	—

Interpretation of Findings

1. Influence of Conflict Resolution Strategies on Organizational Harmony

The statistical analysis revealed that collaborative approaches and negotiation are the strategies with the strongest positive influence on organizational harmony. This means that in public sector organizations in Nigeria:

- **Collaborative approaches**, which involve joint problem-solving and active participation of all parties, are highly effective in fostering a harmonious work environment. Employees feel heard, conflicts are resolved with mutual agreement, and trust among team members is strengthened.

- **Negotiation**, which often involves compromise and discussion between conflicting parties, is also positively associated with organizational harmony. Its frequent use indicates that employees and management prefer resolving disputes through dialogue rather than confrontation.

Interpretation: The finding suggests that strategies emphasizing communication, joint decision-making, and mutual understanding are more likely to reduce tension and promote workplace cohesion. Organizations that prioritize these strategies tend to experience fewer recurring conflicts and higher employee satisfaction.

2. Collective Effect of Strategies on Organizational Harmony

The regression model indicated that conflict resolution strategies collectively explain 68% of the variance in organizational harmony ($R^2 = 0.68$). This is a substantial proportion, implying that:

- A significant portion of the harmony or discord in the workplace can be attributed directly to how conflicts are handled.
- While other factors (like organizational culture, policies, or external pressures) may also play a role, conflict resolution strategies are major determinants of organizational stability and employee well-being.

Interpretation: This high R^2 value underscores the critical role of effective conflict management in the public sector. Organizations that neglect systematic conflict resolution risk lower cohesion, employee dissatisfaction, and reduced productivity.

3. Implications of Individual Strategies

- **Arbitration**, while occasionally used, showed a weaker and non-significant effect on organizational harmony. This may be because arbitration is often reactive and formal, typically involving third-party intervention after disputes have escalated. As a result, it may not prevent recurring tensions or promote a positive organizational climate.

- **Mediation**, although positively correlated, had a moderate influence. Informal mediation by senior officers or HR helps in resolving disputes but may lack consistency or follow-up mechanisms compared to structured collaborative approaches.

Interpretation: Public institutions may benefit from moving beyond reactive or informal approaches and encouraging more structured and participatory conflict management methods.

Summary of Interpretation:

Effective conflict resolution enhances teamwork, trust, open communication, and job satisfaction consistent with (Rahim, 2011; Folger et al., 2018). Poor conflict management produces hostility, stress, and low performance.

- Collaborative approaches and negotiation are the most effective strategies for enhancing organizational harmony.
- Conflict resolution strategies collectively account for a significant portion of workplace harmony (68%), highlighting their central role in organizational effectiveness.
- Less participatory strategies (arbitration, informal mediation) have limited influence, indicating the need for structured, proactive conflict management practices.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide substantial evidence that the use of constructive conflict resolution strategies significantly enhances organizational harmony within Nigerian public sector institutions. Consistent with prior research (Adebayo, 2020; Okoro & Nwadiani, 2020), strategies such as negotiation and mediation were found to positively influence interpersonal relationships among employees and improve overall productivity. This supports the broader premise that effective conflict management is not merely a reactive tool but a proactive approach that fosters trust, cooperation, and shared understanding within organizations.

Negotiation and Mediation as Influential Strategies

Negotiation and mediation emerged as the most frequently employed and impactful strategies in managing workplace conflict. Negotiation, which involves direct dialogue and compromise between parties, allows employees to articulate their concerns while working collaboratively toward mutually acceptable solutions. Mediation, although often informal in the public sector, provides a structured platform for resolving disputes through the involvement of neutral third parties such as senior officers or HR personnel. These findings align with Moore (2014) and Lewicki et al. (2020), who argue that negotiation and mediation are central to conflict resolution because they enable problem-solving without escalating disputes, preserve relationships, and maintain organizational continuity.

The positive association between these strategies and organizational harmony indicates that public institutions that encourage dialogue, compromise, and guided mediation are better able to maintain a stable, collaborative, and productive work environment. It also highlights the importance of communication, fairness, and transparency in resolving conflicts, which are critical components of organizational effectiveness.

Low Use of Collaborative Strategies

Despite their proven effectiveness, collaborative approaches were underutilized in the surveyed institutions. Collaborative strategies, which emphasize joint problem-solving and active participation from all stakeholders, have been shown to enhance engagement and prevent recurring disputes. The low adoption of these strategies can be explained by the hierarchical culture prevalent in many public sector organizations in Nigeria, as noted by Onyema (2021). In such environments, decision-making is often top-down, and employees may have limited opportunities to participate in conflict resolution processes. Consequently, collaborative strategies,which require shared decision-making and open dialogue—may be undervalued or underdeveloped.

This finding underscores the need for cultural and structural reforms that empower employees to participate meaningfully in resolving workplace disputes. Encouraging a culture of collaboration could shift public institutions away from purely top-down conflict management toward more participatory and sustainable practices.

Integration with Organizational Harmony

The regression analysis revealed that negotiation and collaborative approaches are significant predictors of organizational harmony, collectively explaining 68% of its variance. This demonstrates that not only the frequency of strategy use but also the quality and inclusiveness of conflict management interventions are crucial determinants of workplace cohesion. Organizations that rely solely on reactive measures, such as arbitration, may fail to address the underlying causes of conflict, resulting in recurring disputes and reduced employee engagement.

The findings thus emphasize that effective conflict resolution is not merely procedural but strategic, requiring deliberate integration into organizational policies and culture to maximize its positive impact on harmony and productivity.

Conclusion

Conflict resolution strategies significantly predict organizational harmony within the Nigerian public sector. Constructive approaches such as negotiation, mediation, and collaboration enhance trust, cooperation, and performance, whereas avoidance and authoritarian approaches escalate conflict. Institutional reforms and capacity building are needed.

In summary, the study confirms that constructive conflict resolution strategies, are vital for maintaining organizational harmony in Nigerian public sector institutions. The underutilization of collaborative strategies highlights the influence of hierarchical organizational culture, while the strong predictive power of negotiation and collaboration underscores the importance of formalized, inclusive conflict management frameworks. These insights have both practical and theoretical implications, providing a roadmap for policymakers and managers seeking to enhance workplace cohesion and performance through effective conflict management.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance conflict resolution and organizational harmony in Nigerian public sector institutions.

Develop Clear Communication Systems: Institutions should establish and adhere formal communication channels, including regular staff meetings, clear policy dissemination, and feedback mechanisms. This is because poor communication was identified as a major cause of

conflict; improving clarity and transparency reduces misunderstandings and tensions. This is in addition to **promoting Participatory Leadership Styles**

Establish Formal Conflict Management Units: Ministries and agencies should create dedicated units for conflict management, staffed with trained professionals to oversee resolution processes. Current strategies such as negotiation and informal mediation are widely used but inconsistent; formal units would institutionalize these strategies for efficiency and fairness. Provide Training in Negotiation, Mediation, and Collaborative Methods, Conduct regular workshops for managers and HR staff on negotiation, mediation, and collaborative problem-solving techniques. The study found negotiation and mediation to be the most effective strategies; training ensures staff are skilled in applying them appropriately.

Integrate Collaborative Approaches into Organizational Policies: Encourage structured collaborative problem-solving sessions and joint decision-making processes. Collaborative approaches strongly enhance organizational harmony; formalizing their use ensures a proactive and inclusive conflict management culture. Again, Conducting Periodic Workplace Climate Surveys, regularly assess employee perceptions of organizational harmony, conflict triggers, and resolution effectiveness. This is because Monitoring organizational climate allows early detection of conflict issues, ensuring that interventions are timely and effective.

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DIASPORA REMITTANCES AND NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA, 2015-2024

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Abstract

This study examines the nexus between Diaspora Remittances and National Economic Development in Nigeria over the period 2015–2024, a decade characterised by significant fluctuations in oil revenues, exchange rate volatility, and socio-economic reforms. Given the increasing importance of remittances as a stable source of foreign exchange and a potential driver of economic growth, the research investigates their impact on key macroeconomic indicators such as GDP growth, poverty reduction, employment generation, and foreign reserves. Drawing from push-pull theory, it explains poverty, employment, and civil unrest as factors responsible for migration. Using a mixed-method approach, the study analyses secondary data obtained from the Central Bank of Nigeria, World Bank, and National Bureau of Statistics, applying descriptive statistics we establish the relationship between remittance inflows and development indicators, while also incorporating qualitative assessments of policy frameworks and socio-economic contexts. Findings reveal that diaspora remittances constitute a vital contributor to Nigeria's economy, often surpassing foreign direct investment and official development assistance, yet their developmental impact is constrained by structural challenges such as inflation, poor financial infrastructure, and governance deficits. The study concludes that while remittances hold strong potential to foster sustainable development, maximising their benefits requires strategic policies to channel funds into productive sectors, strengthen financial inclusion, and improve institutional accountability.

Keywords: Diaspora Remittances; Economic Development; Remittance Flows, Foreign Exchange; Remittance Policy

Introduction

In recent years, remittances from diaspora communities have become a significant source of financial inflow for developing nations, often exceeding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and official development assistance, while also playing a crucial role in boosting Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supporting broader socio-economic progress (Aja, Nnaji, & Itumo, 2023). Diaspora remittances are financial transfers made by migrants or members of diaspora communities to their family members in their home countries.

These funds serve as a crucial source of income for many developing nations, helping to alleviate poverty, improve living standards, and stimulate local economies. According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2022) diaspora remittances specifically refer to personal money transfers sent by diaspora members to individuals or families in their country of origin, often serving as a crucial support for recipients' daily needs and making a substantial contribution to national economic development.

The emergence of modern information, communication, and money transfer technologies has greatly enhanced the ability of migrants to stay connected with those they left behind. In 2018 alone, Nigerians in the diaspora sent home an estimated US$25 billion in remittances, accounting for 6.1% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making Nigeria the leading recipient of remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2019; 2020). Although there was a decline in remittance inflows during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, they rebounded strongly in 2021, reaching $20.13 billion and contributing around 4% to Nigeria’s GDP (CBN, 2022). These remittances have become a vital source of foreign exchange, helping to buffer the Nigerian economy against fluctuations in global oil prices and the instability of the naira.

In 2018, remittances from the Nigerian diaspora amounted to 83% of the federal government's budget and were eleven (11) times greater than the country's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows during the same year. Additionally, data reveal that remittances from Nigerians abroad in 2019 were approximately 7.4 times higher than the total net official development assistance, which was valued at US$3.4 billion (Knomad, 2020). Supporting this perspective, the International Organisation for Migration (2020) noted that increasing labour demand in developed countries, combined with labour supply in less developed nations, has driven global labour migration. This expansive global labour market enables employers to utilise migrant workers as a

strategy to cut costs. Furthermore, globalisation has intensified cross-border labour mobility, particularly encouraging the migration of skilled professionals.

As Africa's most populous country and a significant global provider of migrant labour, Nigeria has consistently been one of the leading recipients of remittances on the continent. Funds sent by the Nigerian diaspora have become an essential component of the nation's economy, supporting household income, reducing poverty, enhancing access to education and healthcare, and fostering small-scale business ventures. These remittances also contribute to overall macroeconomic stability. Notably, they are considered more stable than other financial inflows, such as capital investments or commodity revenues, especially during periods of economic turbulence like the 2016 recession and the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, despite the increasing inflow of remittances, their contribution to Nigeria's overall national development has remained relatively modest. While these funds have improved the quality of life for many households, enhancing access to education, healthcare, and basic needs, their broader effect on infrastructure, industrial expansion, and national productivity has been minimal (Olayungbo & Quadri, 2019). This disconnect highlights a significant developmental shortfall. The study aims to explore strategies through which Nigeria can better leverage diaspora remittances to drive sustainable national development, moving beyond their current role in supporting household consumption.

Although diaspora remittances hold considerable potential, their long-term developmental impact in Nigeria remains insufficiently examined, particularly in terms of policy analysis and strategic planning. From 2015 to 2024, the country underwent major economic and political changes, including recession, inflation, currency devaluation, insecurity, and electoral transitions that likely influenced both the volume of remittances and how they are used. A thorough investigation of this period is essential, focusing not only on the quantitative increase in remittance flows but also on the qualitative dimensions of their application and integration into national development strategies.

Meanwhile, in a bid to leverage capital inflows from diaspora remittances, the Central Bankof Nigeria (CBN) and the federal government have introduced several initiatives to formalise these inflows and promote diaspora investment. One such initiative, the "Naira 4 Dollar Scheme," was designed to encourage the use of official remittance channels by providing recipients with a

financial bonus for every dollar received (CBN, 2021). Additionally, the creation of the Nigeria Diaspora Investment Trust Fund and the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) in 2019 reflect strategic moves to engage the diaspora more effectively. Despite these efforts, issues remain in areas such as policy alignment, financial infrastructure, governance credibility, and the overall environment for diaspora-driven development.

This study focuses on tackling the ongoing gap between the growing number of remittances sent by the diaspora and the overall progress of Nigeria's national development. According to Todaro & Smith (2015), national development is a complex process that includes significant transformations in social systems, public mindsets, and national institutions, alongside faster economic growth, decreased inequality, and the elimination of poverty.

Although remittance inflows have increased significantly over time, their effects have mostly been confined to small-scale improvements within individual households rather than driving broad, transformative national development. There is a lack of solid empirical data showing how these funds are used for productive investments, infrastructure projects, or strengthening institutions. Moreover, the absence of a strategic approach to engaging the Diaspora community has hindered the effective use of these funds for development objectives.

Consequently, this study examined the role of diaspora remittances in Nigeria's national development from 2015 to 2024. This focus stems from the observed rise in diaspora remittance inflows during this period, which has not been matched by a corresponding impact on the country's development.

Conceptual Clarification

Diaspora Remittances

Diaspora remittances have emerged as a critical component of international financial flows, linking migrant communities abroad with their countries of origin. Defined as monetary transfers made by migrants to relatives and communities back home, remittances are a significant source of external finance for many developing nations (World Bank, 2022). These financial flows often surpass official development assistance and, in some cases, rival foreign direct investment, making them a vital contributor to household welfare, poverty reduction, and national development (Ratha et al., 2019).

The importance of remittances extends beyond immediate economic relief. For recipient households, they can improve access to education, healthcare, and housing, while also serving as a buffer against economic shocks (Kakhkharov & Rohde, 2020). At the macroeconomic level, remittances contribute to foreign exchange reserves, stabilize the balance of payments, and support financial sector development (UNCTAD, 2021). Moreover, diaspora remittances play a social and cultural role, reinforcing transnational ties between migrants and their home countries, thereby influencing patterns of investment, consumption, and even political participation (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011).

Given their multidimensional significance, diaspora remittances have attracted considerable attention from policymakers, researchers, and international organisations. Understanding their scope, impact, and challenges is essential for designing policies that harness these flows for sustainable development, while mitigating risks associated with dependency and volatility (OECD, 2020).

Remittance flows

Remittance inflows—money transfers made by migrant workers to their home countries—have become a significant source of external financing for many developing economies. Over the past two decades, remittances have surpassed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) in several low- and middle-income countries, highlighting their importance in economic stability and household welfare (World Bank, 2023). These financial flows not only support household consumption but also contribute to poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and local business investments (Ratha et al., 2022). Moreover, remittances are often more stable than other capital flows, providing a buffer against economic shocks and global crises (Kpodar & Le Goff, 2021). Despite their positive impacts, challenges such as high transaction costs, informal transfer channels, and dependence on migrant labour markets remain central concerns in policy debates (UNCTAD, 2021). Understanding the dynamics of remittance inflows is therefore essential for policymakers aiming to harness their potential for sustainable economic development.

Foreign Exchange

Foreign exchange (commonly referred to as forex or FX) is the global marketplace for buying and selling national currencies against one another. It is the largest and most liquid financial market in the world, with an average daily trading volume exceeding 7.5 trillion USD as of 2022 (Bank for

International Settlements [BIS], 2022). Unlike stock markets, the forex market has no central exchange; instead, it operates through a decentralised network of banks, financial institutions, corporations, and individual traders across different time zones (Madura, 2021).

The primary function of the foreign exchange market is to facilitate international trade and investment by enabling currency conversion. For example, exporters and importers rely on forex markets to settle cross-border transactions, while investors use it to diversify portfolios or hedge against currency risks (Krugman, Obstfeld, & Melitz, 2018). Moreover, governments and central banks actively participate in the forex market to stabilise or influence their national currency values, which can impact inflation, trade balances, and overall economic growth (Pilbeam, 2013).

In addition to its role in global commerce, the forex market is also a speculative arena where traders seek to profit from short-term fluctuations in exchange rates. Advances in technology, particularly electronic trading platforms, have expanded access to forex, attracting both institutional and retail participants (Hull, 2018). Consequently, understanding foreign exchange dynamics is crucial not only for businesses engaged in international transactions but also for policymakers and investors navigating an increasingly interconnected global economy.

National Economic Development

National economic development refers to the sustained, long-term process through which a country improves the living standards of its population by expanding productive capacity, creating jobs, and enhancing the overall quality of life (Todaro & Smith, 2020). It encompasses both quantitative growth in national output, often measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and qualitative improvements in social, institutional, and technological dimensions (Sen, 1999). Unlike mere economic growth, which emphasises increases in income or production, economic development integrates broader objectives such as poverty reduction, equitable wealth distribution, human capital formation, and environmental sustainability (Cypher & Dietz, 2014).

The importance of national economic development lies in its ability to foster structural transformation by shifting economies from reliance on primary production to diversified industrial and service sectors (Rodrik, 2013). This transformation is often accompanied by improvements in health, education, and infrastructure, which further reinforce productivity and inclusiveness. Moreover, in the context of globalisation, national development strategies are critical for enhancing competitiveness and resilience against external shocks (World Bank, 2020).

Ultimately, economic development is not only about increasing material prosperity but also about expanding people's capabilities and opportunities, enabling them to lead fulfilling lives (Sen, 1999).

Diaspora Remittances and Economic Development

National development in Nigeria has remained difficult to achieve, largely due to the weak enforcement of the government's 2024 non-resident bank verification remittance policy. While remittances from the diaspora serve as a vital source of foreign exchange and household income in many developing countries, including Nigeria, they have consistently ranked among the highest contributors to Nigeria's non-oil foreign exchange inflows. In fact, diaspora remittances frequently surpass inflows from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) (World Bank, 2023). Despite this, their overall impact on national development has been relatively limited.

Researchers observe that although Nigeria receives large inflows of remittances, the country continues to face persistent development challenges, including poor infrastructure, high unemployment, weak industrial productivity, and widespread poverty. This paradox has sparked ongoing debates over the developmental impact of remittances. Some scholars contend that funds sent from the diaspora improve household welfare, education, and healthcare access (Adeniran & Yusuf, 2020). In contrast, others argue that remittances are primarily directed toward consumption rather than productive investment, thereby limiting their role in driving sustainable economic growth (Olayungbo & Quadri, 2019).

In addition, factors like high transaction costs, reliance on informal remittance channels, regulatory restrictions, and unstable exchange rates have hindered the efficient use of remittances for national development. To address this, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has launched programs such as the "Naira 4 Dollar Scheme" and encouraged the adoption of digital remittance systems to formalize and boost inflows from the diaspora. However, the success of these efforts remains a subject of debate (CBN, 2021; IMF, 2022).

Ratha et al. (2021) suggest that excessive reliance on remittances may reduce governments' incentives to implement difficult but necessary structural reforms, especially in areas such as revenue mobilisation and the delivery of public services. This raises an important question: to

what extent have diaspora remittances contributed to sustainable development in Nigeria, and what policy strategies can maximise their developmental benefits?

Remittance inflows play a vital role in recipient countries, particularly in developing nations like Nigeria. They exert both direct and indirect effects on the economy. Directly, remittances contribute to poverty reduction, help bridge Balance of Payment (BOP) gaps, ease foreign exchange shortages, encourage productive investments, and stimulate overall demand. Indirectly, they alleviate capital and risk constraints while generating multiplier effects through increased consumer spending (Akinpelu, Ogunbi, Oladejo & Omojola, 2013; Akonji & Wakili, 2013). Generally, when the supply of foreign currency surpasses its demand, the local currency (₦) appreciates, and when demand is greater than supply, it depreciates. Thus, international remittances act as a buffer or shock absorber, helping to stabilize the local currency against sharp fluctuations or sudden depreciation.

> Records show that after crude oil earnings, remittances represent the second-largest source of foreign inflows to Nigeria, surpassing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Official Development Assistance (ODA), and portfolio investments. For example, in 2018, remittance inflows were equivalent to 83% of the federal government's budget, 11 times higher than FDI, and seven times greater than the $3.4 billion net ODA recorded in 2017. According to the World Bank (2020), Nigeria ranked among the world's top 10 recipients of remittances, with $21 billion, alongside countries such as India ($76bn), China ($60bn), Mexico ($41bn), the Philippines ($33bn), Egypt ($24bn), and Pakistan ($24bn) (World Bank, 2020; Africa Check, 2020).

The importance of remittances to recipient households cannot be overstated. These funds are clearly channeled toward meeting household consumption needs, providing a cushion against economic shocks, enhancing access to quality education and healthcare, financing both cash and non-cash investments, servicing debts, facilitating access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and promoting financial inclusion. On a broader scale, remittance inflows fuel aggregate demand, which in turn stimulates economic growth. Recognizing the critical role of remittances from Nigerians abroad, the federal government enacted the Nigerians in Diaspora Bill in July 2017, which led to the establishment of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM). This body was tasked with harnessing the human, financial, and material resources

of the diaspora community. Notably, these remittance inflows primarily originate from athletes and professionals employed in international organizations and foreign institutions.

> Generally, when the supply of foreign currency surpasses its demand, the local currency (₦) tends to appreciate, and the opposite occurs when demand exceeds supply. In this context, international remittances act as a shock absorber against fluctuations or sudden depreciation of the local currency. After crude oil revenues, remittance inflows represent Nigeria's second-largest source of foreign exchange earnings, exceeding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Official Development Assistance (ODA), and portfolio inflows. For example, in 2018, remittances amounted to the equivalent of 83% of the Federal Government's budget, which was 11 times greater than FDI and 7.4 times higher than the $3.4 billion net ODA recorded in 2017.

According to a World Bank (2013) report, Nigeria ranked among the world's leading recipients of remittances, positioned after India ($71 billion), China ($60 billion), the Philippines ($26 billion), and Mexico ($22 billion). Within Africa, Nigeria is the largest recipient in sub-Saharan Africa and the second largest on the continent, following Egypt. In 2021, Nigeria received $19.5 billion, representing 20 percent of Africa's total remittance inflows, compared to Egypt's $32.5 billion, which accounted for 30 percent. By 2022, Nigeria's remittance inflows had increased to $21 billion (Urama, 2023).

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach to investigate the impact of diaspora remittances on national economic development in Nigeria from 2015 to 2024. Secondary data were sourced from the Central Bank of Nigeria, World Bank, National Bureau of Statistics, and International Monetary Fund, focusing on annual remittance inflows, GDP growth, foreign exchange reserves, unemployment, and poverty indicators. Qualitative insights were obtained through content analysis of policy documents, government reports, and scholarly literature to contextualise the findings and assess policy implications. This triangulated approach enhances the reliability and validity of the study's results.

Theoretical Framework

To effectively explain and analyse the topic of Diaspora Remittances and Nigeria's Economic Development, this study employs the Push-Pull theory of migration. This model, developed and discussed by scholars such as Udo (1993), Afolayan (1998), and Awaritefe (2000), is grounded in the idea that migration is influenced by a combination of repelling and attracting forces. Push factors, such as poverty, unemployment, inadequate socio-economic infrastructure, and limited economic opportunities, drive individuals to leave their home regions. On the other hand, the availability of better prospects elsewhere acts as a pull factor. According to scholars like Udo (1975) and Afolayan (1972), the decision to migrate is primarily shaped by how individuals assess these external conditions.

The choice to leave rural areas is often driven by socio-economic shortcomings within the place of origin. This creates a migration pattern from regions with internal "push" pressures—such as unemployment, poverty, and limited social and economic opportunities—toward destinations offering external "pull" advantages like jobs, access to essential services, and an overall better quality of life (Castles, 2012). Migration, therefore, can be linked to processes of development, urban growth, or situations where people are forced to flee violent conflict or natural disasters. In cases of economic migration, push factors generally include poor economic conditions such as joblessness, low wages, or low per capita income compared to the destination country. On the other hand, pull factors encompass elements like migration policies and labour market conditions in host nations. In contrast, forced displacement is usually driven by causes such as political repression, widespread violence, or civil conflict.

The relevance of the push-and-pull theory of migration to this study lies in its explanation of the large-scale movement of Nigerians abroad, which is largely driven by socio-economic and political challenges within the country. A notable example is the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in June 1986, which marked a shift from the policy of full employment to significant cuts in government spending on essential services like healthcare, education, and housing. This policy change heightened the desire of many Nigerians to relocate to more stable economies across Europe, Asia, North America, and the Middle East. Additionally, many Nigerian migrants have also settled in neighboring ECOWAS countries such as Ghana, Niger, Chad, and the Ivory Coast.

They are present in several other African nations such as South Africa, Cameroon, and Gabon. Beyond Africa, their presence extends to the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, Brazil, and various other regions. Data on international migration indicates that 1.81% relocate to Europe, 1.06% to the United States, and 0.95% to Asia. Meanwhile, destination s like Canada, the Middle East, Africa, and South America collectively account for 36.91% of migrant destinations.

Many young Nigerians with limited education have also migrated abroad, both through legal and illegal means. Regardless of their status, these migrants often earn significantly higher incomes than they would have in Nigeria. Those without proper documentation may remain overseas while trying to regularise their stay, move to countries with more accessible residency options, or face the possibility of deportation. The number of Nigerian migrants abroad continues to rise. Among them, the Yoruba from southwest Nigeria represent the largest share, likely due to their earlier interactions with the Western world. According to official statistics, approximately 1.24 million Nigerians were living abroad (UN, 2017; Nevin & Omosomi, 2019). As a result, Nigeria contributes to over one-third of remittance inflows into sub-Saharan Africa, with transfers growing from US$25.5 billion in 2018 to US$29.8 billion in 2019, and projected to reach US$34.8 billion by 2021 and 2024.

Findings

Between 2015 and 202, diaspora remittances were a large, stable, and increasingly important source of foreign exchange for Nigeria. Remittances (officially recorded) generally ranged in the tens of billions of dollars annually, at times exceeding $20–25 billion per year and representing a material share of GDP and foreign-exchange inflows. These flows supported household consumption, poverty mitigation, and foreign-exchange liquidity, but they were not consistently channeled into productive investment at scale. Structural obstacles — including high transfer costs, the use of informal corridors, FX market distortions, and weak policy instruments to mobilise diaspora capital — limit the development impact of remittances. Recent policy moves (CBN reforms, a proposed diaspora fund and diaspora bond plans) aim to better monetise and leverage these flows for national development.

Conclusion

This study of diaspora remittances and national economic development in Nigeria (2015–2024) shows that remittance flows have been a persistent and stabilising source of foreign exchange,

household income, and livelihood resilience — even while they have not fully translated into broad-based, long-term productive investment across the period examined, remittances helped smooth consumption, supported poverty reduction at the household level, and provided a countercyclical buffer during episodes of economic stress. At the same time, structural constraints in the Nigerian economy — including weak financial intermediation, foreign-exchange volatility, limited channels for diaspora investment, and gaps in institutional capacity — constrained the capacity of remittances to catalyze durable, economy-wide development outcomes.

Recommendations

Maximising their benefits requires strategic policies to channel funds into productive sectors, strengthen financial inclusion, and improve institutional accountability.

Below are evidence-based, actionable recommendations for policymakers, the Central Bank, financial institutions, and development partners to better capture remittances for sustainable development. Macro & FX policy: Stabilise incentives for official channels. Guarantee market-transparent, predictable FX settlement for remittances. Rationale: Unpredictable FX policy encourages informal channels and currency hoarding. Guaranteeing timely settlement in FX (or clearly specified naira settlement terms) will raise flows through formal channels. (CBN already issued measures in 2024 to widen access to local currency liquidity — build on this). Implementation: Publish a rolling 6-month roadmap for remittance FX settlement rules; operationalize a dedicated CBN desk for IMTO settlement issues. Avoid abrupt restrictions on convertibility that push flows offshore. Implementation: Any FX interventions should be pre-announced with transition windows and accompanied by liquidity support for IMTOs and banks.

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GOOD GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA (2015–2023)

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Abstract

Good governance shapes the everyday lives of citizens, influencing access to public services, security, economic opportunities, and trust in government. In Nigeria, the period between 2015 and 2023 was marked by political transitions, anti-corruption campaigns, electoral reforms, and heightened expectations for accountable governance (Bekoe, 2015; UNDP, 2018). This study examines the extent to which key governance principles like transparency, accountability, rule of law, citizen participation, and government effectiveness were implemented and how they influenced democratic development. Using a qualitative research design approach, secondary data from government reports, policy documents, electoral records, and scholarly literature were analyzed. Findings indicated that reforms such as anti-corruption initiatives and electoral changes strengthened democratic norms, many citizens continued to face insecurity, economic hardships, and limited access to public services which undermining public trust (BudgIT, 2021; Transparency International, 2022). The study emphasizes that good governance is not abstract; it directly affects people's lives, from access to education and healthcare to employment and security. It concludes that inconsistent implementation of governance principles limited their transformative impact. The researcher recommends that stronger institutions, inclusive decision-making, transparency, and accountability to consolidate democracy and improve citizens' everyday lives.

Keywords: *Good Governance; Democratic Development, Transparency, Accountability, Citizen Participation*

Introduction

The quality of governance plays a central role in shaping the direction and stability of any democratic society. In Nigeria, good governance is not merely a theoretical expectation; its presence or absence affects the daily lives of millions of citizens through access to public services, economic opportunities, and security (World Bank, 2017). Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, the country has continued to struggle with building effective institutions, strengthening the rule of law, ensuring public accountability, and promoting inclusive participation (Adejumobi, 2010). These challenges became even more pronounced between 2015

and 2023, a period that witnessed major political transitions, heightened public expectations, and significant socio-economic and security pressures impacting national development and democratic stability (International Crisis Group, 2020). The year 2015 was historic for Nigeria because it marked the first time an incumbent president was defeated at the polls, signaling a deeper embrace of democratic norms and the potential for institutional strengthening (Bekoe, 2015). The incoming administration promised to entrench good governance through anti-corruption efforts, improved security, stronger institutions, and a more accountable public sector. Nigerians hoped that adherence to key governance principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, rule of law, and government effectiveness would address many of the structural problems affecting the country (UNDP, 2018).

However, the reality on the ground revealed mixed outcomes. While there were visible attempts at reforms, including public financial management initiatives, social intervention programs, and electoral reforms, many governance challenges persisted (BudgIT, 2021). Insecurity worsened in several regions, corruption allegations remained widespread, economic hardships intensified, and public trust fluctuated due to perceived gaps between policy promises and implementation (Transparency International, 2022). These conditions shaped how Nigerians experienced democracy during the period, influencing their confidence in state institutions and their political participation. Democratic development requires not only the existence of democratic institutions but also the consistent practice of good governance that ensures fairness, justice, accountability, and opportunities for citizens (Diamond, 2019). Nigeria's democratic trajectory between 2015 and 2023 illustrates how fragile democracy can be when governance deficits remain unresolved. The performance of government during these years raised important questions: To what extent were good governance principles practiced? How did these practices or failures affect Nigeria's democratic growth? And what can be done to strengthen democratic consolidation? This study is therefore grounded in the need to deepen understanding of the relationship between good governance and democratic development in Nigeria within this critical period. By examining governance practices and their influence on democratic structures, the study aims to generate insights that can inform future reforms and contribute to building a more resilient, accountable, and people-centered democracy.

Conceptual Clarification

Good Governance

Good governance refers to the effective, transparent, accountable, and inclusive management of public affairs by government institutions to meet the needs of citizens (UNDP, 2018). It goes

beyond the mere exercise of political authority and focuses on the extent to which government uses public resources responsibly and delivers essential services in a manner that improves the quality of life for all individuals. The concept emphasizes the rule of law, participation, responsiveness, and equity as core elements that contribute to a stable and well-functioning society.

A government is considered to be practicing good governance when its decision-making processes are open and transparent, allowing citizens to understand and monitor how public power is exercised. Accountability ensures that public officials and institutions can be held responsible for their actions or inactions, while inclusiveness promotes equal opportunities for all groups, especially vulnerable populations, to contribute to and benefit from national development (UNDP, 2018). Good governance also demands efficiency and effectiveness in the administrative system so that public programs and policies achieve intended results without waste or misuse of public funds.

Furthermore, good governance supports active citizen participation in civic and political activities, enabling individuals and communities to voice their opinions and influence policy outcomes. It strengthens institutional frameworks, promotes justice, and ensures public trust in governance processes. When these principles are upheld, governance becomes a driving force for sustainable development, social stability, and economic progress (UNDP, 2018).
Accountability: Holding leaders and institutions responsible for their decisions and performance ensures that public officials act in the best interest of citizens rather than for personal gain (Adejumobi, 2010). It requires strong oversight institutions, transparency in the use of public resources, and mechanisms that allow citizens to demand explanations and corrective actions when governance falls short of expected standards. Accountability therefore supports public trust and discourages corruption by making leaders answerable to the people.

Rule of Law: Ensuring that laws are fairly applied and enforced without favoritism or discrimination provides a foundation for justice, equality, and order in society (World Bank, 2017). The rule of law protects citizens' rights and ensures that no one is above the law, including those in positions of authority. It also strengthens legal and judicial systems so that disputes are resolved fairly and institutions operate according to established rules and procedures.

Participation: This means encouraging citizens to engage in decision making, elections, and other governance processes promotes inclusion and strengthens democracy (International Crisis Group, 2020). Meaningful participation allows people to express their views on issues affecting them, influence policy choices, and contribute to national development. When citizens are actively involved, government decisions become more reflective of societal needs and public legitimacy increases.

Government Effectiveness: Delivering public services efficiently, responding to citizens' needs, and successfully implementing policies are central to the idea of a capable state that prioritizes development and welfare (UNDP, 2018). Effective governance means that institutions are competent, public policies are well coordinated, and resources are managed prudently to achieve intended outcomes. This improves the quality of life for the population and advances national progress.

Good governance is not only a theoretical ideal; it directly affects citizens' lives by determining whether they have access to essential services, security, economic opportunities, and a voice in political processes. In Nigeria, the period 2015 to 2023 saw efforts to implement these principles through anti-corruption campaigns, electoral reforms, public financial management initiatives, and social intervention programs. However, inconsistent application limited their effectiveness and impacted citizens' trust in democratic institutions (BudgIT, 2021; Transparency International, 2022).

Democratic Development

Democratic development refers to the process through which a country consolidates democratic institutions, practices, and values, ensuring that political power is exercised in a manner that respects citizens' rights, freedoms, and participation (Diamond, 2019). It focuses on creating a political environment where authority is derived from the will of the people and where leaders are accountable to those they govern. As a continuous effort, democratic development emphasizes participation, equality, and the protection of civil liberties as essential pillars of a stable political system.

Political Stability: This refers to ensuring peaceful transitions of power and reducing political conflicts helps to promote national unity and confidence in the democratic system. Stable political

environments reduce the likelihood of violence, promote long term planning, and allow democratic institutions to function without disruptions or threats to security.

Institutional Strengthening: This is a situation of building independent and effective institutions that uphold democracy is crucial for preventing the abuse of power. Strong institutions support transparency, fair elections, checks and balances, and the protection of public resources. When institutions function properly, democracy becomes resilient and capable of withstanding political pressures.

Civic Engagement: This is promoting citizen participation in decision making and governance processes enables individuals to influence policies and hold leaders accountable. Active civic engagement strengthens the social contract between government and the people and ensures that governance outcomes align with the needs and aspirations of society.

Rule of Law and Human Rights: Protecting citizens' freedoms and enforcing laws fairly ensures justice and equality. Respect for the rule of law prevents discrimination and reinforces the legitimacy of government actions. Human rights protection guarantees that citizens can express their opinions, associate freely, and participate in political processes without fear.

Democratic development is both a process and an outcome. It reflects the extent to which governance practices translate into meaningful benefits for citizens. In Nigeria, 2015 to 2023 witnessed a mix of progress and setbacks. During this period, reforms were implemented to strengthen elections, accountability, and transparency, yet insecurity, corruption, and socio-economic challenges often limited their impact (Bekoe, 2015; UNDP, 2018). These realities demonstrate that democratic development necessitates sustained commitment, continuous improvement, and effective leadership to build a political system that genuinely serves the people.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Good Governance Theory which emerged from global development institutions. The theory stresses that the quality of governance determines the level of democratic progress and national development. Good Governance Theory views governance as a process where authority is exercised in a manner that promotes the wellbeing of the entire society. It emphasizes that a democratic system cannot thrive where governance is characterized by corruption, exclusion, abuse of power and weak institutions. The core principles of good

governance include accountability, transparency, rule of law, effectiveness in public service delivery, participation of citizens in decision making, responsiveness to the needs of the people and equity in distribution of state resources. These principles serve as benchmarks for assessing whether a government is performing in a way that strengthens democratic development.

Accountability ensures that leaders are answerable to the public and that public institutions operate within established rules. Transparency strengthens public trust by enabling citizens to have access to information about government actions. The rule of law ensures that both the leaders and the citizens are subject to the same legal and institutional standards. Participation allows citizens to freely contribute to the governance process through elections and civic engagement. Responsiveness reflects the speed and quality with which government institutions address public needs and challenges. Inclusiveness ensures that every group in society receives fair treatment without discrimination. Within the Nigerian democratic system between 2015 and 2023, questions have been raised concerning whether governance practices have truly aligned with these principles. Issues such as electoral disputes, increased insecurity, economic hardship and complaints about mismanagement of public resources have shaped public perception of governance. Good Governance Theory therefore provides the lens through which this study evaluates the extent to which governance during this period promoted or hindered democratic development.

The theory guides the study in understanding how the conduct of leadership, public administration reforms, anti-corruption efforts, management of state institutions and respect for civil liberties influence democratic stability in Nigeria. By examining these components, the study seeks to determine how closely the Nigerian government adhered to good governance principles and how this has affected democratic legitimacy, citizen trust and institutional performance, establishing the link between the practice of governance and the strength of democratic culture. It supports the argument that democratic development becomes meaningful only when governance upholds accountability, transparency, rule of law, and participatory inclusion. The framework therefore provides both the analytical foundation and evaluative standards for assessing the nature of democratic development in Nigeria from 2015 to 2023.

Good Governance Principles and Democratic Development in Nigeria, 2015 to 2023

Between 2015 and 2023 Nigeria experienced a complex interaction between governance practice and democratic performance. Key governance principles such as accountability, transparency,

rule of law, public sector effectiveness and citizen participation shaped the quality of democratic processes and outcomes. Progress in some areas for example economic policy reform and improvements in service delivery was counterbalanced by persistent challenges including corruption public sector impunity and weak implementation capacity. (World Bank 2024).

World Bank

Electoral integrity and institutional trust were central to democratic development in the period under review. Although electoral administration improved in technical respects there were significant reports of irregularities and disruptions during major polls which affected public confidence in outcomes and in governing institutions (Freedom House 2023). The performance of election management bodies and the independence of the judiciary remain critical determinants of whether elections translate into stable democratic consolidation.

Freedom House +1

Accountability and control of corruption continued to be major governance tests for democratic deepening. International indices and expert assessments recorded low perceived levels of public sector integrity which undermine citizen trust and distort policy making. Weak anti corruption enforcement and the prevalence of corrupt practice in key sectors erode the legitimacy of democratic institutions and reduce the ability of the state to deliver public goods equitably (Transparency International 2023).

Transparency.org +1

Civil liberties and state response to protest also shaped democratic development. The nationwide demonstrations in 2020 that mobilised youth around demands for police reform and wider governance change highlighted the role of civic activism in democratic life. The state response to those protests and the limited accountability for incidents of excessive force damaged trust and raised concerns about the protection of human rights as a foundation for democratic participation (Human Rights Watch 2021; reporting on the 2020 protests and subsequent accountability gaps).

Human Rights Watch +1

The governance environment from 2015 to 2023 therefore influenced democratic development through three linked channels. First institutional performance and rule-based governance affected the credibility of elections and the stability of political competition. Second accountability and anti corruption outcomes shaped citizen trust and the capacity of government to deliver public

goods. Third respect for civil liberties and space for civic action influenced the quality of political participation and the ability of citizens to hold power to account. Assessing Nigeria in this period requires empirical attention to these channels using official data and trusted observer reports to measure the degree to which governance practice supported or undermined democratic consolidation.

World Bank +2

Implications of Governance Deficiencies on Nigeria's Democratic Progress

Governance deficiencies in Nigeria undermine democratic progress by eroding public trust in institutions and by weakening the mechanisms that make democracy functional. When public officials do not answer to citizens and when public resources are perceived to be misused, citizens grow cynical about the value of participation and about the fairness of political competition. This loss of trust depresses voter turnout and reduces civic engagement which in turn diminishes the capacity of society to hold leaders to account (Transparency International, 2023).

Transparency.org

Weak accountability and limited anticorruption enforcement distort public policy and produce unequal access to public goods. Corruption and the capture of public offices by private interests reduce the quality of education health and infrastructure because budgetary allocations are diverted or implemented poorly. The result is widening inequality and a sense that democratic elections do not deliver tangible improvements in everyday life. This outcome undermines the legitimacy of democratic institutions and fuels political apathy and grievance (World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators; Transparency International, 2023).

DataBank +1

Deficiencies in electoral administration and in the independence of oversight institutions weaken the credibility of elections and the stability of political competition. Reports by international observers documented technical improvements alongside persistent problems such as irregularities logistical failures and contested results that damaged confidence in electoral outcomes. When elections are widely perceived as flawed that perception increases the likelihood of post electoral disputes and reduces the incentive for opposition groups to accept peaceful turnover of power (European Union Election Observation Mission Nigeria 2023).

European External Action Service

Poor protection of civil liberties and limited accountability for excessive use of force undermine democratic participation and constrain civic space. High profile episodes of state response to protest have left many citizens uncertain that their freedoms will be protected when they speak out or when they assemble to press for reform. Restrictions on civic space and weak accountability for rights violations reduce the ability of social movements and ordinary citizens to influence public policy through non electoral channels which weakens pluralism in democratic life (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

Human Rights Watch

Governance failures also interact with insecurity to produce cascading effects on democracy. Where the state cannot guarantee security for communities' electoral processes become more difficult to manage and service delivery breaks down. Protracted insecurity displaces populations disrupts livelihoods and concentrates power in security institutions that are often less accountable to civilian oversight. The combined effect is a narrowing of democratic space and an increase in executive discretion which may be justified on security grounds but which risks entrenching undemocratic practices (scholarly analyses of governance and insecurity 2015 to 2023).

ResearchGate +1

Finally, governance deficiencies constrain long term democratic consolidation by weakening institutional capacity to deliver reforms. Strong regulation transparent budgeting impartial judiciary and professional public service are necessary for sustained democratic performance. Where those elements are weak reforms are fragile and dependent on individual office holders rather than on enduring institutions. Strengthening accountability transparency and the rule of law remains central to reversing the negative implications described above and to restoring public confidence in democratic governance in Nigeria (World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators; Freedom House, 2023).

DataBank +1

References for the empirical evidence cited above are publicly available from Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2023 World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators Freedom House country reports 2023 Human Rights Watch reporting on accountability for protest related abuses and the European Union Election Observation Mission Nigeria 2023 final report. Transparency.org +4

Conclusion

A democratic system thrives when the institutions of governance are accountable, transparent, responsive, and rooted in the rule of law. Nigeria has made notable democratic strides since the return to civil rule but the period from 2015 to 2023 demonstrates that progress remains uneven where governance principles are not fully respected. Weak accountability, persistent corruption, limitations in electoral credibility and restricted civic space have reduced public confidence in democratic institutions. The continued gap between citizen expectations and government performance has also deepened frustration particularly among young people who feel excluded from decision making. These challenges show that democratic development cannot advance without deliberate efforts to strengthen governance structures and to ensure that leadership reflects the interest of all citizens.

Recommendations

To support a more resilient democratic future, Nigeria needs to reinforce independent institutions that oversee public finance, electoral administration, and the justice sector. Public officials must be held responsible for their actions, and corruption cases must be pursued to conclusion without political interference. Citizens should have wider access to government information so that they can engage and monitor public decisions effectively. The government should continue to invest in security reforms that protect human rights and guarantee the safety of voters and communities during political processes. Economic policies should prioritize inclusive growth so that democracy is not viewed only as a political system but as a source of measurable improvements in living conditions. Civic education and youth engagement should be strengthened to rebuild trust and encourage citizens to participate actively in governance. If these reforms are implemented with sincerity and consistency Nigeria can overcome the setbacks experienced in recent years and move toward a democracy that is stable, responsive, and truly beneficial to the people.

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WORKERS' INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION PROCESSES AND THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR: THE STUDY OF FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS TARABA STATE COMMAND, 2013 – 2024

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Abstract

This study overviews employee's Involvement in decision making in Nigerian Public sector using Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Taraba state Command with a understanding to ascertain the level of workers Involvement in decision-making, and determine its influence on FRSC corporate performance between 2013 - 2024. The research investigates how participatory management practices, such as consultation, joint problem-solving, and staff representation in organizational decisions, influence efficiency, service delivery, and overall institutional effectiveness. Descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from FRSC officers across different units within the command. The study is quantitative in nature and used researcher's structured Likert scale questionnaire format to generate data from 360 respondents, which was complemented by extensive review of related literature. SPSS version 20.0 tools were used to analyze the data. Results of analysis reveal workers do not involved in decision making but are solely responsible for its implementation; and prevalence of corporate poor performance in FRSC Taraba state Command. Therefore, the study finds-out that statistically significant relationship between workers' involvement in decision-making and corporate performance in the public sector. Primarily, study recommends the democratization of decision making in the FRSC Taraba state Command in order to enhance performance.

Keywords: Decision Processes, Workers, Involvement, FRSC, Nigeria.

Introduction

According to Abiodun and Jembola (2023) and Alon-Barkat, and Busuioc (2023), human activities at the group and organizational levels are becoming more complex, volatile, and highly competitive with challenges and negative influences on their performances. This calls for varying

degrees of adaptability and flexibility in decision-making. These choices serve as a prelude to ongoing adjustments to organizational structures and policies in an effort to survive and expand in the face of competitive challenges. Decisions guide human behavior toward particular objectives, and selecting the optimal course of action from a variety of options will result in the achievement of these objectives (Amah, 2022 et al., 2022). Therefore, decision-making tends to be lacking when there are no objectives and no other ways to achieve them. Therefore, whenever there is an organization with a goal, it will eventually be necessary to decide what needs to be done, by whom, where, and how. One of the main factors influencing the efficacy of such decisions, according to Irawanto (2022) is the human factor, or employees or personnel and their integration into participatory decision-making processes.

The process of liberalizing workers' involvement in the creation, preservation, and analysis of relevant information for the purpose of forming inductive or deductive opinions that direct the pursuit of organizational goals for a better outcome or performance is referred to as "worker integration" in this context. These academics argue that an essential component of any organization's success or high performance is its employees' ability to come up with new ideas, recognize obstacles and gaps, boast new policies, and demonstrate dedication. As a result, workers' involvement in decision-making (PDM) becomes a crucial platform for organizations to capitalize on their inventiveness and creativity and extract their unwavering dedication to the success and results of policies. According to Arshad, et al., 2021) worker involvement is defined in this paper as "the involvement resulting from the practices which increases the scope for employees’ share of influence in decision making at different tiers of organizational hierarchy with concomitant (related) assumptions of responsibility."

Involving workers in the decision-making process will benefit them from their unique talents and commitment to breaking down organisational barriers and, or improving, organisational derivatives and goals beyond the inherent backward-looking bureaucratic nature of the organisation (Chou, et al., 2022). Their inclusiveness is reflected in their inimitable attitudes and work practices and is enhanced by the creation of co-operative schemes (Eze, et al., 2022), design schemes (Falanga, et al., 2021), joint consultation schemes (Inimiesi, & Oluku, 2024), cooperation projects (Meli, 2020) and management by target (Farooq, et al., 2024).
It also improves morale and employee-relationship, increases loyalty (Goel, et al., 2024), improves correspondence and cooperation (Hysing, 2021), facilitates productivity and helps organisations reach their final objectives (Inimiesi, & Oluku, 2024). However, Mills, et al., (2021)

identified the lack of ownership on the part of workers, the lack of secret or classified official facts and information, the time-consuming nature of the process and the involvement of a large number of people as obstacles and disadvantages to the involvement of workers in decision-making processes. Other issues include the thematic restrictions required for confidentiality, the crisis linked to the withdrawal of the right to be involved, the possibility of false and conflicting interests, etc. However, a raft of studies confirms the power of worker involvement in decision-making as a tool to improve organisational performance (see Barinua and Kornome, 2022; Dede, Okoroji and Chukwu, 2019; Babjohn, Parimala and Thejanjali, 2018; Banyu, 2013).

Okoro, et al. (2024), (Reed, et al., 2021) and et al., Reed, et al. (2021) therefore argued that the decision-making process is the most important factor determining the success or failure of any project. Decisions can be programmed or unprogrammed (Szakonyi, 2021), strategic, tactical or operational (Uhunwagho, et al., 2025) but in each case, they structure mechanisms and dynamics to achieve the objectives. Kozioł-Nadolna and Beyer (Uzondu, et al., 2022) have aptly defined it as the process of choosing the most appropriate outcome to meet the objectives, aims, desires and values of the organisation. As a process, it identifies and specifies the problems presented, collects relevant information on them, identifies possible solutions and different ways to achieve them, selects the best option, applies or implements the chosen option and reviews the result (Van Noordt, & Misuraca, 2022). Empirical research by some researchers, such as Virginia, et al. (2023), has shown that the management of any organization lacks the necessary knowledge and skills to guide these processes to effective results without the input of employees. They tend to rely on rules that are unclear, uncertain, and subject to frequent changes, and are highly influenced by emotions, sympathies, and antipathy, which undermine effective decision-making. Therefore, a comprehensive input from employees is needed to enable effective decision-making and improved performance (Wang, et al 2024).

The dominant position in the literature is that employee involvement in decision-making processes has a significant positive impact on organisational performance. However, virtually all available and peer reviewed literature has focused on the private sector, with little or no focus on the public sector. The need for a public sector inquiry has arisen. In this context, the current investigation used the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) Taraba State Command as a case in point, as it promoted more than 865 employees to higher levels in 2024 as a reward for excellence. The FRSC was established by Order No. 45 of 1988 as FRSC Act Cap 141 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) as amended by Order No 35 of 1992 and subsequently adopted

by the National Assembly as the Law establishing the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) 2007. The primary responsibilities of the Corps according to Federal Government of Nigeria (2007) include among others:

i. Preventing or minimizing road accidents;
ii. Prevention or minimization of road accidents;
iii. Educating drivers, passengers and other members of the public in general on the proper use of roads;
iv. Design and production of a driving licensed for use by different categories of vehicle operators;
v. Design and manufacture of vehicle number plates
vi. Standardizations of road codes;
vii. Providing immediate attention and care to accident victims
viii. Conducting research on the causes of road traffic accidents and methods of preventing them and implementing the results of such research;
ix. Remove and detain any vehicle parked in such a way as to cause a roadblock and the owner or driver of the vehicle shall pay N200.00 (two hundred naira) for each day or part of the detention, in addition to any other penalty imposed under this law.

This research examines the extent to which workers are involved in decisions arising from these obligations or provisions of the law in the course of implementing them and their impact on the performance of the FRSC - Taraba State Command, which has been given a massive promotion in 2024.

Research Questions

The paper is poised to provide answers to the following questions:

i. Has the status of staff involvement in decision processes any positive impact on the performance of Federal Road Safety Corps Taraba state Command?
ii. Does Federal Road Safety Corps staff Taraba state Command involvement substantially in decision processes?

Methods

The study adopted the Trans-sectional Study of 2023 with 360 respondents drawn from the staff of the Federal Road Safety Corps Taraba State Command. Participants were drawn from FRSC offices in the three senatorial districts of the State, with an equal number of 120 from each

district. An introductory letter was sent to the headquarters of the command in Taraba, paving the way for access to the research staff in the senatorial districts. In essence, the researcher ensured that respondents were fully informed about the nature of the research, the risks and benefits, and the opportunities for inquiry. The research was conducted in compliance with the principles of anonymity and confidentiality of respondents during the investigation, findings, dissemination and storage of data, which resulted in informed consent of respondents.

A structured questionnaire was used to generate data from participants, the validity and reliability of which have been professionally tested. Questionnaires were distributed and collected in sealed form by the Command's supervisory unit in each district within four weeks. The instrument shall have two sections, namely sections on socio-demographics and on questions. The questions were structured in the format of a five-point scale, with the following scores: SA = strongly agree (5 points), A = agree (4 points), NO = no opinion (3 points), D = disagree (2 points) and SD = strongly disagree (1 point).

When analyzing the data generated by the questionnaire, the relevant statistical tools in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 were used to find average and standard deviation answers for descriptive purposes, with responses validated or invalidated at a significance level of .05. The paper adopted McGregor's X and Y theory, which highlights the fundamental factors that drive the performance of good employees in organizations, as the framework for its analysis.

Framework of Analysis

McGregor (1960) specifically examined how human factors influence and are integrated into organizational behavior and outcomes, and developed the famous X-Y theory in his book The Human Side of Business. The main premise of X theory is that people are lazy, avoid work, resist change, and need direction, external benefits, rewards, and coercion to achieve their goals (see Helms, 2006). Simply put, the theory advocates an authoritarian style of leadership in which decisions are made by management, as a precursor of excellence.

But Theory Y proposes in a different way that the needs of the higher order are superseded by the lower orders and dominate the individual. The main premise of theory Y is therefore that work is an essential part of the human condition, enabling him to take responsibility, to exercise self-direction and self-control in order to achieve goals as a basis for self-satisfaction. Thus, man is

essentially creative, reconciling his personal interests with the organizational goals as a framework for self-actualization. This theory advocates a democratic style of leadership in which participatory decisions are the key to good organizational performance. Liberal managers use theory Y, which allows workers to grow and evolve with the organization, as a true instrument of corporate performance. According to McGregor, the principles of theory X are likely to be more productive and effective in any organization than they are in any other. This paper examined the level of staff involvement in the decision-making processes of FRSC Taraba State Command, following the principles of theory Y, in order to assess its impact on the institutional performance of the Corps from 2013 to 2024

Data Analysis and Findings

Respondents' Socio-Demographic information

Out of the 360 respondents, 192 (i.e., the majority) were female. 53.3 percent are men and 168 (i.e. Of these, 268 (46.7) are women. Some 92 (74.4 percent) are married, while the remaining 25.6 percent are single or divorced. 102 respondents, representing 28.33 percent of the total, are aged 18-27 years, 183, representing 50.83 percent, are aged 28-37 years, and 75, representing 50.9 percent, are still under-35 years of age. 20.83 percent drop from age 38. The data also show that 256 respondents, i.e. 71.11 percent have a first-class degree or diploma, while 104 respondents, representing 28.89 percent, have a higher level of education. From these statistics, respondents are equipped to understand their responsibilities, to contribute effectively to the decision-making process and to the implementation of the programmed (if permitted), and are therefore reliable.

Research Question 1: Has the status of staff involvement in decision processes any positive impact on the performance of Federal Road Safety Corps Taraba state Command?

Table 1. Results of SPSS Analyses of responses to questions

S/n	Sub-Research questions	Grand Mean	Stand. Deviat.	Standard Error	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	Sig.	Pairwise Comparisons
5	FRSC Taraba state Command has yards for packing and enough truck for towing accident vehicles and those obstructing traffic on high ways	2.64	.118	.356	164.520	.004	@95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
6	FRSC Taraba state Command engages in regular sensitization of motorists, arresting and	2.14	.897	.027	804.231	.000	@95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

	prosecuting of traffic and FRSC provisions' violators regularly						
7	The revenue generated by FRSC Taraba state Command from culprits has continued to increase over the years	1.01	.338	834	211.017	.001	@95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
8	FRSC Taraba state Command has eradicated the use of sirens, flashers and beacon lights on vehicles by none ambulances and security personnel vehicles	2.03	.106	.114	768.003	.000	@95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
9	The Corps has been providing roadside and mobile clinics services for accident victims, and substantially reduced the use of mobile phones, seat belts and other safety devices by motorists on wheel	1.01	.338	.834	211.017	.001	@95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

Source: SPSS analysis of responses to research questions

An analysis of the answers to sub-question 5, which asked whether FRSC Taraba had a packing yard and sufficient trucks to tow the stricken vehicles and to block the highways, shows a grand average of 2.64 with a standard deviation of .118 and an error of .356. The grand mean of these responses indicates that there is no sig. Differences of .004, whereas the difference is significant by .005 and pairwise comparison of the differences shows no change. Thus, the ground value of 2.64, which is the equivalent of 'Disagree' in our measure of likertime, was accepted and means that FRSC Taraba State Command does not have a packing yard and does not have enough trucks to tow the accident vehicles and those blocking the roads.

Analysis of the answers to sub-question 6 also revealed a total grand mean of 4.14 and a standard error of .897. Tests of effects between subjects show an average difference of .001, whereas the difference should be significant at a level of .05. A comparative analysis carried out to determine the level of adjustment due to the significance level of.000 reveals no adjustment. The ground line of 2.14, which is the equivalent of a negative in our Likert scale, is therefore accepted and means

that FRSC Taraba State Command does not regularly sensitize motorists, arrest and prosecute traffic violators and FRSC violators.

A similar analysis of the answers to sub-question 7 shows a grand mean of 1.01, with a standard deviation of .338 and a standard error of .834. A test of effects between subjects to determine the magnitude of the difference in their responses revealed a significant difference of.001, which should be significant at.05. A pairwise comparison of the results reveals no modification. The large figure of 1.01, which is strongly disagreeable in our measure of liker time, was therefore adopted and means that the revenue generated by the FRSC Taraba State Command by the perpetrators does not increase over the years.

Similarly, analysis of the answers to sub-question 8 shows a grand mean of 2.03 and a standard deviation of .106 and the standard error of .114. A test of effects between subjects to determine the magnitude of the difference in their responses revealed a significant difference of.000, which should be significant at.05. A pairwise comparison of the results reveals no modification. The large figure 2.03, which is the equivalent of a disagreement in our scale of measure, was therefore accepted and means that FRSC Taraba State Command did not eliminate the use of sirens, flashers and lighthouses on vehicles of any kind by ambulances and security personnel.

Research Question 2: Does Federal Road Safety Corps staff Taraba state Command involved substantially in decision processes?

Table 2. Results of SPSS Analyses of responses to questions

S/n	Sub-research questions	Grand Mean	Stand. Deviat.	Standard Error	Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	Sig.	Pairwise Comparisons
1	There are Junior and Senior staff association in FRSC Taraba state Command, and they are represented in the management	2.01	.104	.016	432.119	.000 & .001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
2	The management of	1.02	.874	.256	965.012	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

3	FRSC Taraba state Command holds regular staff monthly meetings where issues are discussed	1.02	.874	.256	965.012	.000	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments
4	Decision making is the prerogative of management in FRSC Taraba state Command, who uses regular weekly briefings and circulars to give directives	4.42	. 203	.189	119.002	.001	@ 95% confidence Interval, no adjustments

Source: SPSS analysis of responses to research questions

Table 2 shows the analysis of the answers to sub-question 1, which asked whether there are junior and senior employees in FRSC Taraba State Command and whether they are represented in the management, with a total grand average of 2.01 and a standard deviation of.016. Based on the inter-subject effect tests, the mean response differences show significant differences at .000 and .001, while they should be significant at .05. Pairwise comparison performed to determine the adjustment level due to the .000 and .001 level of significance revealed no adjustment. The ground value of 2.01, which corresponds to the negative of our Likert scale, was therefore accepted and means that the junior and senior employees do not exist in the FRSC Taraba State Command and are not represented in the management.

A similar analysis of the answers to sub-question 2 shows a grand mean of 1.02, with a standard deviation of 874 and a standard error of 256. A test of effects between subjects to determine the magnitude of the difference in their responses revealed a significant difference of.000, which should be significant at.05. A pairwise comparison of the results reveals no modification. The large figure of 1.02, which represents a strong disagreement on our Likert scale, therefore means that the FRSC management has not put in place or used an opinion box mechanism to obtain the views of the staff and report on the various issues.

Similarly, analysis of the answers to sub-question 3 shows a grand mean of 1.02, with a standard deviation of 874 and a standard error of .256. A test of effects between subjects to determine the magnitude of the difference in their responses revealed a significant difference of.000, which should be significant at.05. A pairwise comparison of the results reveals no modification. The

large figure of 1.02, which is the strongly disagreeable value of our Likert scale, was therefore adopted, and means that FRSC Taraba State Command does not hold regular monthly staff meetings to discuss the issues.

Furthermore, an analysis of the answers to sub-question 4, which sought to ascertain whether decision-making is the preserve of the FRSC Taraba State Command, which uses weekly reports and circulars to issue directives, shows a baseline of 4.42 with a standard deviation of .203, with no adjustment required for differences in significance. The large figure 4.42, which represents the agreement of our liker time measures, is therefore accepted and means that decision-making is the preserve of the management of the FRSC Taraba State Command, which uses weekly briefings and circulars to issue orders.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the data shows that the FRSC Taraba State Command operates a hierarchical decision-making culture which ignores the contribution of the workers. The analysis reveals, inter alia, that there is no FRSC workers' union, whose activities would be the most organized form of employee involvement in decision-making. Scholars such as Abiodun, et al. (2023) and Alon-Barkat, et al. (2023) have argued that trade unionism allows management to tap the potential of workers and to destroy the anti-union forces in order to achieve its goals effectively. In addition to this finding, the FRSC management did not put in place or use an opinion box mechanism for obtaining the views of staff and reporting on various issues. This is also in contradiction with the previous observations of Amah, et al. (2022) and Arshad, et al. (2021), among others, that the Opinion Box or Proposal Box system is an effective platform for the involvement of workers and ensures effective implementation of the objectives. To make matters worse, the FRSC Taraba State Command does not hold regular monthly staff meetings to discuss important issues. These documents show that decision-making in FRSC Taraba State Command is the preserve of the management, which uses weekly briefings and circulars to issue directives. According to Chou, et al. (2022), Eze, et al. (2022), Falanga (2021) and Farooq (2021), this decision-making system reduces the morale of employees and their relationship with the organization, and has a negative impact on employee loyalty, correspondence and cooperation. It therefore undermines the productivity and effective implementation of the institution's business objectives.

In addition, the document notes the prevalence of poor performance indicators in the FRSC Taraba State Command. The command has no yards for packing seized and towed vehicles, nor

are there enough trucks to tow disabled vehicles and those obstructing traffic on high roads, as required by the law. As a result, the accident vehicles and others that block traffic on the high-way strip are allowed to remain there as long as their owners wish. This suggests that road marshals can either ignore traffic violations or take bribes from the offenders. This position is confirmed by the findings in this document that the annual revenue of the FRSC Taraba State Command has not increased over the years, that motorists use mobile phones and do not use seat belts and other safety devices, and that ambulances and security vehicles still do not have sirens, lights and beacons.

Moreover, FRSC Taraba State Command does not regularly sensitize motorists, arrest and prosecute traffic violators and FRSC violators. Similarly, the Corps did not provide roadside and mobile medical clinics for accident victims. These findings demonstrate lack of commitment, indifference to rules and objectives, apparent pursuit of personal interests, and poor track record of performance. The findings are consistent with previous findings by academics such as Hysing & Etodike (2021), Inimiesi, & Oluku (2024), Okoro, & Boroh (2024), Reed, & Goldman (2021) that employee involvement in decision-making leads to changes in work behaviors; enhances efficiency, loyalty and engagement; and facilitates good performance. In the present case, there is no involvement of workers and the opposite is true. It follows, therefore, that the massive employee promotion that we saw in 2024 has nothing to do with.

Conclusion

The study revealed that workers' involvement in decision-making significantly enhances the performance of the Federal Road Safety Corps, Taraba State Command. When employees participate in setting goals, planning operations, and solving organizational problems, they develop greater commitment to their duties and demonstrate higher levels of motivation, efficiency, and accountability. The findings also show that inclusive decision processes promote better communication between management and staff, leading to improved teamwork, reduction in workplace conflicts, and a stronger sense of organizational belonging.

Overall, the research concludes that involving workers in decision-making is not only beneficial but essential for effective public-sector management, especially in an organization like the FRSC where human input, cooperation, and discipline directly influence operational outcomes and public safety.

Inclusive decision-making system exerts significant positive impact on corporate performance. Thus, workers' involvement in decision-making is a necessary requirement for the growth and development of any organisation. The implication of this for the public sector is the need to re-model or modernise the dominant top-down decision processes associated with bureaucracy and Nigeria's non-armed forces or para military organisations such as FRSC. Staff involvement in decision-making, if allowed or introduced, shall reduce indifference and non-commitment of workers, increase productivity, and corporate performance. It shall provide fertile ground for the management's understanding of workers' mind-set, harnessing of their various potentials, addressing their needs, and actualisation of corporate goals. FRSC Taraba state Command should embrace practical and effective workers' participatory decision-making as panacea to systemic weaknesses and poor performance.

Recommendations

1. **Strengthen Participatory Decision-Making Structures:** The FRSC Taraba Command should institutionalize committees, forums, or regular consultative meetings where staff at all levels can contribute ideas and feedback before major policies are implemented.

2. **Improve Communication Channels:** Clear and open communication between officers and management should be encouraged. Digital platforms, notice boards, regular briefings, and suggestion boxes can be used to gather staff input.

3. **Provide Capacity-Building Opportunities:** Management should train workers on leadership, problem-solving, and organizational decision-making skills. This ensures that when employees participate, their contributions are informed and useful.

4. **Reward and Recognize Employee Contributions:** Staff whose suggestions lead to operational improvements should be acknowledged through commendations, promotions, or incentives. This motivates others to participate actively.

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ROLES OF ACCOUNTANT GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION FOR PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY OF PUBLIC FUNDS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The accountant General of the Federation is the head of treasury division under the Federal Ministry of finance in Nigeria. And constitutional Law gives him power as Chief Accounting Officer of the federation, and his roles play (variables) includes: Funds management for the federal government, Revenue monitoring and accounting, Management and distribution of the Federation Accounting, Collection, preparation and publishing of annual accounting, Control and Asupervision of all Federal Pay Office in the Federation in terms of disbursement of funds and collection of revenue, Investigation of irregularities, fraud, losses of funds and stores, complain with of Financial Regulations, Treasury Circulars regarding financial and accounting policies, accounting system design, review, upgrading and maintenance, training of accounts and audit personnel in government and Public debts repayment and servicing of external and internal loans of the Federal Government. But along the line there some challenges across with this topic of discussion which includes: Miss understanding between the Federal Government of Nigeria and Integral Personal Pay Information System (IPPIS) Service Provider, Miss understands between Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the respect of Joint IPPIS, The Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF) through IPPIS Unit they are deducting federal workers salaries without informing them, Lack of submission of financial reports to the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation, Too much of closure of accounts of Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDA).base on finding solution of the challenges, recommended that the OAGF should take these points as a solution which includes: should try to connect they connectivity that will enable them to provide good network during they service delivery, The Federal Government through OAGF should put all the allowances that the ASUU benefits for them to joint IPPIS, The OAGF through IPPIS Unit should stop deducting workers' salaries without informing them, The OAGF should try to submit they financial report in time that will enable the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation to complete their work in time,

and lastly, the OAGF should inform Ministries, Department and Agencies before can disclosure their accounts, especially if they fail to comply with them.

Keywords: *Accountant-General; Accountability; Federation; Public Funds; Roles*

Introduction

The Accountant-General of the Federation (AGF) is the administrative head of the treasury of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The AGF holder is often appointed by the President of Nigeria to serve a four years term in accordance with the constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria. The office was established in 1988 under the civil Services reorganization Decree No: 43 of 1988, now as has been changed in to 1999 constitution of Nigeria. And again under the Finance (Control and Management) Act 1958 and the Financial Regulation describe him as the "Chief Accounting Officer of the receipt and payments of the Federation" thus the Accounting-General has the authority and responsibility for ensuring that all moneys due are received and paid in to the coffers of government and property accounted for and that all payments made are properly executed and accounted for, he also has the overall responsibility for producing and publishing the financial statements on the status and financial results of the operations of the government. There is Office under Federal Ministry of finance is headed by AGF who is the chief accounting officer for the receipt and payments of account of the Federation. (Dabo, 2024).

There is problems In the respect of the roles of AGF of Nigeria, some peoples things been constitutional Law give AGF power as Chief Accounting Officer, he keep public funds in to his office and accounting it like accounting daily business transaction in a shops or super market, but the true is that he determine/ receipts what government have been generate in the name of revenue and make a payment of public funds (expenditure) with approval and directives from the executive council, that is Office of Mr. President as a number one citizens. That is, why the OAGOF explain the roles of his office that will be open for general public to understand roles of AGOF for ascertain and promoting accountability of public funds in Nigeria. This responsibility involves the following activities:

i. Funds management for the Federal government
ii. Revenue Monitoring and Accounting
iii. Management and distribution of the Federation Accounting
iv. Cash Management (cash management and control of banking operation of the Federal Government)

v. Collection, preparation and publishing of Annual Accounting and the Statutory Financial Statement of the Federal government and the consolidation of the financial statements of the Federation
vi. Management of Federal Government Investment
vii. Management and control of all government assets and properties
viii. Control and Supervision of all Federal Pay Office in the Federation in the disbursement of Funds to and collection of revenue from all Federal establishment and local government in the States.
ix. Management of the internal control system in the Federal government to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations and other regulations, policy decisions and Treasury and other circulars.
x. Investigation of irregularities, fraud and losses of funds and stores.
xi. Accounting system design, review, upgrading and maintenance.
xii. Assurance of Financial Regulations, Treasury Circulars regarding financial and accounting policies of the Federal government.
xiii. Training of accounts and audit personnel in government
xiv. Maintaining and deploying members of the accounting and internal audit pool.
xv. Public debts repayment and servicing of External and internal Loans of the Federal Government.

These functions are organized under eight directorates as shown in the organization structure of the Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation and detailed below. The Financial Regulation list many other specific duties of the Accountant-General of the Federation and it is imperative that you should be conversant with these provisions particularly section 1502, 1522, 1531 and 3521 on loss of funds and stores: Section 3422 and 3428 on write-off of stores, Section 907,909 and 508 on security and custody of public moneys, Section 1307-1307 on accounting systems and standardization of accounting procedures.

In this note a writer is trying to explain some variables which include: the roles of AGF in accounting of revenues, Expenditure of the Federal Government, Organizational Structure of the OAGF, and Relationship of OAGF with the Federal Ministry of Finance, States Ministries of Finance and Office of the Auditor-General for the Federation. These are the six points that a writer is target to explain in details below.

The Roles of OAGF in Accounting for Government Revenue

The OAGF, through the revenue division of the Revenue and Funds Department is responsible for the following functions:

i. Monitoring of Revenue Returns on both Federation Account and Independent Revenue from Federal Ministries, Parastatals and Companies and All Agencies in which the Federal Government has interest.

ii. Ensuring proper classification and prompt remittance of all Revenue collected to the Federal Sub-Treasury and Federal Pay Offices.

iii. Understanding surprise checks and visits to Federal Ministries etc, to check the system of Revenue Collection and how they are accounted for.

iv. Compilation and preparation of Annual Statement of Arrears of Revenue as at end of the period which remains uncollected six months after.

v. Collection of Statistical information relating to the Revenue generating MDAs' such as: (a) Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) (b)Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) (c) Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) (d) Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC) (e) Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), (f) Nigeria Postal Service (NIPOST) and other revenue generating agencies of government in MDAs'

vi. Managing the Revenue Reconciliation Committees to ensure proper accounting of revenue.

Roles of OAGF in the Control of Expenditure of the Federal Government

The Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation (OAGF) is the custodian of the Consolidated Revenue Funds, Development Funds and other Public Funds of the Federation. This involves:

i. Controlling government expenditure by way of collecting, collecting the actual out-turns of expenditure and comparing these with budget approvals or proportion of these as may be relevant.

ii. Advising Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDA) on financial and accounting matters and aiding them to fund financially efficient organizations, programmeds and activities.

iii. Maintaining the accounts of the various funds and government investments, backing the former with cash supply while valuing the latter and making recommendations to the government.

iv. Providing Financial Regulations and issuing Treasury Circulars to MDA on government accounting and financial control matters.

v. Providing oversight services on accounting, budget and financial control through inspection, investigation and broads of survey activities.

vi. Providing financial advisory services to federal MDAs' if and when requested.

vii. Approving accounting systems and format of accounts, accounting equipment and procedures for MDAs' as well as training Accounting Staffs to operate the various accounting systems.

Organizational Structure of the OAGF

The summary of the functions and responsibilities of each of the eight (8) Departments are as follows:

1. Revenue and Funds Department

This department has some responsibilities and among of it includes:

i. Managing the Federation Account, the Consolidated Revenue Fund and other public funds

ii. Cash Backing and Cash Management

iii. Loans Servicing

iv. Regular reconciliation of government accounts with Banks etc.

v. Public Debt Statement

vi. Revenue Monitoring and Accounting

vii. Collection and Preparation of the relevant Reports and Financial Statements on Revenue of the Federal Government
(Management Information).

viii. Control and Supervision of Federal Sub-Treasury and federal Pay Offices in the States' and Abuja.

2. Government Investment Department (Formally MOFI Department)

i. Managing Federal Government Investments in Statutory Corporations, Parastatals and Companies.

ii. Loans Recovery and Collection of Returns on Investments.

iii. Project Evaluation and Performance Assessment of Government Investments.

3. Treasury Inspectorate Department

i. Inspectorate of the accounting records, documents and books of each Ministry etc. to ensure compliance with rules and regulation as well as assessment of the system of internal control.

ii. Investigation of cases of fraud and losses of funds and stores in the MDAs'

iii. Permanent Board of Survey and Enquiry into Cash and Stores and cases of loss of government funds and properly in the MDAs'

4. Planning, Research and Statistical Department

i. Planning, Project Monitoring and Evaluation

ii. Research and Statistics

iii. Finance and Accounting Department

iv. Maintain the accounting books of the OAGF

v. Budget and Funds

vi. Supplies and Maintenance Services

5. Treasury Internal Department

i. Control and Supervision of the Poor of Internal Auditors in the MDAs'

ii. Performing all the Internal Audit duties in OAGF and Federal Pay Office

iii. Collection and analyses the Internal Audit reports from all the MDAs'

6. Treasury Services Department

a. Consolidated Accounting Division

i. Prepares Treasury Accounting, incorporations the accounts of MDAs'

ii. Prepares monthly, quarterly and yearly consolidated financial statements of Account and reports of the Federal Government.

iii. Prepare the Annual Report of the Accountant-General of the Federation,

iv. Collection of responses to the Auditor-General reports and taking overall charge of the Treasury's Public Accounts Committee Matters.

v. Serving as Secretariat for the monthly Tripartite Meeting between Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, Central Bank of Nigeria and Ministries on the reconciliation of bank accounts with cash books.

b. Financial Rules and Regulation Division

i. Formulation interpretation and Review of the Financial Regulations and the Finance (Control and Management Act).
ii. Issuance of Treasury Circulars.
iii. Providing financial service to MDA including choice of accounting equipment.
iv. Providing Financial Management Services for Federal Ministries, for example; conduct of Management Audit of the Accounts and Internal Audit Divisions.
v. Formulation of Financial and Accounting Policies
vi. Coordination of charges in existing policies including accounting design and professional account ting matters.

c. **Professional/Executive (Accounting) Cadres Division**

i. Managing the pool of professional accounting cadre Grade Level (GL) 06 to GL 17.
ii. Managing the pool of Executive (Accounting Cadre GL 07-GL 14
iii. Administering the Federal Treasury Academy and arranging of the various training programmed for accountants and executive officers (Accounts) in the service from GL 07 to GL 17.
iv. Serving as the Treasury link with ICAN, ANAN and other international accounting bodies.
v. Serving as the Secretariat of the BI-monthly meetings of the Accountant-General of the Federation with all Directors of Finance and Accounts, Head of Accounts Division and Internal Audit Unit in all Federation MDAs'

d. Computer Service and information Technology Division

i. Computerization of the accounts of line Ministries, Federal Pay Officers, Federal Sub-Treasury and Treasury Headquarters'.
ii. Development of Management Information Services to provide information for Cash Management and assets in decision making.
iii. Preparation of government accounts by use of computers.
iv. Preparation of Salary payroll for Office of the AGF, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget Office, Federal Pay Officers in 36 States and the Federal Sub-Treasury, Abuja.
v. Design and computerization of the Salary Payroll of Federal MDAs'

7. Administration Department

i. Appointment, Promotion and Retirement etc.

ii. Discipline and Staff Welfare

iii. Manpower Training and Development

iv. Supplies and Stores Management

8. Federal Pay Offices in the States

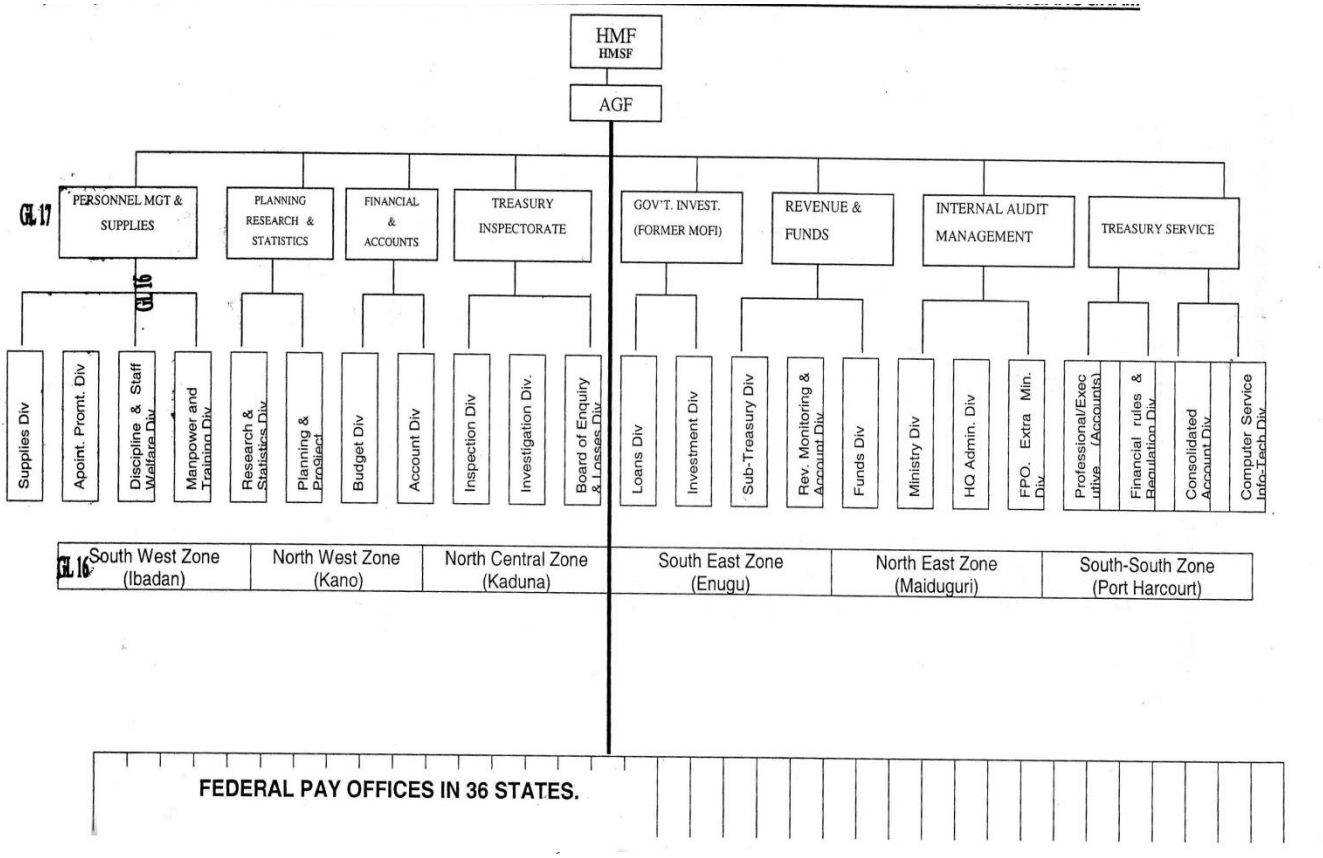
There are thirty seven (37) Federal Pay Offices in existence, one in each state with the exception of two in Lagos State. The Federal Pay Office in each state capital is required to provide a Cash Pay Office and Other Accounts Section to cater for the Federal Government financial transaction as well as the financial transactions of branches of all the Federal MDAs' in each stat of the federation. It also collects revenue into the Federal Account and the Consolidated Revenue Fund Accounts of the Federal Government. It is also required to disburse funds to all the Local Government in each respective state.

9. The Federal Sub-Treasury

It operates the Consolidated Revenue Funds Account of the Federal Government. It is this section that enjoys the Ways and Means (Overdraft) granted by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) whenever there is insufficient cash in the Account. The maximum Ways and Means Advance that can be enjoyed is 12 ½ % of the expected revenue in a year and this must be cleared before the end of the year; The Sub-Treasury also services non-self-accounting units and agencies in Abuja.

The Organizational Structure of the OAGF

The summary of the functions and responsibilities of each of the eight (8) departments are as follows:



any disbursement from any of the Fund Accounts.

ii. **Cash Management**

The AGF prepares the Cash flow Statement and Cash Management information for the use of the Finance, National Planning Commission, Presidency and CBN.

iii. **Exchange Control Matters**

The AGF issues mandates to the CBN for opening of Letters of Credit on behalf of the Federal Government.

iv. **Federation Account**

The AGF is charged with the operation of the Federation Account with the CBN and Computation and Disbursement of the Monthly Allocation of the account to the Federal, States and Local Governments.

v. **Public Debt Management**

The AGF maintains the ledger accounts for the internal Public Debt of the Federation. The OAGF also issues mandates to the CBN for servicing of External Loans.

vi. **Government Securities and Bonds**

The AGF manages the ways and means Advance of the Federal Government as well as the Funded Loans, Treasury Bills and Treasury Certificate and Bonds. The ‘’ways and means advances’’ are the equivalent of bank over-draft of the Federal Government.

vii. **Promissory Notes**

The AGF prepares all Promissory Notes of the Government for endorsement by the Ministry of Finance.

viii. **Write –Off of Losses of Fund and Stores**

The AGF presents the memorandum to the Minister of Finance for write-off approval of losses of government Funds and stores whenever they are not recoverable.

ix. **Government Investment**

The AGF presents memorandum to the Federal Minister of Finance for approval of loans to statutory corporations, Parastatals, and Companies and on Federal Government investment generally.

Relationship of OAGF with States Ministries of Finance

The OAGF is responsible for;

i. The computation and disbursement of the Statutory Revenue Allocation to States and Local Governments from the Federation Account.
ii. Servicing Guaranteed External Loans and Development Loans Stock on behalf of State Governments.
iii. Disbursement of non-statutory allocation such as grants to the states.
iv. Management Services on Government Financial Accounting System

Relationship of OAGF with the Auditor-General for the Federation

The OAGF has a cordial relationship with Office of the Auditor General and among of relationship includes:

i. The AGF prepares and presents the monthly, quarterly and annual accounts and Finance Statements of the Federal Government to the Auditor-General for the Federation for auditing.

ii. Joint examination and approval of the Accounting Codes and Internal Audit Guide for all Federal Ministries, Offices and Agencies seeking for Self- Accounting Status.

iii. Reports of investigation of Cases of Fraud, Losses and Embezzlement of government funds and stores in Federal MDAs', are forwarded by the AGF to Auditor-General for information and follow-up action.

iv. Report of surprise and Annual Boards of Survey of Cash, Stamps and stores in MDAs'.

v. The OAGF collects the responses of the treasury and MDAs' for Auditor General Report and forwards them to the Office of the Auditor-General for the Federation.

vi. The OAGF investigates and follows up accounting issues rose against MDAs' by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and collects the responses for consideration by the PAC.

Problems of Associated with Roles of Accountant General of the Federation

There some problems associated with OAG and among of the problems includes the following:

i. Miss understanding between the Federal Government of Nigeria and IPPIS Service Provider: in the respect of this issue the workers of Federal are facing some challenges during receiving monthly salary at the end of the month, that is, Federal Government gives directives for the payment salary while the IPPIS Service Provider are delay for the release of connectivity for workers to see the alerts as at when due.

   This is in line with a report from Punch newspaper of Nigeria AGF Meets Service Provider over IPPIS Problem: The AGF has urged service providers for the IPPIS to permanent resolve challenges in the payroll platform. The AGF made the call at a meeting with IPPIS service provider on. She said that the Office of the OAGF had initiated engagement with the service Providers and other stakeholders as part of Strategies to find permanent solutions to challenges in the operation of IPPIS. The reports that the OAGF had blamed technical glitches in its payment platforms for the delay in payment June salaries of federal civil servants. The OAGF is determined to consolidate on the gains of the IPPIS and will work assiduously to maintain an efficient and trustworthy payroll system for the country. We have taken notice of the challenges in IPPIS and we will do everything possible, not only to resolve them, but to forestall future occurrence. " She

reaffirmed the Federal Government commitment to IPPIS, adding that there was no going back to the analogue payroll system. According to AGF, all that is necessary must be done to move forward. (Punch News Paper, 17th July,2023).

ii. Miss understands between Federal Government and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in the respect of Joint IPPIS. The ASUU refuse joint IPPIS established by the Federal Government through OAGF, because ASUU discovered there some allowances they benefits while in site the platform of IPPIS did not put it, what is why they refuse joint them.

iii. The OAGF through IPPIS Unit they did some deductions from workers' salaries without informing them. Because just of recent it happen. There is Protest of Workers from Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Over Salary Deduction and Double Taxation: A ggreieved workers of the NSITF under the umbrella of the National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institutions Employees have protest double taxation and illegal deduction from their salaries through AGF. The protesters stormed the NSITF headquarters entrance on Friday, charting solidarity songs, and truncating business activities. Recalled that in 2023, the union petitions the Head of Service of the Federation, accusing the NSITF management of breach of agreement, violation of recruitment rules and demotion of staff (Purch News Papers 17th July, 2023).

iv. Lack of submission of financial reports to the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation, thoroughly the OAGF are not submit they report in time, that will enable the Officer of the Auditor General to start doing financial examination in time.

v. Too much of closure of accounts of MDA.

Solution to the Problems

i. The Service provider should try to connect they connectivity that will enable them to provide good network during they service delivery.

ii. The Federal Government through OAGF should put all the allowances that the ASUU benefits for them to joint IPPIS.

iii. The OAGF through IPPIS Unit should stop deducting workers without informing them that think cause a lots of petitions and other misunderstanding between the workers and Federal Government.

iv. The OAGF should try to submit they financial report in time that will enable the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation to complete their work in time.

v. Concerning the Closure of accounts of MDA, the OAGF should inform all them before they will do.

Conclusion

The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Financial Regulation and other financial Acts give power to the AGF to play he/her roles in the public office. That is, to manage the public funds in terms receipts and expenditure of the whole federation. There are professional standards where the AGF are expecting to compliant with it, there is a serious problem in terms of utilization of public publics. That is, there is a division of labour where ever department/ unit are expect to play their roles according to the explanations of each department. However, this publication shows that the OAGOF has a cordial relationship with: the Federal Ministry of Finance, States' Ministries of Finance, and Auditor-General for the Federation, Budget Office of the Federation, and National Planning Commission. The reasons why the OAGOF and others public entities are working together is to: ensure that the utilization of public funds is doing in line with the legal and financial Acts of the Federation.

Recommendations

i. The revenue funds department should ensure that all the information concerning revenues is receipts and kept the necessary documents' for futures use.
ii. The expenditure department should ensure that all payments are paying together with directives/approval from the federal executive council and the sign by the President of Federal Republic of Nigeria.
iii. The Computer and Information Technology division should capture the necessary information (Bio-data) of federal workers: that will not miss any payment of workers salary, to ensure that there is no any ghost worker of MDAs' of all over the federation.
iv. The treasury service department should: prepare treasury accounts of MDAs', consolidated financial statement of accounts and reports of the Federal Government, monthly, quarterly and yearly and collection of responses to the Auditor General reports.
v. The OAGOF should try to maintain their relationship with: ministries of finance, federal ministry of finance and the Office of the Auditor-General of the federation, us the stakeholders.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRADITIONAL LOGISTICS SERVICES AND APP-BASED DELIVERY PLATFORMS IN URBAN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The transformation of Nigeria's logistics sector through digital innovation has gained significant momentum, particularly with the rise of app-based delivery platforms. While much of this growth is observed in southern commercial hubs, cities like Maiduguri in the northeast are emerging as important logistics corridors, despite facing infrastructural deficits and insecurity. This study compares traditional logistics services with app-based delivery platforms in Maiduguri, focusing on delivery performance, customer satisfaction, cost, and user preferences. A quantitative survey was conducted involving 200 logistics users—comprising 110 users of traditional logistics services and 90 users of app-based platforms. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results indicate that app-based platforms significantly outperform traditional services in terms of delivery speed, reliability, and overall customer satisfaction, although they are costlier. Traditional services, however, retain relevance due to affordability, trust-based relationships, and accessibility to digitally marginalised users. The study recommends a hybrid logistics model that integrates the community reach of traditional services with the technological efficiency of digital platforms. This approach would foster a more inclusive logistics ecosystem capable of serving diverse user needs in urban Nigeria. The findings offer valuable insights for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and development actors focused on post-conflict economic recovery and digital inclusion in underserved regions.

Keywords: Logistics Services; App-Based Delivery; Traditional Courier Systems; Customer Satisfaction, Delivery Performance

Introduction

Logistics is the backbone of any modern economy, acting as a critical enabler of trade, commerce, and supply chain efficiency (Monjur and Akon, 2023). According to Sitas, R., et al. (2022) in Nigeria, the logistics sector has experienced significant changes in the past decade, transitioning

from predominantly traditional courier systems to more technology-enabled, app-based platforms that aim to meet the growing demands of urban populations and an expanding e-commerce sector. While much of the research and innovation in this sector has focused on major commercial centres like Lagos and Abuja, secondary urban hubs such as Maiduguri are also emerging as crucial logistics corridors. Maiduguri occupies a strategic location in northeastern Nigeria, serving not only as the capital of Borno State but also as a key trade link with neighbouring countries, including Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (Buba et al., 2024). Buba et al. (2024) explained that despite being severely affected by insecurity and insurgency, Maiduguri has demonstrated remarkable resilience and economic adaptability, primarily driven by informal commerce, humanitarian logistics, and local entrepreneurship. The city is home to the famous Monday Market, which attracts traders and consumers from across the region (Shehu, 2023). As a result, the demand for fast, efficient, and reliable delivery services has increased, especially in the context of post-insurgency recovery and digital transformation.

Traditional logistics services in Maiduguri are typically characterised by manual operations, informal networks of dispatch riders, a lack of tracking technology, cash-based transactions, and firm reliance on personal trust (Balana et al., 2023). These systems have long served the needs of local traders and residents, particularly in areas with limited digital penetration (Li & Zhang, 2024). However, they are often marred by inefficiencies such as delays, lost packages, poor documentation, and inconsistent pricing (Ojadi & Maiyaki, 2025). In contrast, app-based logistics platforms like GIG Logistics, Topship, and Kobo360 are gradually gaining ground in northern cities, offering more structured and tech-driven solutions such as real-time tracking, route optimisation, automated billing, and customer feedback mechanisms. While app-based delivery platforms are touted as more efficient and customer-centric, their adoption in Maiduguri faces unique challenges. These include limited internet connectivity, digital illiteracy, distrust of digital financial transactions, and infrastructure limitations caused by years of insurgency and environmental disasters. Nevertheless, the use of smartphones, mobile money, and e-commerce is slowly expanding among urban youths and small-scale businesses, offering a fertile ground for technology-enabled logistics to take root. This situation creates a dual-track system in which both traditional and app-based logistics providers operate side-by-side, each with distinct strengths, weaknesses, and user bases.

Despite the increasing interest in logistics innovation, there is a noticeable gap in empirical studies that critically assess how these two models compare in secondary urban centres like

Maiduguri. Most existing literature is centred on southern Nigeria, particularly Lagos, where infrastructure, digital access, and consumer behaviour patterns are significantly different from those in the northeast. This research, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by providing a comparative analysis of traditional logistics services and app-based delivery platforms in Maiduguri. More so, the need for an efficient logistics sector in Maiduguri cannot be overemphasised, especially in the context of humanitarian response, agricultural trade, and small business development. According to Olalekan (2025) logistics inefficiencies add up to 40% to the retail cost of goods in Nigeria, with implications for poverty reduction, inflation, and food security. In Maiduguri, these inefficiencies are compounded by damaged roads, restricted access to specific zones, and security checkpoints. App-based platforms claim to address some of these barriers through technology, but their real-world performance in fragile urban settings remains unclear. There is also a need to understand how these platforms interact with traditional actors whether they are disrupting, replacing, or complementing existing service providers. To this end, the research seeks to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To compare the delivery time and cost structures of traditional logistics services and app-based delivery platforms in Maiduguri.
2. To assess customer satisfaction and service quality across both models.
3. To evaluate the operational scalability and adaptability of each system in response to environmental and security constraints.
4. To identify the key factors influencing user preference and platform adoption in Maiduguri's logistics ecosystem.

Literature Review

Conceptualising Logistics Services in Nigeria

Logistics, broadly defined, refers to the management of the flow of goods, services, and information from the point of origin to the point of consumption (Bamyaci, 2021). In Nigeria, logistics is a critical enabler of economic activity, linking producers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers across the country's vast and often underdeveloped transport infrastructure (Olalekan, 2025). The logistics sector includes warehousing, inventory management, freight transportation, courier services, and last-mile delivery operations. Historically, Nigeria's logistics ecosystem has been dominated by traditional service providers informal courier networks, intercity transporters, and small dispatch firms often operating in cash-based systems with minimal use of digital technology (Balana et al., 2023). These traditional operators are heavily reliant on personal trust,

physical presence, and unstructured delivery mechanisms, particularly in peri-urban and conflict-prone areas like the northeast. However, the growth of Nigeria's digital economy has catalysed the emergence of app-based logistics platforms, which leverage mobile technology to digitise service delivery, tracking, pricing, and customer engagement (Akinrinoye et al., 2021). These innovations are part of a broader trend of digital disruption across Africa's transportation sector, particularly in countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa, where digital entrepreneurs are tackling infrastructural inefficiencies through technology (Balana et al., 2023).

Traditional Logistics Services: Characteristics and Challenges

Informal processes, fragmented operations, and limited data management systems often characterise traditional logistics services in Nigeria. In many cities, including Maiduguri, logistics is driven by local knowledge, social networks, and community-based delivery agents who know the terrain intimately (Ssekibaala, Ilukor & Walusimbi, 2024). This system is effective in navigating areas with poor digital infrastructure or where formal records and addresses are absent. However, this model is not without limitations (Brohi, Memon & Shaikh, 2023). Studies highlight issues such as high delivery time variability, lack of transparency in pricing, inability to track goods in real-time, and difficulty in handling high delivery volumes (Vaka, 2024). Moreover, customer service is often inconsistent, with no formal complaint or feedback mechanisms. Insecurity, infrastructural decay, and weak enforcement of transport regulations further complicate logistics operations in the northeast, making it difficult for traditional providers to scale effectively (Olalekan, 2025; Aliyeva, 2024; Mahat, 2021).

Rise of App-Based Delivery Platforms in Nigeria

App-based delivery platforms such as Gokada, Kwik, Topship, Kobo360, and GIG Logistics have entered the Nigerian market with promises of speed, convenience, and cost-effectiveness. These platforms integrate GPS tracking, digital payment systems, automated dispatch allocation, and customer engagement tools to streamline the logistics process (Surya, Keerthiga & Shalini, 2024; Mohandas, Panchangam & Wolfl, 2023). They have gained popularity particularly in urban centres with better digital penetration and smartphone adoption. Kobo360, for instance, operates a digital freight matching platform that connects shippers with truck owners across Nigeria, including routes into the northeast such as Lagos to Maiduguri (Balana et al., 2023). The firm reports delivery cost reductions of up to 40% through route optimisation and a reduction in idle time. Similarly, GIG Logistics operates a user-friendly mobile application for booking, tracking, and paying for courier services, with increasing coverage in northern cities (Jawad et al., 2024).

However, the penetration of app-based platforms in conflict-affected or low-infrastructure cities like Maiduguri remains limited due to digital illiteracy, poor internet access, and cultural resistance to online transactions. According to Akinyemi and Saidu (2021), only 33% of businesses in northeastern Nigeria utilise digital platforms for logistics coordination, compared to 74% in Lagos. This gap underscores the uneven digital transformation across Nigerian regions.

Comparing Performance Metrics

Several studies have attempted to compare traditional and app-based logistics services along key performance dimensions. Matsuyuki, M., & Nakamura (2025) found that app-based services tend to outperform traditional logistics providers in terms of delivery speed, route efficiency, and customer satisfaction, especially in well-connected urban areas. In contrast, studies such as those by Alfina et al. (2025) argue that traditional logistics services remain more adaptable in uncertain environments due to their flexible, relationship-based networks and lower reliance on digital infrastructure. This is particularly relevant in regions like Borno State, where security threats, network disruptions, and limited smartphone penetration pose real challenges to digital logistics systems. Furthermore, reliability and trust are critical factors in customer preference. While app-based platforms offer real-time tracking and customer reviews, users in Maiduguri and similar cities often value familiarity and face-to-face interactions more than digital convenience. Thus, the perceived reliability of traditional services remains high in specific demographics, especially among older customers and small local traders.

Logistics in Conflict and Disaster-Affected Urban Settings

Urban logistics in post-conflict and disaster-affected areas faces unique challenges that are not typically addressed in standard logistics literature. According to Bell & Card (2021) logistics in Maiduguri have had to adapt to sudden population displacements, curfews, insurgency threats, and seasonal flooding. These disruptions demand a flexible, decentralised delivery model that can respond rapidly to changing security dynamics. Traditional logistics services, due to their informal structure and local embeddedness, often adapt more swiftly to such disruptions than rigid corporate platforms. However, app-based systems when supported by robust backend operations and contingency planning can also function effectively, especially in coordinating humanitarian logistics and emergency deliveries (Sánchez, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to assess logistics systems not only on performance metrics such as speed or cost, but also on adaptability, resilience, and contextual appropriateness. The success of logistics innovation in

Maiduguri, and cities like it, depends not just on technological sophistication but on how sound solutions align with local needs, infrastructure realities, and cultural norms.

Research Gap and Contribution

While there is growing literature on digital disruption in Nigeria's logistics sector, few studies have provided a comparative analysis in the context of northeastern cities like Maiduguri. Existing research has focused mainly on metropolitan cities where digital infrastructure and consumer behaviour favour app-based solutions (Acheampong, 2022; Harun & Yigitcanlar, 2025; Fernandes, Peregalli & Canettieri, 2023). This creates a gap in understanding how traditional and app-based logistics systems operate in cities with infrastructural deficits, socio-political instability, and evolving economic recovery frameworks. This study contributes to filling this gap by offering a grounded comparison of traditional and digital logistics services within Maiduguri's unique urban context. It also adds to the discourse on urban resilience, digital inclusion, and inclusive innovation in Nigeria's underserved regions.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to compare the effectiveness, efficiency, and user satisfaction associated with traditional logistics services and app-based delivery platforms in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The choice of a quantitative approach was informed by the need to gather empirical, measurable data that could be statistically analysed to assess differences in service delivery performance between the two logistics models. Given the growing presence of technology-driven logistics in Nigerian cities, including Maiduguri, the study sought to objectively evaluate how these platforms compare with long-established traditional delivery services within the urban landscape. The research was conducted in Maiduguri metropolis, a regional commercial hub in northeastern Nigeria. Despite its exposure to prolonged insurgency and infrastructural setbacks, Maiduguri remains a central node for trade and distribution, particularly along the northeast transport corridor linking Nigeria with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. The target population comprised individuals and businesses who have engaged with either traditional logistics service providers—such as manual dispatch riders, informal courier agents, and intercity transporters—or app-based delivery platforms such as GIG Logistics, Kobo360, Topship, and others.

The study population was broadly categorised into two groups:

1. **Users of traditional logistics services** include market traders, retail shop owners, and individual senders/receivers.
2. **Users of app-based delivery platforms**, including SMEs, e-commerce vendors, and digitally active consumers.

To ensure a fair comparison, respondents in both groups were required to have used logistics services in the past six months within Maiduguri. A total of 220 respondents were selected for the study using a stratified random sampling technique. The sample was stratified into two equal subgroups: 110 users of traditional logistics services and 110 users of app-based delivery platforms. This stratification enabled clear comparisons between the two user groups. The sampling frame was developed based on clusters from key commercial areas in Maiduguri, such as Monday Market, Custom Area, Post Office Junction, and the University of Maiduguri surroundings. Participants were selected from both formal business premises and informal street trading zones. Enumeration assistants screened prospective respondents to ensure that only those who had used logistics services recently were included in the study. The relatively balanced sample size ensured statistical power for inferential analyses. The instrument of data collection was a structured, self-administered questionnaire, which was pre-tested for validity and reliability. The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions organised into five sections: Section A: Demographic information (age, gender, education, business type, frequency of logistics use), Section B: Type and frequency of logistics service used (traditional vs. app-based, and how often). Section C: Service performance indicators, including delivery speed, cost, accessibility, and reliability, Section D: Customer satisfaction measures using a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from “Very Dissatisfied” to “Very Satisfied”), Section E: User preferences and willingness to continue using a particular model, as well as awareness of alternatives.

To ensure internal consistency of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 25 respondents outside the central sampling locations. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for the satisfaction and performance scale items was 0.81, indicating a high level of reliability. Data were collected over four weeks using both paper-based and electronic formats (Google Forms). Trained research assistants administered the questionnaires in English and Hausa, depending on the respondent’s preference. Respondents were approached in commercial clusters and briefed on the purpose of the study. Informed consent was obtained verbally, and anonymity was assured. Approximately 88% of respondents completed the questionnaire on paper, while the remaining 12%—mostly app-based platform users submitted their responses online. The response rate was 91%, resulting

in 200 valid responses for final analysis. Data were coded and entered into IBM SPSS version 26 for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) were used to summarise respondent characteristics and general usage patterns. Comparative analyses were performed using independent samples t-tests to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between users of traditional and app-based logistics services in terms of delivery speed, cost, and customer satisfaction. Additionally, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between the frequency of usage and satisfaction levels. A multiple regression model was also constructed to identify the predictors of overall satisfaction with logistics services. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. Ethical approval was obtained from the research ethics committee of the lead investigator's institution. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all respondents were assured of confidentiality. No personal identifiers were collected. The questionnaire included a consent preamble and provided respondents with the option to withdraw at any point during data collection.

Results

This section presents the findings from the analysis of quantitative data gathered through the structured questionnaire administered to 200 respondents (110 traditional logistics users and 90 app-based delivery platform users) in Maiduguri, Borno State. The data were analysed using SPSS version 26, and results are presented under the following subheadings: demographic characteristics of respondents, delivery performance comparison, cost analysis, customer satisfaction, and overall preference.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 200)

Variable	Traditional Logistics (%)	App-Based Logistics (%)
Gender		
Male	60 (54.5%)	48 (53.3%)
Female	50 (45.5%)	42 (46.7%)
Age Group		
18–25	24 (21.8%)	30 (33.3%)
26–35	46 (41.8%)	38 (42.2%)
36–45	26 (23.6%)	16 (17.8%)
46 and above	14 (12.7%)	6 (6.7%)
Education Level		

Secondary and below	48 (43.6%)	18 (20.0%)
Diploma/ND	32 (29.1%)	24 (26.7%)
Bachelor's degree	24 (21.8%)	38 (42.2%)
Postgraduate degree	6 (5.5%)	10 (11.1%)

This table highlights the demographic composition of respondents in the study. The gender distribution was reasonably balanced across both groups, with males slightly more represented among users of both traditional (54.5%) and app-based (53.3%) logistics services. In terms of age, app-based logistics users were generally younger, with 75.5% under the age of 35, compared to 63.6% of traditional logistics users. Regarding education, app-based users were more educated: 53.3% had at least a bachelor's degree compared to only 27.3% of traditional users.

Table 2: Delivery Performance Metrics

Metric	Traditional Logistics	App-Based Logistics	t-value	p-value
Average Delivery Time (hours)	5.3 ± 2.1	2.1 ± 1.0	13.04	<0.001*
Frequency of Use (monthly)	3.8 ± 1.6	4.5 ± 2.0	-2.87	0.005*
On-Time Delivery Rate (%)	64.7 ± 15.8	85.2 ± 10.4	-9.88	<0.001*

*p < 0.05

This table presents key service performance indicators. App-based platforms demonstrated significantly faster delivery times (mean = 2.1 hours) compared to traditional services (mean = 5.3 hours), with a p-value < 0.001, indicating that the difference is statistically significant. Similarly, the on-time delivery rate was much higher among app-based services (85.2%) than traditional services (64.7%), suggesting that technology-enhanced platforms provide better logistics coordination and scheduling. The frequency of use per month was also higher for app-based users (4.5 vs. 3.8), implying stronger user loyalty or platform reliability.

Table 3: Average Cost per Delivery

Logistics Type	Mean Cost (₦)	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Traditional	₦850	250		
App-Based	₦1,200	300	-8.44	<0.001*

This table shows that app-based logistics services were significantly more expensive, with an average cost of ₦1,200 per delivery compared to ₦850 for traditional services. The t-value of -8.44 and p-value < 0.001 indicate that this difference is statistically significant. While cost may act as a barrier for some users, the value proposition offered by app-based platforms—such as convenience, speed, and tracking—could justify the higher pricing for more digitally literate users and formal businesses. However, the affordability of traditional logistics makes it more appealing to low-income and informal sector users, especially in a price-sensitive market like Maiduguri.

Table 4: Customer Satisfaction Scores (5-point scale)

Satisfaction Indicator	Traditional (Mean ± SD)	App-Based (Mean ± SD)	t-value	p-value
Delivery Speed	3.2 ± 1.1	4.5 ± 0.6	-10.84	<0.001*
Communication Quality	2.9 ± 1.2	4.3 ± 0.8	-9.97	<0.001*
Professionalism	3.0 ± 1.0	4.2 ± 0.7	-9.81	<0.001*
Delivery Tracking	1.6 ± 1.0	4.6 ± 0.6	-23.05	<0.001*
Overall Satisfaction Score	2.7 ± 0.9	4.4 ± 0.6	-15.62	<0.001*

This table evaluates satisfaction across five service quality indicators. App-based users were delighted (mean = 4.5), while traditional service users expressed only moderate satisfaction (mean = 3.2). App-based services scored 4.3, almost 1.4 points higher than traditional services (2.9), highlighting better coordination and responsiveness. Again, app-based services outperformed traditional services (4.2 vs. 3.0) possibly due to standardised training and customer service protocols on digital platforms. This showed the most dramatic difference, with app-based users scoring 4.6 and traditional services scoring just 1.6. The lack of tracking in traditional systems is a major customer pain point. App-based services received an average satisfaction rating of 4.4, while traditional services lagged at 2.7. The p-values for all indicators were below 0.001, indicating statistically significant differences. These scores demonstrate that customer experience is significantly enhanced by digital features, especially in transparency and professionalism.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare the performance and user satisfaction of traditional logistics services and app-based delivery platforms within the urban context of Maiduguri, Nigeria. The findings reveal statistically significant differences between the two logistics models, particularly in areas such as delivery speed, customer satisfaction, and service reliability. This section discusses these results in light of existing literature, the socio-economic realities of

Maiduguri, and implications for logistics innovation in emerging urban centres. One of the most salient findings of this study is the clear superiority of app-based platforms in terms of delivery speed and on-time reliability. App-based services achieved an average delivery time of 2.1 hours compared to 5.3 hours for traditional logistics. Similarly, the on-time delivery rate was markedly higher (85.2% vs. 64.7%). These results are consistent with Matsuyuki and Nakamura (2025) who found that app-based platforms enhance route optimisation and reduce idle time through automated systems and GPS-enabled coordination. In the context of Maiduguri, these performance improvements are significant given the challenges posed by intermittent security checkpoints, road degradation, and unpredictable curfews. The ability of app-based platforms to dynamically adapt routes using digital tracking enhances resilience and responsiveness—key traits in a conflict-affected urban setting (Balana et al., 2023; Bell & Card, 2021).

Despite superior performance, app-based delivery platforms were found to be significantly more expensive than traditional services (₦1,200 vs. ₦850 on average). While this cost difference may limit adoption among low-income earners or micro-businesses, the high satisfaction scores recorded among app-based users suggest that the additional cost is perceived as justified by the value delivered. This aligns with findings by Akinrinoye et al. (2021) who noted that urban Nigerian consumers are increasingly willing to pay a premium for reliability, professionalism, and digital features such as real-time tracking and seamless communication. However, affordability remains a core strength of traditional logistics systems. Their low operating costs, absence of digital overheads, and reliance on informal agents enable them to deliver services at competitive rates. In Maiduguri, where household incomes remain depressed due to prolonged conflict and economic disruption, price sensitivity is a significant determinant of logistics choices. This supports the position of Alfina et al. (2025) who argue that relationship-based networks thrive in uncertain environments by offering affordable, flexible alternatives that do not depend on digital infrastructure.

The study's satisfaction metrics reveal consistently higher ratings for app-based platforms across all service indicators—especially in communication, professionalism, and delivery tracking. The gap in tracking ability was vast (1.6 vs. 4.6 out of 5), highlighting a significant advantage of technology-based platforms. This echoes the findings of Surya, Keerthiga, and Shalini (2024), who highlighted the role of visibility, transparency, and digital communication in shaping modern logistics experiences. In Maiduguri, where insecurity often heightens anxiety around lost or delayed goods, tracking capabilities and direct contact with dispatchers provide users with critical

reassurance. App-based platforms typically offer customer support portals, notifications, and dispute resolution features that enhance trust and reduce uncertainty (Jawad et al., 2024). Conversely, traditional logistics systems still suffer from weak customer support mechanisms, a lack of documentation, and dependence on word-of-mouth or physical tracking. While some users value the human connection and local trust embedded in these systems (Ssekibaala, Ilukor & Walusimbi, 2024). The absence of formal feedback or redress mechanisms undermines service quality. This supports the observations of Olalekan (2025) who highlighted that while traditional providers are agile in low-infrastructure settings, they struggle to meet rising consumer expectations for professionalism and predictability. Despite the advantages of app-based platforms, the data suggest that a significant portion of traditional logistics users remain hesitant or unable to transition. About 54.5% expressed willingness to switch if affordability and accessibility improved. This is consistent with findings by Akinyemi and Saidu (2021) who reported that only 33% of businesses in northeastern Nigeria utilise digital logistics platforms, in contrast to over 70% in Lagos. This digital divide underscores structural disparities in infrastructure, digital literacy, and socio-cultural acceptance of digital services.

Moreover, the study confirmed that younger, more educated respondents were more likely to use app-based platforms, reflecting broader technology adoption patterns. This demographic correlation supports previous observations by Fernandes, Peregalli, and Canettieri (2023) who found that app-based logistics tend to attract users with higher levels of education and digital exposure. Meanwhile, older or less digitally inclined populations particularly informal traders remain loyal to traditional systems that operate within familiar cultural and relational contexts. These results point to the potential for hybrid logistics models in cities like Maiduguri approaches that combine the local flexibility of traditional networks with the operational efficiency of digital platforms. For instance, informal dispatch agents could be integrated into digital ecosystems through simplified interfaces or agent-based models that accommodate low-bandwidth users. This resonates with Bell & Card (2021) and Sánchez (2013) who advocate for decentralised yet digitally enhanced logistics systems in disaster-affected and conflict-prone regions. Finally, the study reinforces the position of Balana et al. (2023) that successful logistics transformation in Nigeria must be inclusive, contextual, and infrastructure-sensitive. Technological innovation alone cannot guarantee success in environments marked by insecurity, digital exclusion, and economic fragility. Logistics providers and policymakers must balance innovation with empathy developing delivery models that reflect both consumer preferences and the realities of fragile urban systems.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the logistics landscape in Maiduguri, Borno State, is undergoing a significant transformation shaped by the intersection of traditional practices and digital innovation. App-based logistics platforms have introduced marked improvements in delivery speed, service reliability, customer communication, and tracking capabilities. These enhancements are particularly valuable in an urban context such as Maiduguri, where infrastructural and security challenges require resilient, adaptable delivery systems. Nonetheless, the higher cost associated with app-based services, combined with barriers such as limited digital literacy, low smartphone penetration, and a lingering distrust of online transactions, limits widespread adoption. Traditional logistics services, despite their inefficiencies, continue to serve a substantial portion of the population, particularly low-income and informal users who rely on affordability, human interaction, and localised knowledge. The study concludes that neither model alone can fully meet the needs of Maiduguri's diverse logistics users. Instead, a blended or hybrid approach where the reach and flexibility of traditional networks are enhanced by the tools and structure of digital platforms presents a more sustainable and inclusive pathway for improving urban logistics in the region. Such integration would not only improve service delivery but also support broader goals of economic resilience, digital inclusion, and entrepreneurial innovation in post-conflict settings.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Promote Hybrid Logistics Models:** Logistics startups should explore partnerships with traditional courier networks to build hybrid systems that expand reach while improving service standards. This could involve integrating local dispatch riders into digital platforms through agent-based models.
2. **Invest in Digital Literacy and Capacity Building:** Government and private stakeholders should organise training programs for traders, riders, and small businesses to enhance their ability to use app-based logistics platforms effectively. Particular focus should be placed on underserved communities and low-literacy users.
3. **Subsidise Digital Access and Data Costs:** Public-private initiatives should work toward making smartphones and mobile data more affordable in the northeast region to boost access to app-based logistics.

4. **Encourage Localised Platform Development:** Indigenous tech entrepreneurs should be encouraged to develop logistics platforms that are tailored to the local context, including offline functionality, Hausa-language interfaces, and integration with mobile money services.
5. **Establish Regulatory and Infrastructure Support:** Government agencies should provide enabling environments for logistics growth by improving road networks, enforcing quality standards, and regulating delivery pricing to protect consumers without stifling innovation.
6. **Support Post-Conflict Recovery through Logistics Innovation**: Donors, NGOs, and humanitarian actors should recognise the role of efficient logistics in rebuilding local economies and should support logistics startups as part of their post-conflict recovery efforts in Maiduguri and similar cities.

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NIGERIAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE COLD WAR

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Abstract

This paper examined, the domestic, regional and external factors that over the years especially in the post-cold war era influencing Nigeria's Foreign Policy. The study adopted ex-post factor research design-secondary sources of data collection was employed and analysed qualitatively using content analysis. Analysis in the study was anchored on Linkage theory as its framework for analysis. The study found out that there has not been any significant difference in the Nigeria's Foreign Policy of the Independence era and the post-cold war period. Moreso, the paper drew a conclusion that more than anything else, the domestic factors played major dominating influence on the country's foreign policy making and implementation especially in the post-cold war era. Regrettably, these internal factors have not in any way project the image of the country positively in the international arena. On this basis, the paper recommended among other things. There is need for Nigeria to adopt a found economic policy as a fundamental pre-requisite for conducting effective foreign policy.

Keywords*:* Foreign Policy, Domestic, Regional; External Factors

Introduction

A country's foreign policy consists of self-interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve its goals within the international relations milieu Wogu (2013). It is the planned strategies which guide a country in its relationship with other countries in the international system in order to achieve its national interests. "Foreign policy is essentially the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world, and to attain objectives that are in consonance with their perceived national interest Akinboye in Anifowose and Enemuo (1999). He, therefore, explained that Nigeria's foreign policies are those objectives which Nigeria seeks to pursue and achieve in her international relationships.

National interest has been the most prominent objectives of Nigeria's foreign policy right from the time of her independence. However, it was not clear the elements that were said to constitute national interest. The elements which constitute national interest were identified in June 1976 based on the Adedeji Commission that was set up by late General Murtala Mohammed to examine Nigerian foreign policy. The Commission report guided General Obasanjo to uphold the following as elements of Nigeria's national interest: The defence of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; the creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defence of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries, while at the same time, foster national self-reliance and rapid economic development; the promotion and the defence of justice and respect of human dignity, especially, of the black men; the defence and promotion of the world peace (Akinboye in Anifowose & Enemuo 1999).

Wogu (2016) divided the historical evolution of Nigeria's foreign policy into two periods – the era before independence and the era after independence. Throughout the period of 1914 (the creation of Nigeria) to the time of independence in 1960, the interest of Nigeria was determined by the British administration as a dependent state. While the post-independent period was an indigenous foreign policy. "With the coming of successive governments in the following years after independence – the military and other subsequent civilian administrations – the foreign policy Nigeria had, via various epistemological and ideological constructions, evolved to what we now have today. These policies have remained with some amendments to capture local, global political and economic changes (Nasidi, 2021).

Methodology

This study adopts ex-post–facto design. In addition, qualitative method of data collection was employed in generating information for this study. Data were collected from secondary sources such as published books, journals, periodicals official documents and dissertation. These gathered data were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts linkage theory as its framework of analysis. Linkage theory was propounded by Marvin Kelb and Henry Kissinger. The Theory was developed in the 1970s. The theory considers the linkage between the domestic and external factors as major influences in international policy making process.

Meanwhile, the common understandings of the term are that linkage means leverage- the linking of one event to another in order to maintain bargaining power or pressure on the opposing party involved.

The theory is hinged on the following assumptions:

1. Linkage is established by the players' beliefs that co-operative behavior in one setting influences the prospects for co-operation in another setting (Susanne,1979).
2. By connecting events or issues that are not necessarily connected in a particular way, government can boost their political and economic situation by surrendering less important issues for those that have a greater, all round importance (Robert & Thomas, 1979).
3. The linkages between domestic and external factors majorly influence policy making in international community and determine the way a country would be perceived.
4. That linkage theory/technique, as Jensen (1988) argued is used as a media – relations tool for image management.
5. Linkage theory is also used as a strategy to reach a more significant agreement, and a device to ensure negotiation failure
6. Linkage theory is also seen as a tactic one party uses when it believes that the other side will pay a higher prices to obtain its initial goal.

Application of the Linkage Theory to the Study

The fact has become apparent in international system that domestic factors and external factors have linkages in the projection and management of a national image among the comity of nations in the international arena. Thus, domestic factors, such as; conduct of election, internal security challenges, leadership style, public opinion, national ideology structure of the country national capability and corruption.

Evidences from the conduct of the Nigeria's 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 general elections have shown that, the country conduct of elections is a watershed. The anti-democratic practices that characterized the elections posed serious image abyss on the country in the international system. Nigeria since independence has been looked upon by the international community to show the democratic example to the rest of Africa. But many times, she has failed to do this starting from the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election. Nigeria's democratic failure or success, among other issues and factors has been a major gauge for assessing her external image.

Also the failure of the leadership to rise up to the level commensurate with the manifest destiny of Nigeria to lead Africa and the black raced, armed the external environment with necessary weapons to confer a pariah status on the country more so, in the contemporary international system military rule is an aberration, any country that is ruled by the military cannot but be cannot but be initiated in the pursuit of her goal in the global system. Nigeria no doubt has experienced a number of coups. The country's recourse to military intervention in the 1990s served to project a bad image for her.

Nigeria Foreign Policy

The foreign policy of Nigeria according to Section 19 of 1979 and 1999 Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be: Promotion and protection of national interest; promotion of African integration and the support of African unity; promotion of international cooperation for consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of all its manifestation; respect for international law and treaty; and promotion of a just world economic order Wogu, (2013). Nigerian foreign policy in the early years of post-independence was pro-Western policy. However, Nigeria adopted the policy of non-alignment. There was no commitment to any of the big power blocs. Nigeria was neutral in issues in international relations, but never neutral in issues affecting African countries. Nigeria's foreign policy under Tafawa Balewa from 1960-1966 was pro-West. This reflected in various areas such as defence, trade, organisation, assistance, et cetera. When the military intervened in Nigerian politics in 1966, the pro-West stand of Nigerian foreign policy did not witness any significant shift. In the early 1970s, after the civil war, Nigeria witnessed oil resources boom leading to prosperous economy. Consequently, the country began to assert leadership role in Africa as a "Big Brother". Late General Murtala Mohammed had dynamic interest in Nigeria's external relations. And as a result, set up Adedeji Commission to review the foreign policy of the country. His administration foreign policy was Afro centric policy. Hence, Nigeria actively encouraged the three factional groups in Angola (MPLA, FNLA and UNITA) to jointly work to gain their independence on November 22, 1975.

In 1979, the Obasanjo military administration returned the country to civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. Shagari was not serious with Afro-centric policy. This made him to absent from OAU (now AU) meetings. Major General Muhammadu Buhari toppled Shagari administration, and returned to dynamic Afro-centric policy. In August 1985, General Ibrahim Babangida terminated Buhari's regime through a palace coup. The Babangida administration tried

to use Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) to reduce Nigeria's economic dependence on the West, but it failed. Babangida administration led Nigeria's leadership role in the Liberian and Sierra Leonean crises. Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was set up by Babangida, and it successfully brought peace to the war-torn Liberia. General Sani Abacha took over leadership after Babangida retired in 1993. Abacha's relationship with some international organizations like Commonwealth was not cordial. However, his administration should be credited for the establishment of lasting peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Nasidi, 2021).

Africa was adopted as the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Thus, its foreign policy could be traced to Tafawa Balewa Administration 1960-1966. Prime Minister Balewa maintained that we belong to Africa, therefore, Africa should be given her pride of place in the formulation our foreign policy. The principles of the concept are: Developing programs for fostering understanding among African States and assisting them; the belief in the sovereignty and equality of African states; opposition of aggression and support for the restoration of fundamental human rights in Africa; promotion of friendly relations among independent Africa states; and to support the then struggle against apartheid policy in South Africa and its eradication.

The following are the reasons why Nigeria adopted Africa as the centre-piece of her foreign policy: The enormous size, population and wealth of Nigeria in the continent; decolonization of African states was still colonized in the 1960s; the geographical location of Nigeria gave it a pride of place by African leaders; and the provision of assistance to other states.

Nigeria has demonstrated that Africa is the centre-piece of its foreign policy in the following ways: Anti-racism and anti-colonialism; friendly cultural, social and trade relations; military, material, and financial assistance to other African states; resolution of conflicts in Africa; for encouragement of democracy among African states; and promotion of sports among African states (Passnownow, 2016).

Since the return of our current democratic governance in 1999, Nigerian citizens became the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy. Citizens as the centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy is the brainchild of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, and has been followed by subsequent administrations. That is, the administrations of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari. Ozoemenam Mbachu in Wogu (2016) posits that, "the basic thrust resolve around the

concern for the basic needs, human rights and socio-economic welfare of Nigerian citizens in conducting bilateral and multilateral engagements with other countries". The rationale for citizen focused foreign policy is to harness the resources and potentials of Nigerians in diaspora, and also create an enabling environment for Nigerians to engage in issues of human importance at both the national and international levels. This will also bring prosperity to Nigerians within and outside the country. Against this background, this paper sets out to examine the internal, regional and external influences on Nigeria's foreign policy in the post-cold war era.

Factors that Determine Nigeria's Foreign Policy

There are some conditions that serve as determinants in the conduct of a state's foreign policy. These conditions could be internally, externally or regionally motivated resulting to the type of policy to be formulated at a particular point in time. Every policy is guided by an environmental factor, which could be temporary or permanent. The factors are broadly divided into two vis-à-vis the internal and the external factor.

(1) **The Internal Factor**

Obviously, there are elements within the state system that affects the external relations of that country. It is indeed the major factor to be considered in a country's foreign policy. These are:

A). Image of Decision-Making Elite: A Nations International behavior is profoundly affected by the perceptions, attitudes and value preferences of the various participants in the decision – making process (Alonge, 2005). The general dispositions and concrete political attitudes of the foreign policy elite are the result of interactions between personality factor and domestic political environment. For example because of the psychological make-up of the Prime Minister; Tafawa Balewa, he was generally oriented towards conservative and pro-West Positions. All decision makers possess a set of imagination, values, and beliefs, and governed by them in their response to foreign policy problems (Adeyemo, 2002)

B). Leadership Styles: This is considered vital in the affairs of conducting any state's foreign policy. Foreign policy pursuit affected by the style the leadership of the state decides to adopt. A radical leader obviously will pursue a radical foreign policy while a conservative leader will be most often conservative in his foreign policy pursuit. For instance, during the Abacha regime in 1993-1998, Nigeria's foreign policy was regarded as confrontational while the Obasanjo's administration pursued a dynamic and diplomatic foreign policy. In some cases, the regime type affects the behavior of leaders while in some instance; personality of leaders differs even with a particular regime type. (Adeyemo, 2002).

C). Structure of the Country: The structure of a country serves as domestic realities that must be harmonize to reflect on the country's foreign policy. A country with diverse ethnic, religious, cultural setting obviously is not expected to formulate foreign policy that will benefit a section of the state against the other. This was clearly pointed out when Nigeria assumed the membership of Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 1986 and the Developing Eight Countries (D8) in 1997.it became a debate between the Christians and the Muslims; as the Christians saw it as a way of trying to Islamize a secular state such as Nigeria (Saleh, 2012)

D). Geography: this has been one of the most potent factors influencing the formulation of foreign policy. It is said that pacts may be broken, treaties unilaterally denounced, geography holds its victim fast (Chandra, 2004). The geographic location of a country determines the strength or weakness of that country's foreign policy and how defensive or vulnerable it could be. A country in a landlocked location is said to be more vulnerable than a country that has access to the sea. Geography of a country includes location, size, climate, topography, population, soil, hydrography, etc.

E). National Capability: for a nation to pride itself in the international system, it must have viable indices of capability that could determine whether its foreign policy will be taken seriously or not. This has to do with its capacity in the area of economic relevance, military preparedness, political influence and technological advancement. These capacities should be in an appreciable level for country's foreign policy to be viable enough. Countries like USA, Russia, China, among some others have attained one or more level of this capabilities that is why today, when they sneeze, some other countries will catch cold.

F). Public Opinion: This is another major determinant of foreign policy. No sensitive state carryout foreign policy without putting the opinions of the public or citizens they are formulating policy for into consideration. The opinions and pressure of the public especially in a democratic state could affect the actions and inactions of the foreign policy makers of the state. This is because when the public are not in support of the government foreign policy, it is likely going to fail but when government get the support of the people at home, the policies made for export, is likely to succeed.

G). National Ideology: It is said that a nation without an ideology, is akin or a prophet without a miracle and a sheep without a shepherd. The ideology of a state goes a long way in determining

how they likely will fashion their foreign policy. Ideology is a belief system, individual, group or state fight to uphold and protect. States can go to war if that ideology is threatened by other state(s). for instance, the cold war era between the USA and the USSR was a result of different ideological contestation. This is conditioned by the historical antecedents of the country's ideology.

The External Factor /Regional Factors

These are dynamics that influences a nation's foreign policy from the outside environment. Since foreign policy of nation-states are strictly to inter-relate with other nation state(s) of the world, those external factors that affect/or are involved in the international relations must be considered/or compromised for counties or relate well in the international political system. Due to advent of globalization, no country is considered completely unitary in decision making process. Factor like the international organizations, international laws, and public opinions from various quarters of the international system and other states beliefs and action could pattern the foreign policy of a particular state. (Chidozie, Ibietan & Ujara, 2014).

(a)International Organization

International organizations like the United Nations Organization, African Union, Common Wealth of Nations and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), can shape the posture of nation's foreign policy.

(b) International Law

International laws are sets of certain rules and regulation precepts, laws dos and don'ts that guide the behaviours of actors in the international system. Hence, the domestic behavior of state like Nigeria must confirm to international standard. More so, international law is a magnifying mirror that faithfully and cruelly reflects the realities of world politics Oppenheim 1928). The international Court of Justice (ICJ), of the United Nations (UN) is the custodian of the international law. It is the world apex court (Agabu & Ukhami, (2015). Nigeria acceptance of the ruling of the ICJ in 2002 over the academy of Bakassi Pennisula to Cameroon on boarder/boundary conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon is a clear indication that Nigeria complies with the international law which in return and influence the country foreign policy.

(c) Public Opinion

Public opinion from various quarters of the international system public opinon in democratic states cannot be overlooked as one of the determinants of foreign policy. No country can ignore

or go against the pressure of public opinion. It was the strength of public opinion in the UN among the permanent members of the Security Council that worked against Nigeria being considered a permanent seat in the security council. Also, it was the strength of the public opinion that occasioned by the violent student demonstrations and sharp criticisms by opposition groups that compelled the government/administration of Tafawa Balewa to abrogate the Angle Defence pact of 1961, in 1962. Even then, the abrogation was not without a clause as the two countries agreed that each of the governments would strive at all times to render such assistance facilities in defence matters as are appropriate between partners in the common wealth (Gordon 1970: Akinboye, 2005)

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined with a closer look, the domestic regional and external factors that have over the years especially in the post- cold war era influencing the country's foreign policy. The study contends that more than anything else internal factors have domineering influence in the formulation and implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy and this by extension influence the external environment and the attitudinal posture of the country's foreign policy principles and objectives of Nigeria especially, Africa the centre-piece of Nigeria foreign policy that the country has been pursuing since independence to the post-cold war era has not benefited the country significantly in terms of development as a result of her mono-cutural nature of her revenue base.

Thus, the paper draws a conclusion that for Nigeria foreign policy to be redirected towards achieving the country's national interest, the following recommendations are proffered as policy options:

i. There is need for Nigeria to adopt a sound economic policy as a fundamental pre-requisite for conducting effective foreign policy since all foreign policy spring from the economic base of a state.
ii. There is urgent need to re-orientate Nigeria's dependency structure to stimulate a national economy that is capable of sustaining a realistic foreign policy goals and objectives.
iii. Nigeria should strive to continue to project her leadership image and regional power status especially within the West Africa Sub-region
iv. There is therefore need for a complete transformation of the Nigerian political system as well as electoral system and process. This will help to rebrand the image of the country that has been dented owing to series of electoral malpractices resulting in electoral violence.

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THE NEO-PATRIMONIAL GRIP: POLITICAL PATRONAGE, ELITE CAPTURE, AND THE POLICY PARADOX OF POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Despite high public spending on Poverty Reduction Programs (PRPs), multidimensional poverty persists in the Nigerian State. In this study, a descriptive qualitative content analysis is strategically applied to underscore the underlying architectural significance of political patronage, laws, and policies that structurally hinder the effectiveness of PRPs, primarily based on the neo-patrimonialism and Clientelism Theory. Based on prima facie qualitative evidence from existing academic and institutional documentation, this study affirms that poverty reduction policies and programs are systematically transformed from social welfare policies to policies that serve as a means of elite accumulation and electoral mobilization (Okonkwo & Adeyemo, 2025; Oladejo, 2025). Moreover, from the synthesis of evidence, this study tries to make a case that, the country's experience demonstrates that partisan allocation of resources, exclusion of the most vulnerable, and the failure of accountability frameworks, as advocated by Omilusi (2019), address unprecedented patronage politics that systematically result in the breakdown of accountability frameworks, as advocated by Asogwa, et al. (2025), manifesting the apparent paradox of high spending and low outcomes, imperceptibly locates this aspect of neo-patrimonial politics where the latent function regularly prevails over its intended or applied practical manifestations, making a case that, social policies can be beneficial, if institutional depoliticization and strong transparency frameworks, advocated by Asadu (2021), among others, form the necessary institutional frameworks for such a precipice.

Keywords: *Political Patronage; Poverty Reduction Programmes (PRPs); Neopatrimonialism; Clientelis; Elite Capture*

Introduction

The Policy Problem: Persistence of Poverty Amidst Intervention

In this regard, the case of Nigeria, known as the “Soul of Africa” or the “Gate way to Africa” and “the giant of Africa” because of its dominance in the economy of West Africa, is faced with a

development conundrum that can be defined as a situation where this country is living a poverty trap that touches about 133 million of its population who, according to the latest report provided by the NBS (2022) remain multidimensionally poor. This is a grave situation that exists against a background of successive ambitious development policies that have had the aim of relieving the poor people in the country from a situation of economic hardship. In this case, since the poverty eradication or poverty reduction policies of the NAPEP to the current Social Investment Programme of NSIP, quite a lot of finances from the exchequer of the country have been committed for implementing these social development policies. But, for example, if one is to take a microcosm of this situation from a regional setting, a case that can be provided by the situation of the Osun State, these policies that, as targeted,

The Intervention: Political Patronage as the Critical Factor

This study argues that political patronage is the key hindering factor, defined as the allocation of resources of the government, opportunities, and social goods in exchange for political backing and loyalty. Political patronage makes Poverty Reduction Programs (PRPs) less tangible, social, and instrumental policies, being tools for political institutionalization, a phenomenon emerged from the neopatrimonial politics of the political system in Nigeria (Oladejo, 2025). The main hypothesis is that the effectiveness, equity, and sustainability of PRPs negatively relate to the level of political interference within their administration.

Questions and Objectives

The research seeks to critically examine the political economy relationship that exists between patronage and the effectiveness of PRP. The key questions that form the basis of this research include:

i. What are the most important conceptual-theoretical links relating political patronage to the failure of social welfare programs within the Nigerian context?
ii. What empirical evidence is available about the impact of political affiliation on allocation, beneficiary choice, and exclusion among PRPs?
iii. In what way can political control affect the institutional integrity of PRPs, including matters of transparency, accountability, and sustainability?
iv. What institutional changes can lessen the negative impact of political patronage and improve the development efficacy of PRPs in the Nigerian setting?

Conceptual Review

An exhaustive study needs accurate conceptualization of the defining concepts of the case, namely political patronage, poverty reduction programs, and their dynamic interaction.

Political Patronage

Political patronage is a key political science term, understood as the allocation of public power for private political benefit (Oarhe, 2021). The definition that shall be applied for this study shall describe the practice where by political leaders make communications of administration assets, employments, and advantages derived from policies in return for electoral strength, political loyalty, or sustenance of a political clientele base. Political patronage differs from political responsiveness because of its particularism, where the benefit is non-universal and discretionary, its contingency or dependence on political loyalty, and its asymmetry, where there is a gross disparity of power from the person of power, the political elite or political von, towards the subject, or the citizen or political vulnerable, who is made to be dependency of the political elite through political brokerage, as suggested by Omilusi (2019).

Poverty Reduction Programmes (PRPs)

Poverty Reduction Programmes can be defined as the designed government actions that take place to offset the negative effects of financial difficulties, increase mobility, and improve the living conditions of the most disadvantaged members of a population. In a broad classification, all these actions can be divided into two main functions: that of social protection, and that of empowerment. The basic objective of the first type of intervention is to undertake short-term measures that can be, for example, cash transfer, food support programmes, or basic social protection networks. The other happens to be for empowerment, where the main objective is capacity-building, for example, micro-credit, training, and youth employment.

The conceptual effectiveness of these state-driven initiatives is neither estimated on the basis of funding magnitude and quantity of authorized or actual payments, nor is the scope of these programs to be determined or understood by mere quantity or magnitude of these payments. Instead, the efficacy of these state-driven initiatives is assessed (indeed, measured) and evidenced by their compliance, or lack of compliance, with basic development principles. According to seminal literature on social protection in the developing world (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2015), successful PRPs must satisfy three interdependent and critical criteria:

Efficiency of Targeting: This requires that the form and process of the scheme's design and implementation be optimized to achieve the highest possible targeting efficiency to ensure that a larger share of the benefits targets the poor. Any failure in this form of efficiency is known as 'leakage' and causes diversion of public funds to the non-poor, thus undermining the effectiveness of this aspect of the poverty-targeting tool.

Impact Generation: The key to successful relief is long-term success, rather than mere temporary reprieve. PRPs need to be able to provide positive trajectories towards a non-poverty situation. This requires positive progression, for example, in asset accumulation, such as productive assets or cattle, and enhancing income security (Akinola, 2021). It is structurally defective if a relief instrument merely fosters a positive trajectory for maintaining one's current consumption but neglects to provide ground for becoming independent.

Institutional Integrity: This is the most important criterion, especially where there is institutional weakness or neopatrimonialism. This entails that the whole chain of operation of the PRP, from formulating policies to implementing them, necessarily entails transparent criteria that are absolutely immune to politics. When this fails to happen, that is, when monitoring and evaluation is subject to politics, then the basic goal of the program is undermined, and what happens is that welfare is transformed into a means to a political end, irrespective of its original technical basis.

The Patronage-Poverty Nexus

The nexus is the conceptual connection where the political role of patronage negatively affects the welfare role of PRPs. The allocation of benefits is determined by political calculation rather than technical welfare consideration, to the detriment of the above-slated principles:

Efficiency Loss: Resources affect the politically connected people rather than those who actually need them, making this particular undertaking ineffective for poverty.

Impact Dilution: The programs created for temporary political effect, or palliatives rather than transform or structure, achieve a short-term balance of consumption but no long-term gains of income or asset accumulation (Akinola, 2021).

Institutional Failure: The onset of politics of self-interest that makes implementation a mere exercise in lack of transparency and accountability.

Theoretical Framework

The research relies on a combined theoretical base anchored on the Neopatrimonialism and Clientelism Theory.

Neopatrimonialism

Neopatrimonialism is a type of regime where formal institutions of the state, the constitution, the administration, the rules of law, are combined and systematically intertwined with non-institutionalized forms of power, so that the state itself is infused or colonized by these forms of power. Based on this, a key characteristic of neopatrimonialism is the fusion of the public and private spheres, public office and private property being transformed into a fief or a prebend. In other contexts, the rent of natural resources, such as oil, is a key base for this system of power, making PRPs a component of this patrimonial resource base or rent stream. This leads to the displacement of goals, from development to elite accumulation, and institutional decline, where institutions become weakened and submissive to the loyalty of the Chief Executive, who can build a system of patronage, disregarding formal rules without consequence (Asogwa, Ebigwai, & Ali, 2025; Godfrey & Yu, 2015).

Clientelism Theory

Operating under neopatrimonial conditions, Clientelism Theory particulars the logic of political elite-client exchange. Essentially, this is a matter of a politics of exchange where, for example, benefits such as cash transfers or job offer are provided to citizens, who, in turn, provide immaterial benefits such as votes or political loyalty to the elite. In PRP distribution, political parties, local leaders, and appointed officials act as brokerage institutions to ensure that the gains reach known supporters or partisan constituencies in the case of competitive constituencies (Cruz et al., 2021). Since the allocation of aid is a brokerage (partisan targeting), recent scholarship shows that rather than being driven by levels of poverty, patronage is significantly motivated by partisan politics and mobilization capacity within trusted networks, where benefits access is made contingent on politics, according to Cruz, McKenzie, and Garman (2021). These two theories, combined, shift the focus of corruption concepts to a deeper exploration of the system that makes PRPs systematically non-aligned for actual poverty reduction.

Empirical Review

Available empirical evidence supports the claim that political patronage is a determining factor for the failure of PRPs, especially within the Sub-Saharan context, because of the way such political institutions influence service delivery.

Patronage and Ineffective Target

Inefficiency of targeting is the most extensively recorded empirical evidence of poor targeting practices (Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler, 2015). It is revealed through localized research conducted across Nigeria, including the Osun State, that the criteria for targeting are ignored in favor of political directives. Exclusion of non-aligned sections is recorded in the allocation of social transfers and palliative relief, perpetuating feelings of political exclusion (Omilusi, 2019). Political favoritism is a dimension, and evidence from Osun State shows that favoritism negatively affects deserving recipients to take advantage of such policies and programs, owing to favoritism practiced there. This is a strong indication that clientelist organizers exclude the deserving but politically unaffiliated to allocate limited resources to reward party members or ostensibly to sway undecided voters. Favoritism was designed to provide better and steady access to much-needed welfare among party members where politically credible reciprocity can be optimized for greater rewards (Cruz et al., 2021).

Impact on Financial Integrity and Accountability

This results in the capture of PRPs by political elites, which leads directly to a collapse in financial accountability consistent with the norms of neopatrimonial rule.

Fund Mismanagement: There is a verifiable lack of accountability in the management of poverty reduction funds. This mismanagement is often not random but deliberate, designed to serve the political machinery.

Siphoning for Political Consolidation: These political patrons, mostly referred to as godfathers, are known to siphon state resources for the extension and consolidation of their political influence and control. Resources from PRPs can be easily diverted into slush funds for campaign financing or rewarding key political brokers.

Weakened Oversight: Compromised formal checks and balances are a defining characteristic of neopatrimonialism, and this means that monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction programs

are prone to political capture. This is further evidenced in the poor implementation of publicly funded community projects, directly linked to the failure of legislative oversight due to patronage (Asogwa et al., 2025).

Policy Sustainability and Structural Ineffectiveness

Empirical findings indicate that patronage-driven PRPs are structurally ineffective in realizing sustainable, long-term poverty exit strategies.

Short-term relief: Cash transfer, one of the prevalent PRPs, is found to equally have only positive but insignificant impacts on short-term household consumption and no significant impacts on income security and asset accumulation. According to Akinola (2021), these programmes stabilize immediate crises but fail to provide the capital, skills, or investments needed for permanent poverty reduction.

Dependency Syndrome: This design perpetuates a dependency syndrome, where beneficiaries are reliant on continuous state handouts, which serves the political purpose of maintaining a client base rather than the developmental goal of fostering self-sufficiency.

Resource Curse Effect: In resource-rich ethnically diverse nations like Nigeria, competition for spending (oil rents) often diverts the political attention from the reform agenda and undermines the political process of achieving good policies (Fox, 2007). PRPs turn into another battleground for rent distribution, not social engineering.

Discussion of Findings

These findings confirm the validity of the Neopatrimonial-Clientelist Policy Paradox model in explaining the failure of Poverty Reduction Programmes in Nigeria. The central finding is that the political imperative of consolidating power always overrides the technical requirement of reducing poverty.

Patronage as Systemic Risk

The analysis shifts the focus from treating corruption as an isolated ethical failure to recognizing patronage as a systemic policy risk. In particular, the institutional design of PRPs has made them highly vulnerable to capture by relying on targeted, discretionary resource distribution. The local political official or party broker acts as the crucial nexus, ensuring that politicians use poverty

reduction programmes for private or political gain. This systemic risk undermines the legitimacy of the programmes and ensures that wealth disparity is reinforced along political lines.

The Need for Institutional Hardening

In turn, it is the persistence of the patronage system that is supported by weak institutions (Oladejo, 2025). The accountability given by formal rules is quickly trumped by the informal rules of loyalism and political fear of retribution (Godfrey & Yu, 2015). For PRPs to thrive, the administrative structures have to be made resilient toward political encroachment. This means more than just anti-corruption rhetoric; the mechanisms of governance must be made structurally unattractive for political patrons.

Bridging Theory and Policy

Theoretically, the lens has clear policy guidance. Clientelism prospers in opacity and discretion. Thus, any effective reform must focus on:

Impersonality: Transferring benefits from personal gifts-patronage-to legal entitlements, or rights.

Transparency means removing the necessary obscurity that allows diversion of resources.
Accountability involves setting up monitoring mechanisms that are autonomous in their operations from a political point of view.
This confirms the need for autonomous and transparent entities for the management of social funds.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

This study has, therefore, argued rigorously that political patronage, emanating from the neopatrimonial political structure of Nigeria, represents the dominant factor subverting the effectiveness and developmental potential of Poverty Reduction Programmes, drawing on evidence from Osun State and broader Nigerian literature. The policy paradox is explained, PRPs are highly successful political tools even as they are abysmal social welfare interventions. The following policy implications and recommendations are paramount in moving into an effective, developmental social policy regime:

Implement Institutional Depoliticization: Poverty reduction programs should be overseen by multi-stakeholder independent oversight bodies with legally enshrined autonomy from the executive. These bodies are to include CSOs and academic experts, among others, who should be vested with full powers for real-time auditing and sanction enforcement.

Mandate Radical Transparency in Targeting: The government has to adopt and implement a policy where beneficiary selection is strictly based on transparent, objective criteria, using harmonized national registries, for example, NIN data to eliminate most local political discretion. In addition, political patronage increases the opaqueness of poverty reduction programs, so the mandatory public release of all lists of beneficiaries and policy expenditures should be non-negotiable.

Enhancement of Legal and Judicial Accountability: The absence of accountability, therefore calls for the strengthening of the judiciary and effectively applying the Freedom of Information Act in ensuring that public officers are made accountable for misusing funds meant for development (Asadu, 2021).

Design Structural Policy: PRPs in the future should be structurally designed, moving from short-term palliatives to long-term investments in the creation of formal sector jobs, education, and health infrastructure, as these are more difficult for patrons to control and distribute selectively. Being a resource-rich and ethnically diverse country, Nigeria really requires sound checks and balances with decentralized public spending in order to restrain the government's power (Fox, 2007).

What will ultimately determine whether poverty is reduced in Nigeria is not the size of the PRPs budget but the political will to dismantle the neopatrimonial networks currently controlling it.

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EMPLOYEE PROTECTION IN CORPORATE INSOLVENCY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA, UK AND AMERICAN FRAMEWORK

Brakemi C. George Ebiye

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Abstract

In the modern legal system for corporate insolvency there are twofold basic paths which can be followed in dealing with a corporation that is: liquidation and corporate rescue. The terms 'liquidation' and 'winding up' are usually regarded as being synonymous and are therefore used interchangeably. Corporate rescue refers to an outcome by which the business of an insolvent company avoids closure and is able to continue trading as a going concern, after having been through a formal or informal rescue procedure. By "formal" rescue procedures, refers to insolvency procedures, enshrined in or recognized by statute, that facilitate rescue outcomes. Employees are major stakeholders of a company who contribute to the productivity the company through their services rendered in return for remuneration and others benefits that may accrue to workers in an employment contract. An employee may be a director or a member of a company. Employees are important stakeholders of companies. Hence, directors are statutorily bound to have regard in the performance of his functions include the interests of the company's employees in corporate governance balancing the profit-making aim of the business of the company. Similarly, the companies Act (CA) 2006 of the United Kingdom have a similar provision for interest of employees. If employees are so important are adequately protected in event of corporate insolvency? This article seeks to compare the protection of employees during corporate insolvency in Nigeria, United Kingdom and United State of America.

Keywords: Comparative Analysis, Corperate Insulvency, Employee Protection, Framework

Introduction

In the modern legal system for corporate insolvency there are twofold basic paths which can be followed in dealing with a corporation that is failing: liquidation and corporate rescue. Winding-up of a company is dissolution process of any given company in Nigeria. It is a decision that is collectively settled by the company to end the existence of such company. Accordingly, leading to the distribution of the company's assets for the benefits of the creditors and members of the company. The petition for winding up of a company can be initiated by the creditors of the company. The net value that is gathered through this pooled debt collection procedure is then distributed among claimants according to a statutory system of priorities.

Alternatively, corporate rescue procedures offer an alternative to the immediate liquidation of the ailing company, seeking to provide companies in financial difficulty with a period of relief in which compromises and rescue arrangements can be made. Professor Belcher defined the term 'corporate rescue' as 'a major intervention necessary to avert eventual failure of the company'.[1] Such a wide definition includes any drastic remedial action to a company at a time of corporate crisis, as well as both the informal and formal strategic rescue responses.[2] In contrast, Bo Xie narrowed definition of the term uses it to cover only the operation of legal proceedings, which offer facilitating mechanisms for rescuing financially distressed companies.

Orientation of Insolvency Law

The creditor wealth maximization argument has been highly influential and has been put into legislative effect in many jurisdictions. However, this normative theory has been subject to extensive criticism by a number of schools of thought. The opponents argue that insolvency is simply a debt collection development for the benefit of creditors and that the only legitimate goal of insolvency law is creditor wealth maximization.

The creditor wealth approach has been criticized as it considers only hypothetical contract creditors, which is only one group of victims suffering from the company's financial distress, and this, it has been said, fails to take account of the wide range of other stakeholders (for instance, employees, dependent suppliers, regular customers and the local community at large) that the corporate insolvency may have an impact on[3]. It is criticized that the creditor wealth maximization view focuses only on economic value and is incapable of recognizing non-economic value aspects, such as moral, political, social and personal considerations.[4] Rejecting the view that bankruptcy law is merely a response to the problem of collecting debt, Professor Korobkin presents a value-based account which views bankruptcy law as 'a response to the many aspects of financial distress – moral, political, personal, social, and economic – and, in particular, to the grievances of those who are affected by financial distresses.[5]

[1] A Belcher, Corporate Rescue (Sweet and Maxwell, London 1997), 12.
[2] Ibid, 12
[3] Bo Xie, Comparative Insolvency Law The Pre-pack Approach in Corporate Rescue (Elgar Online: The online content platform for Edward Elgar Publishing 2016),430
[4] DR Korobkin, 'Rehabilitating Values: A Jurisprudence of Bankruptcy' (1991) 91 Columbia Law Review 717, 762.
[5] Korobkin, 'Rehabilitating Values: A Jurisprudence of Bankruptcy', 721.

Meaning of Insolvency: Nigeria

The Companies and Allied Matters Act defines insolvency as the inability to pay a debt which arises where a creditor by assignment or otherwise to whom the company is owed the sum exceeding two thousand Naira serves a notice of demand on the company at its registered office requesting for payment of the sum that is outstanding, if after the expiration of three weeks, the company fail to pay the outstanding sum to the reasonable satisfaction of such creditor.[6]

This also occurs where an order of the court is issued in favour of a creditor of a company.[7] Where the order is not complied with, either in whole or in part, the court may consider contingent liability of the company and where the insolvency continues, the company can be declared insolvent by the order of the court through a petition filled by the creditors[8], the debtors or by a deed of agreement with the creditors, that his assets should be sold to satisfy the debt as much as the assets can disburse.

This meaning involves an order of court to establish that a person[9] is insolvent, whereas in practical situation, corporate insolvency means the inability of a debtor to meet with its commercial commitment to its creditors. This problematic meaning `is restrictive and does not put into consideration other processes that come to play before the order of the court`.[10] Insolvency, just like other Nigerian Laws is based on common law, precedents and local statutes like CAMA and to some extent the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria Act.[11]

Modes of Winding up in Nigeria

Under the CAMA[12] there are 3 types of winding up. It is as follows:

(1) Voluntarily,

(2) By the Order of the Court, (compulsory winding-up or,

(3) Subject to the supervision of the Court.

Samuel Osamolu argued that all modes of winding-up are usually geared towards the realization of either of the two objectives or both to wit[13]

[6] Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 1990 Cap. C20 LFN 2004, S409(a)
[7] Ibid, S409 b
[8] Ibid ,S409 c
[9] This include juristic person – a company
[10] Estine Ojoh Okolo, `Insolvency Law in Nigeria' October 11, 2016 <https://investadvocate.com.ng/2016/10/11/insolvency-law-nigeria/> (last accessed in 31/01 2020)
[11] Ibid
[12] Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 1990 Cap. C20 LFN 2004 S.401 of
[13] Samuel A. Osamolu, Corporate Law Practice in Nigeria (Lawlords Publications 2018),430

a) To realize the assets of the company and distribute the net proceeds to the creditors and to the members (if any is left) according to their respective priorities.[14]
b) It facilitates inquiry or examination of the company`s management to be conducted.

This clearly shows Nigeria company insolvency law gives priority to creditors during corporate insolvency before employees. Other corporate lawyers have stated Nigeria is a creditor friendly jurisdiction[15].

However, some scholars such as S Osamolu and O. Olusola[16] have also proposed that Winding-up proceeding should be last resort or not to be resorted to at all for debt recovery from a company in Nigeria as held in Oriental Airlines Limited v. Air via Ltd[17]. The writer supports their views.

Liquidator

A liquidator is a person who is appointed by the company or the court to distribute its assets if any among creditors and contributories in accordance with the articles and rules of priority. He stands for the interests of all creditors, especially unsecured creditors.

Once a liquidator is appointed all the powers of the directors cease.[18] In *Gbedu v. Itie*[19] the court summarized the effects of winding-up order is a divesture of directors of its board of directors and the in vesture of such powers on its liquidator.[20] Furthermore, the company powers to make provisions for the benefits of its employees, in connection of the company becomes the liquidator`s.

[14] Anakwaenze V Tapp industry Ltd (1991) 7 NWLR pt 202 177 at 198 in note 2
[15] Jenifer Abubakar-Douglas and Jude Odi, ' Nigeria: corporate and insolvency law' < file:///C:/Users/UATCSC-039/Downloads/Corporate%20Recovery%20&%20Insolvency%202019%20_%20Nigeria%20_%20ICLG.html> accessed 16 December 2019
[16] Olujobi, Olusola Joshua insolvency law and business recovery practices in nigeria's upstream petroleum sector: the need for a paradigm shift <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330936580_Insolvency_law_and_business_recovery_practices_in_Nigeria's_upstream_petroleum_sector_The_need_for_a_paradigm_shift >last accessed 19 December 2019
[17] (1998) 12 NWLR (Pt. 577) 271 at 280-281, Hansa International Construction Limited v. Mobil Producing Nigeria (1994) 9 NWLR (Pt. 336) 76 at 86, Nigeria Industrial Development Bank Ltd. v. Fembo Nigeria Limited (1997) 2 FHCLR 501 at 502.
[18] S.422(9)CAMA
[19] (2010) 10 NWLR 227 CA
[20] Pp.260-261, paras H-C

Employee Protection during Winding up in Nigeria

Section 494 of the CAMA provides for preferential payment during winding up. It provides:

(c) all wages of any workman or labourer, whether payable for time or for piece work, in respect of services rendered to the company;

(d) all wages of the workman or labourer whether payable for the time or for piece work in respect of services rendered to the company;

(e)all accrued holiday remuneration becoming payable to any clerk, servant, workman or labourer (or in the case of his death to any other person in his rights) on the termination of his employment before or by the effect of the winding up order or resolution;

(f) unless the company is being wound up voluntarily merely for the purpose of reconstruction or of amalgamation with another company or unless the company has at the commencement of the winding up under such a contract with insurers as is mentioned in section 26 of the Workmen's Compensation Act, rights capable of being transferred to and vested in the workman, all amounts due in respect of any compensation or liability for compensation under the Act aforesaid, accrued before the relevant date.

(2) Where any compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Act is a weekly payment, the amount due in respect thereof shall, for the purpose of paragraph (e) of subsection (1) of this section, be taken to be the amount of the lump sum for which the weekly payment could, if redeemable, be redeemed if the employer made an application for that purpose under the aforesaid Act.

(3) Where any payment on account of wages or salary has been made to any clerk, servant, workman or labourer in the employment of a company out of the money advanced by some persons for that purpose, that person shall in a winding up have a right of priority in respect of the money so advanced and paid up to the amount by which the sum in respect of which that clerk, servant, workman or labourer would have been entitled to priority in the winding up has been diminished by reason of the payment having been made.

(4) The foregoing debts shall—

(a) rank equally among themselves and be paid in full, unless the assets are insufficient to meet them, in which case they shall abate in equal proportions; and

(b) so far as the assets of the company available for payment of general creditors are insufficient to meet them, have priority over the claims of holders of debentures under any floating charge created by the company and be paid accordingly out of any property comprised in or subject to that charge.

(5) Subject to the retention of such sums as may be necessary for the costs and expenses of the winding up, the foregoing debts shall be discharged forthwith so far as the assets are sufficient to meet them.

(6) In this section "the relevant date‖ means"

(a) in the case of a company ordered to be wound up compulsorily which had not previously commenced to be wound up voluntarily, the date of the winding-up order; and

(b) in any other case, the date of the commencement of the winding up."

When a company initiates insolvency proceedings in Nigeria, the services of the employees are no longer required and are terminated. Under CAMA, their wages or salaries, pension allowances, accrued holiday remunerations and employee compensation rights are given preferential treatment and are paid in priority to all other creditors. Employees whose employment are terminated due to insolvency cannot bring an action for wrongful termination but can institute an action regarding unpaid entitlements in the national industrial court of Nigeria.[21]

Employees on Cessation or Transfer of Business

Section 566[22] provides for employees were allotted shares in company by virtue of congruency before cessation or transfer of business. It states:

(1) The powers of a company include (if they would not otherwise do so apart from this section) power to make the following provisions for the benefit of persons employed or formerly employed by the company or any of its subsidiaries, that is to say, provision in connection with the cessation or the transfer, to any person of the whole or part of the undertaking of the company or subsidiary.

(2) The power conferred by subsection (1) of this section shall be exercisable notwithstanding that its exercise is not in the best interest of the company.

(3) The power which a company may exercise by virtue only of subsection (1) of this section shall only be exercised by the company if sanctioned—

(a) in a case not falling within paragraph (b) or (c) of this subsection, by a resolution of the company; or

(b) If so authorised by the memorandum or articles, a resolution of the directors; or

[21] National industrial court Act 2006, s.7 ; constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (third alteration) Act 2010,S.254C(1)(k)

[22] CAMA

(c) if the memorandum or articles require the exercise of the power to be sanctioned by a resolution other than a simple resolution of the company, with the sanction of that other resolution.

(4) Any payment which may be made by a company under this section may, if made before the commencement of any winding up of the company, be made out of profits of the company which are available for dividend.

It means the liquidator is mandated to comply with section state in subsections 1 of S.566. Where the liquidator fails to comply, the employees can exercise the rights to any payment, dividend or profit is due to them.

Voluntary Winding Up of a Company in Nigeria

The voluntary winding up of a company with specific referencing under sections 457- 485 of CAMA**.** The Sections 457 of the CAMA provides two instances by which a voluntary winding up could occur, with the first being when the period, if any, fixed by the articles of the company stipulates the duration the company is to exist and same subsequently expires, or if the article base the existence of the company on some future event and same subsequently occurs; the company at its general meeting may pass **a *resolution*** requiring the company to be wound up voluntarily.

Process for Voluntary Winding up of a Company

There are two types of procedures that can be used to voluntarily wind to a company in Nigeria. The procedures include the following:

1. A Members winding up occurs where the company is insolvent and cannot pay its debt in full within such period not exceeding twelve months from the commencement of the winding up).[23] Or
2. A Creditors winding up occurs if the company is insolvent and the creditors of the company would have to take charge of the liquidation process) as provided for under sections 472- 478 of the Act.

Procedure for a Company Voluntary Winding-Up by Members

1. The company at a general meeting would pass a special resolution proposing to wind up the company, and at this meeting would appoint one or more liquidators for the process.

[23] Sections 464- 470

The appointed liquidator may be a corporate lawyer or professional such as an accountant with the good knowledge of the winding up laws and procedures.

2. The company shall give notice of the special resolution passed to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) within 14 days of its passage and also advertise it in the official gazette or in two daily newspapers[24].
3. A statutory Declaration of solvency must be made by the directors or majority of the directors within 5 weeks immediately preceding the date of the passing of the special resolution for winding up the company.[25]
4. The company must thereafter cease to carry out business after the resolution for winding up has been passed, and the powers of the directors' ceased upon the appointment of the liquidator unless the company in a general meeting or the liquidator allows the continuance of it.[26]
5. In the event the winding up process last for more than a year, the liquidator is to hold a meeting at the end of each year, and these meetings should be called to notice by publishing it in the official gazette and in some newspapers printed in Nigeria.
6. The liquidator is to hold final meetings upon liquidation of the company and a copy of the accounts/returns of the meeting sent to the Corporate Affairs Commission within 7days of the meetings for registration.[27]
7. As soon as the affairs of the company are fully wound-up the liquidator is to prepare, send and convene a meeting for the purpose of laying before it the financial accounts of the winding up, thus showing how the winding up was conducted and result of any trading during this period.[28]
8. The liquidator is required to preserve all books/papers/documentation of the company on his activities as a liquidator for a period of 5 years before any destruction or otherwise directed by the commission in such event shall not destroy same until the CAC consents in writing.[29]
9. The liquidator shall within 28days after this meeting sends to the Corporate Affairs Commission the copies of the accounts and a statement of holding of meeting and dates for registration.[30]

[24] Section 458 (2)
[25] Section 464(2)
[26] Section 464(2)
[27] Section 468 (3)
[28] Section 470(3)
[29] Section 470(8)
[30] Section 470 (4)

10. The liquidator is thereafter to finally apply for dissolution order and send same to the commission. It should be noted that the company is deemed dissolved after 3 months of the registration of the accounts/returns with the Corporate Affairs Commission in accordance with the Sections 478(4).

Procedure for Voluntary Winding up by Creditors of Company

1. Both the Company and its Creditors would hold separate meetings to propose for a winding up of the company. In this case, the company must call the meeting of the creditors on the same day or the next day after. *Section 472(1)*
2. The Creditors and the Company at their respective meetings may nominate a person to be the liquidator of the winding up process. However, the person nominated by the Creditors will be the liquidator if different persons were nominated at the two meetings. Meanwhile, any director, member, or creditor may apply to the court to order otherwise[31].
3. The Creditors at their meeting may, if they think fit, appoint a committee of inspection of not more than 5 persons. The Company may also appoint not more than 5 persons to the committee but the creditor may reject such persons so appointed by the Company.
4. The liquidator shall within 14 days of his appointment publish it in the official gazette and 2 daily newspapers and he is to deliver same to the commission for registration a Notice of his appointment[32].
5. The liquidator shall make publications of notice of the final meeting and the account of the liquidation is laid before and approved by the meeting. And after this meeting, the liquidator must within 7 days sends a copy of the account and return holding of the meeting to the Corporate Affairs Commission.
6. The company is subsequently deemed dissolved after 3 months of the registration of the accounts and return to the commission[33]. However, the Court upon an application by the liquidator, member, or creditor can defer the date, which the dissolution is to take effect.

In conclusion, it is noteworthy that the moment a company voluntarily decides to wind itself up, there are effects and consequences of such action being carried out towards the structure of the company. In this case, the company will cease to carry on its business except so far as may be required for the beneficial winding up of the company. It should be noted that the company still

[31] CAMA1990, s473 (1).
[32] CAMA 1990 , s477
[33] S 478(4) CAMA

remains a corporate entity with its corporate powers (unless its articles provide otherwise) or until it is finally dissolved.

A liquidator is appointed for a company the exercise of the liquidator`s power not only supplants the powers not only supplants the powers of the board of directors; it actually negates the capacity of the company to sustain capacity of the company of the company to sustains contractual capacity. He is authorized to make compromise with creditors which refers to employees based on the benefits under their contracts of employment.[34]

Corporate Insolvency in UK

The relevant legislation can be found in the:

1. Companies Act 2006
2. Insolvency Act 1986 (as amended)
3. Insolvency Rules 1986 (as amended)
4. The Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016

If the registrar has reason to believe that a company is not carrying on business or is not in operation, its name may be struck off the register and dissolved without going through liquidation.[35] A private company that is not trading may apply to the registrar to be struck off the register. This procedure is not an alternative to formal insolvency proceedings. Section 247 (1) of the Insolvency Act of UK 1986 defines it thus;

> In this Group of parts except in so far as the context otherwise requires, Insolvency in relation to a company include the approval of a voluntary arrangement under part 1, the making of an administration order or the appointment of an administrative receiver

Different Types of Insolvency Processes

Insolvency occurs when the employer is unable to pay its debts when they fall due or their liabilities exceed their assets. The most common forms of insolvency processes are:

Administration: this is traditionally a process to rescue the company as a ‘going’ concern.

Liquidation: this is hopeless - the company is closed and its assets are sold to pay its creditors. This is similar to Nigerian regime because has either voluntary or compulsory liquidation. A compulsory liquidation is done through the courts. There are 7 reasons stated in the section 122 of

[34] S 425 (1) e and (F), CAMA.
[35] Section 122 of insolvency Act 1986

insolvency Act. However, the most significant one inability to pay a creditors debt of more 750pounds after 3 weeks of demand.

Administrative receivership: initiated by single creditor (often a bank) and the company's assets are traded to pay this creditor.

Bankruptcy: this only applies to an individual, not to partnerships or limited companies. The rights of the employees will usually depend on the specific form of the insolvency regime and the consequences of company insolvency can vary. Here are just some of the most common consequences:

The employer makes the employee redundant. This usually occurs when the company enters liquidation which is similar to the Nigerian regime. An employee can apply to the National Insurance Fund for unpaid wages and other payments via the gov.uk website. Employees can also make a claim to the employment tribunal if they were dismissed unfairly ('basic award') or if there was not a consultation about their redundancy ('protective award'). This is highly commendable because not all employee will be able to consult a lawyer or an insolvency practitioner to know their rights. Employees who have reached retirement age are not entitled to redundancy payments.[36]

The employer asks the employee to continue working after entering an insolvency process. Should an employee continue working after a company enters an insolvency process, they will still be eligible to claim for redundancy pay if they are made redundant at a later date (subject to meeting the two years' service qualification as provided in section 155[37]. Section 135[38]of the Act gives an employee a right to compensation if his or her job becomes obsolete – provided he or she has worked under the employer for a specified duration to become an established employee. However, they will not be able to claim holiday pay, wages, bonuses or commission that they are owed between the day the company enters insolvency process and the day they were dismissed.[39]

[36] Employment Rights Act 1996,S156
[37] ibid
[38] Employment Right Act 1996, UK
[39] The official Gazeette `what are your employee rights when your company is insolvent?'file:///C:/Users/UATCSC-039/Downloads/Procedure%20For%20Voluntary%20Winding%20Up%20Of%20A%20Company%20In%20Nigeria%20-%20Corporate_Commercial%20Law%20-%20Nigeria.html > last accessed 20 January 2020

Employee Entittlement during in Insolvecy in UK

If the employer is in an insolvency process, the Government steps in to pay through the National Insurance Fund. All payments are exceeded £525 per week. An employee (but not the self-employed or agency workers) will be able to claim:

Wage arrears: up to 8 weeks' wages

Holiday pay: up to 6 weeks' holiday pay

Notice pays: an employee must be given the notice period stated in their contract or the statutory minimum notice period, whichever is longer.

Redundancy payments: these are calculated by the length of the employees' service, their salary and their age up to a maximum of 20 years' employment. Redundancy payments are calculated using the length of the service and the age of the employee. If the employee is under 21 years old, half a week's pay will be given for each year. If employee is between the age of 21 and 40, one week's pay will be given for each year. If the employee is over 40, one and a half week's pay will be given for each year.[40]

USA: The Insolvency Procedure

The US bankruptcy code provide for two main types of insolvency proceedings, chapters 7 and 11.

Chapter 7 Proceedings in The US;

While chapter 7 is a Trustee controlled liquidation. The goal of chapter 7 is to ensure that the most efficient method to distribute the assets to the creditors and the equity shareholders is used. The company cannot be reorganised under chapter 7. The liquidation procedure under chapter 7 is administered by a Trustee who is either appointed by the US Trustees or elected by some creditors. The chapter 7 Trustee is responsible for realising all the properties of the corporation and coordinating all the properties or proceeds of the sales of the properties to pay the creditors then any balance will be returned the company.

The Importance and Background of Chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code.

The chapter 11 of the US Bankruptcy Code is a precursor of modern corporate business which has impacted many economies globally. Hence, much discussion will be centred on chapter 11 in this paper. Insolvency laws have existed around the world for centuries. The US has long had its own

[40] www.gov.uk

bankruptcy laws[41] which, over the years, have sometimes been more creditor-friendly and sometimes more debtor-friendly. As a result of the enactment of the current Bankruptcy Code in 1978, US law now decidedly favours debtors by providing a unified and comprehensive treatment of business reorganization for financially distressed companies found primarily in "Chapter 11" of the Code. This is not to say that US law disfavours creditors, but rather that the emphasis is on giving the management of Chapter 11 the opportunity to reorganize the business, even under circumstances where secured creditors would rather foreclose on their collateral or where creditors overall would rather force a liquidation than spend time and money on attempting to reorganize a failing enterprise[42].

Thus, Chapter 11 reflects the primary policy of US bankruptcy law for corporate debtors: to preserve and protect an ailing business by encouraging a financial restructuring that is binding upon all parties[43]. Under Chapter 11, a distressed company has the opportunity to obtain a breathing spell from the demands of creditors, remain in business with existing management, reassess its business plan and negotiate (or seek to impose) a restructuring of its capital structure which binds all existing creditors and shareholders[44].

Notwithstanding the flexibility and support offered to a debtor, the Chapter 11 is not a panacea. It should be considered only as a last resort when the necessary parties are unable, unwilling or unavailable to reach an agreement outside of court proceedings or when, as in the case of In re Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc[45], there is nothing that can be done quickly enough outside of Chapter 11. Creditors have safeguards, remedies and strategies to maximize timely recoveries under Chapter 11, and to negotiate (or impose) a financial restructuring that is quite different from the desires of the debtor or its shareholders. Given the natural tensions between debtors and creditors, and the underlying policy of the Code in favour of financial rehabilitation, Chapter 11 and the bankruptcy courts have emerged as a significant forum for addressing nearly every major trend or catastrophe affecting the financial health and economic future of US businesses[46].

Purpose And Process of Chapter 11.

[41] *Note that, in the US, the term "bankruptcy" applies to all forms of court-supervised insolvency proceedings for legal and natural persons, whereas in most other countries "bankruptcy" refers just to liquidations and other terms (such as "administration)".*
[42] Bracewell and Giuliani ibid.
[43] Bracewell and Giuliani. *chapter 11 of the united states bankruptcy code: background and summary (2012)*
[44] Bracewell ibid
[45] Case no 08-13555(JMP) Feb, 22, (2011)
[46] Bracewell ibid

The general purpose of Chapter 11 is to provide a meaningful opportunity to preserve the debtor's business as a going concern by restructuring its debt and equity interests to better reflect the actual (and usually diminished) ability of the business to service debt, and retain or create equity value for shareholders. This is accomplished through the formulation and approval of a financial restructuring plan (***A "Plan***").

A Plan can provide for a number of changes, including changes in the amounts, interest rates or maturities of outstanding debts, reinstatement of favourable existing contracts notwithstanding defaults, satisfaction or modification of liens, rejection or assumption of contracts and leases, attraction of new credit with senior liens, amendment of the debtor's corporate charter, and issuance of new debt or equity securities for cash, property, existing securities, or in exchange for old debt or equity interests. As part of this process, existing creditors usually see their debt claims reduced or modified, and they often become shareholders of the reorganized entity as well.

In contrast to reorganizations under prior US law and in many other countries, existing management normally continues to operate the business during Chapter I 1 proceeding and is expected to negotiate with creditors and frame a Plan for reorganization of the business.

Further, to eliminate the delays and uncertainties inherent in the reorganization process under prior law, the Code is structured to foster a negotiating process that hopefully will lead to a consensual Plan. The Code retains, however, a mechanism for imposing a financial reorganization if a consensual Plan cannot be achieved, called "*CRAMDOWN*[47]." After giving weight to the relative rights and remedies of the parties under applicable state and bankruptcy law, the bankruptcy court can approve ("*CONFIRM*") a Plan that will be binding on all creditors and shareholders' even if they don't agree.

Filing of a Petition under Chapter 11 and its Effect

Voluntary Versus Involuntary Petitions

a**. Voluntary Petitions;**

[47] A cramdown is the imposition of a bankruptcy reorganization plan by a court despite any objections by certain class of creditors. A cramdown is often utilized as part of a chapter 13 bankruptcy filing and involves the debtor changing the terms of a contract with a creditor with the help of the court.

Chapter 11 case can be commenced on a voluntary or involuntary basis. The debtor commences a voluntary Chapter 11 case by filing a petition for relief with the clerk of a bankruptcy court. The filing of a voluntary Chapter 11 petition automatically constitutes entry of an "*order for relief*" opening the case[48].

b. **Involuntary Petitions**

As its name suggests, an "*involuntary*" case is commenced by an entity other than the company, usually creditors. Although most involuntary cases are commenced under Chapter 7 (seeking liquidation of the company), creditors may also commence an involuntary Chapter 11 case against a debtor[49]. Generally speaking, for most businesses three creditors with ***"****Bona Fide Unsecured Claims*" of at least $14,4253 in the aggregate are needed to file an involuntary petition against the company[50]. If the company contests the filing of an involuntary petition against it, the petitioning creditors are required to establish either that:

(1) the company "is generally not paying [its] debts as they become due," unless such debts are the subject of a "*Bona Fide Dispute*" (i.e., the company is in payment default on a substantial portion of its undisputed debts), or

(2) a non-bankruptcy trustee or receiver has taken charge of appointed under state law for the foreclosure of liens on virtually all of the company's property)[51]. If the debtor fails to timely contest the involuntary petition, or if the court decides that the statutory criteria have been met, the court will enter an "*Order for Relief*" and conduct the case like any voluntary Chapter 11.

Sections 327, 1103, and 1114 of the Bankruptcy Code authorize the employment of professionals in a chapter 11 case, and Bankruptcy Rule 2014 requires that a professional seeking employment under those sections file a verified statement of all connections with parties in interest. The retention and disclosure process is designed to ensure public confidence in the integrity and efficiency of the bankruptcy system by determining whether professionals can render undivided loyalty and untainted advice and by limiting the retention of professionals to those instances where the services are necessary. Absent complete, clear, and public disclosure of all connections, a court cannot determine whether a professional satisfies the rigorous statutory standard for employment.

[48] 11USC ss 301.
[49] 11 USC ss 303 (a)
[50] 11 USC ss303 (b) (1).
[51] 11 USC ss 303 (h)

Employee Entitlements in Types of Bankruptcy

The type of bankruptcy that the employer files is crucial to determining if the company will move on after the initial changes or whether the entire business will be liquidated. With a Chapter 7, the owner or partners of the business may have incurred so many debts that the only way to manage the concern is to liquidate everything including the laying off of all employees and workers. This also means that established relationships may be severed if the owner is unable to recover by creating a newer but smaller business. All customers would be cut off from the product or services, and new employees may be denied payment if there are not assets to transfer funds to their accounts. Employee Entitlements in Types of Bankruptcy

When the issue concerns a Chapter 11 bankruptcy, this means that the company could survive the issue. This is usually just a reorganization or a restructuring of the company to remove as many ruptures of income and profits as possible. If an entire department is not making any progress or cannot improve revenue, it may be cut with all persons losing their jobs. This may also mean that the newest workers are let go, but this may depend on other factors. Most of the excess debts are taken care of through this reorganization along with lower operating and transactional costs. The company may be utilizing the assistance of a lawyer to work through these concerns.

Possible Recourse

When the employee is affected by bankruptcy through a Chapter 7 filing, he or she is generally out of work due to this process. If the funds are not available for employees to be paid, it may not be possible to seek compensation unless the owner opens a new company after bankruptcy has been completed. It is important to seek the advice and options available through a business lawyer versed in bankruptcy claims. These legal professionals understand what this means and if there are any options open to the employee for viable compensation. Wage employees and others that have pensions or retirement plans in effect already are given a higher priority for payment.

The rights of the employee are different based on the bankruptcy chapter type. However, there are certain regulations in place that require the company to provide up to 60 days' notice of impending layoffs. Unfortunately, there are exceptions to this. Wages may still be available for those under pending Chapter 11 bankruptcy provided that the employee remains at work and keeps up with daily duties. If the individual is laid off, he or she becomes one of many that are owed money such as creditors, vendors and similar persons. This means there may be some time before any funds are received.

In December 2019, the U.S. Trustee Program issued guidance to its staff establishing principles to apply in reviewing the adequacy of disclosures by professionals seeking court approval for employment in chapter 11 bankruptcy cases and in determining whether to object. The crucial determination on the obligations of professionals who seek employment under sections 327, 1103, and 1114 and make disclosures under Rule 2014 exist only with the court.

This is unlike the insolvency practice in Nigeria where there are no definite rules guiding the appointment of a liquidation nor compelling him to disclose make disclosure in order to avoid conflict of interest.

Compensation of Trustee

U.S. Trustees also have an express statutory responsibility to review applications for professional compensation. In the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1994, Congress directed the U.S. Trustee Program to establish uniform guidelines for reviewing fee applications to provide consistency in the fee application preparation and review process. In 2013, the Program promulgated fee guidelines governing the review of applications for compensation filed by attorneys in larger chapter 11 cases.

Conclusion

However, there is no consensus as to how various and competing goals that underlie the insolvency system should be prioritized and served, nor is there a working standard to determine preferences among them. As a result, critical questions, such as how to judge if trade-offs between different goals are desirable or not, remain unresolved.

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COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON NIGERIA - CHINA ECONOMIC RELATIONS, 2019-2024

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Abstract

The outbreak and spread of Covid-19 put many countries on panic mood with each scrambling to contain the disease as well as provide support to its citizens. The consequence of these is that many nations to a large extent abandoned the humane component of international and diplomatic relations. The resultant consequence was the emergence of diplomatic tensions occasioned by trading of blames and scramble for medical and safety kits among countries. This study examines how Covid-19 pandemic affected Nigeria - China economic relations from 2019-2024. The complex interdependence theory was adopted. Information/data for the study were generated from both primary (interview) and secondary sources. Finding from the study shows that the pandemic has exposed the overreliance of Nigeria on Chinese goods to sustain its manufacturing sector. The decline of the global supply chain has adversely affected Nigerian traders as they are unable to access products from China, hence affecting the economic relationship of the two countries. This is so because China is the business hub of Nigeria businessmen, however, the lockdown in China affected a lot of businesses especially in Nigeria. The implication of the economic cost was that Nigeria's economy became stagnant and encountered no form of progress. As of policy, government should introduce economic reform to diversify the economy and reduce over dependence on revenue from crude oil export. There is also the need to build a resilient socio-economic-environmental pathway to fight similar possible pandemics, and make advance towards digital technology which helps to drive digital economy.

Keywords: COVID-19, Economic, Implications, Pandemic

Introduction

The outbreak of Corona virus pandemic popularly referred to as Covid-19 has significantly affected international relations and caused diplomatic tensions among countries resulting in a United Nations Security Council Resolution demanding a global ceasefire. International relations have been affected largely due to the tensions around trade and transport of medicines, diagnostic tests and hospital equipment for corona virus disease 2019 (Cable News Network, 2020). Similarly, Yuan (2020) and Watts (2020) noted that leaders of some countries have accused other countries of not containing the Corona virus disease effectively which resulted in the uncontrolled spread of the virus. Many of the developing countries struggled to cope with shortages of testing kits and personal protective equipment because developed countries are focusing on their citizens thus putting a strain in international relations between the global north and the developing south.

The COVID-19 universal pandemic has caused many African countries suffering from starvation and disease, limited economic funding, and under-resourced health systems (Matezo & Matondo, 2022). Within this situation, the negative treatment against African across the country specifically, from Nigeria, Mali, Kenya and Ghana has come to reinforce human right abuses which negate international rules of peaceful coexistence. Videos were released of racist abuse and xenophobic attack against Africans in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong Province in southern China, closely linked to Hong Kong and Macau, and has the largest African community in Asia. The discriminatory act started within the fear of the outbreak of the second wave of Covid19 and thought of the fear of importation of corona virus cases and a second wave of the pandemic in China, the local government implemented surveillance and mandatory testing and an additional 14-day quarantine for all African nationals in the city, regardless of whether they tested positive for COVID-19. These measures paid no regard to whether people had recently travelled out of China, or how they would be mistreated by landlords, hotel managers and shopkeepers.

The Sino-Nigeria trade has also increased as China's growing economy requires more raw material resources from Nigeria; including crude oil to propel its industries. China is also taking advantage of Nigeria's huge population to generate extraterritorial markets for China's manufactured goods. In 2001, Nigeria and China signed an agreement to set up the Nigeria Trade Office in China and the China Investment Development and Trade Promotion Centre there. Beginning with this, the two nations' economic links became stronger. Nigeria-China relations continued to deepen from 2003 to 2007 due to visits from Nigerian President Obasanjo, Chinese President Hu Jintao, and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao of China. Again, with the establishment of

the intergovernmental Nigeria-China Investment Forum in 2006, there has been an increase in the participation of Chinese businesses in Nigerian projects, particularly in industries like telecommunications, construction, transportation, and power. Additionally, there was a significant growth in the export of manufactured goods from China to Nigeria, and towards the end of 2008, Chinese investment in Nigeria was estimated to be around $6 billion (Izuchukwu & Ofori, 2024). In recent times, the Sino-Nigerian cooperation has intensified and increased. Even on resumption of office, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has received words of assurance from the Chinese President Xi Jinping who pledged increased economic cooperation of China and Nigeria which he stated in his words that "Nigeria is important to Africa and the world".

Over the years, China has been relating to Nigeria through trade, aid and investments while Nigeria has equally been exploring trading opportunities in China. The Sino-Nigeria relation also has its basis on the premise of exploring their economic comparative advantages for mutual benefits (Raji & Ogunrinu, 2022). The relations between China and Nigeria have transformed from the limited and intermittent contact that characterized the immediate post-independence era to an increasingly complex and all-round engagement (Ebede, 2023). While, like most other African countries in the 1960s and 70s, Nigeria viewed China as an unaligned developing country, it did little to foster business or even special diplomatic relations with the Asian giant. China's own economic and political challenges made it an unlikely development partner at that time. Following Deng Xiaopeng's reform policies of the 1970s and 80s, China's dramatic growth and modernization, and attendant industrial, energy, and market expansion needs, brought it into greater contact with Africa. Its new expanded presence offered a partnership seen by many stakeholders as an alternative model to Western relationships (Utomi, 2023).

However, the Covid-19 virus outbreak in 2019 put many people and businesses at risk. Millions of people lost jobs and money. The economic slowdown caused a major drop in commodity demand. Nigeria recorded its first covid-19 case, an Italian national on February 27, 2020. Since March 2020, boarders have been shut, lockdowns imposed, interstate travel banned, and offices, clubs and services considered to be non- essential closed. The public sector has also been affected and the low economic activities especially in the oil and gas industry, trade and manufacturing as well as services have significantly impacted down by more than N71 billion. Despite China's investments in Nigeria, the two nations have an imbalanced and lopsided relationship. As billions of US dollars flow through Nigeria's tin-tanks, causing issues with commerce, balances of payments, and national debt, among other things, China gains more in the long run than Nigeria.

Nigeria exported commodities of $1.77 billion to China in 2020, according to the United Nations' COMTRADE database (Nwokolobia & Ikenga, 2023). From the review of extant literature, it was observed that most writings on Nigeria - China relations focused on the nature and implications of bilateral trade on Nigeria economy. Like Adigbuo (2019), Chen (2020), Bukar and Arabaci (2023), they argued that the structure of trade between Nigeria and China reflects the difference in the level of development of the two partners as well as high degree of complementarities that exist between their economies. The authors did not adequately establish the linkage between COVID-19 pandemic implications and Nigeria and China economic relations from 2019-2024 which is a gap in knowledge which this study seeks to examine.

Research Questions

i. How has the nature of Covid-19 pandemic impacted on Nigeria - China economic relations?
ii. Has Covid-19 pandemic had serious implications on Nigeria – China economic relations?

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Nature of Covid-19 Pandemic and Nigeria - China Economic Relations

Imanche, et al., (2020) investigated the effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on the political and economic ties between China and Nigeria. A mixed methodology was used to perform analysis of recent and past trade relations between China and Nigeria. The study analyzed secondary data from UN COMTRADE on past trade relations with China. The consensus from recent literature shows that the Coronavirus pandemic has adversely affected economic and diplomatic relations between the two states. In particular, it has exposed Nigeria's over-reliance on importation from China. The outcome of the study shows that Nigeria trade relationship with China is booming. However, in the last decade, Nigeria has imported more foreign products from China than exportation. The study also outlined a necessary readjustment for trade balance to ensure an equal exporting opportunity to China to boost the Nigeria economy. The study by Imanche, Tian, Akintunde, Orelaja & Tasinda (2020) only focused on the effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on the political and economic ties between China and Nigeria and fail to look at the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria - China relations which is a gap in literature this study seeks to examine.

Ogah and Aliyu (2022) evaluated Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China. Dependency theory was used as theoretical framework. With the use of mixed research

design and both primary and secondary sources of generating data, findings from the study revealed that the outbreak of the novel corona virus has significantly altered the relationship between Nigeria and China. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had effects on the political and economic relations between China and Nigeria. The Pandemic has exposed the overreliance of Nigeria on Chinese goods to sustain its manufacturing sector. It was also discovered that the emergence and quick spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have shifted the focus and dynamics of the debates about global health to include the discrimination, stigma and political tension that characterized the nature of Covid-19 pandemic and the diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China. This shift has overshadowed many of the other controversies in the international sphere. The study strongly recommends that the ultimate aim is to ensure an improved Sino-Nigeria political and economic relationship after the Pandemic by rebuilding the doubted trust and discrimination. The study by Ogah and Aliyu (2022) is relevant to this study as it evaluates Covid-19 pandemic and Nigeria's diplomatic relations with China. However, its only limitation is in scope which stopped at 2022.

Covid-19 Pandemic Implication on Nigeria and China Economic Relations

Shittu and Ogunrinu (2019) studied Chinese investment and its implications for Nigeria's economic security. Several literatures on Chinese investments in Nigeria were reviewed to guide the study on the nature and dimension of the relationship. The study showed that Nigeria and China economic relations were established for mutual benefits but the economic relations favored China in trade and investments. This was made possible by the unequal exchange that made Nigeria rely on China for its manufactured goods and investments. The findings revealed that Chinese investments continued to expand in Nigeria with increased competition between local manufacturing industries in Nigeria.

The unequal relationship between Nigeria and China increased the dependency of the Nigerian economy on China. It recommended that Nigeria should export secondary products to increase its product value in China. The suggestion to add value to Nigeria's exports was necessary to boost Nigeria's crude oil and agricultural produce for better trade by both countries and others.

Marcel and Henry (2023) examined the implications of the Sino-Nigeria cooperation on Nigeria's economic security. Over the past few decades, China and Nigeria have strengthened their bilateral relations through various economic agreements and partnerships. As China's influence in Africa grows, the nature and extent of its involvement in Nigeria's economy have raised concerns about the potential impacts on Nigeria's economic security. The study explored the key areas of

collaboration between China and Nigeria, such as trade, investment, and aid. It assessed the implications of these partnerships, weighing their effects on Nigeria's economic independence and economic security. The study found that although bilateral cooperation with China increases Nigeria's economic security through increased investment, trade, and support for infrastructure development, there are multiple risks associated with this cooperation. This includes the potential debt issues and lack of transfer of technology. The paper however recommends that there is a need for Nigeria to prioritize the development and support of local industries to increase their competitiveness against Chinese imports. The study did not consider the implications of Covid-19 pandemic on Nigeria – China relations and this is a gap in knowledge which this study is look at.

Theoretical Framework

Based on the subject of investigation, the theoretical framework that used to explain the outcome of the study is the Complex interdependence theory. This was justified by the fact that both weak and strong economies have something to gain in economic relations, even though the dynamics of unequal exchange in the international division of labour cannot be ignored, the content of unequal exchange applied so long as China's economic strengths were revealed through its extraordinary capital and productivity over Nigeria.

The theory was put forward by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. The thesis of the theory is that states and their fortunes are inextricably tied together and that in, both weak and strong economies have something to gain in a relationship, no matter the proportion. According to the analysis, complex interdependence has the following characteristics:

i. The use of multiple channels of actions between societies in interstates, trans-governmental, and transnational relations.
ii. The absence of hierarchy of issues with changing agendas and linkages between issues prioritized.
iii. Bringing about a decline in the use of military and coercive power in relations among sovereign states.

The theory aids in dispelling widespread misconceptions and improper applications of the dependency theory to the study of international relations. No nation is naturally endowed with all the resources it needs to sustain itself, so nations must interact with one another in order to survive. This is why the theory is relevant in explaining the modern world, where no country can exist in isolation. This theory's main contribution is that it draws attention to the fact that

countries are extremely interdependent, to the point where no one country can completely make decisions for another. However, this does not change the reality that there will always be winners and losers in relationships. The theory thus acknowledges and demonstrates the reality of unequal gains from trade among two or more cooperating nations. Because neither of the two nations has complete control over their means of existence, trade relations between Nigeria and China are the result. Therefore, they must establish some sort of interdependence in order to share resources that are unevenly endowed by nature. Between the two nations, there are some complementarities.

This theory is therefore considered very germane to the study in the sense that it explains the relationship existing between China and Nigeria given the fact that the socio-economic and diplomatic activities existing between the two is such that both countries benefit from each other. It is true that in complex interdependence, the relationship between two countries may be symmetric or asymmetric depending on the level of development of the countries in question. In the case of Nigeria-Sino relations, the relationship is asymmetric because China is more developed scientifically. This does not portray an atmosphere of total dependence of Nigeria on China but shows that Nigeria benefits also. Although her benefits may not be as pronounced as that of China, given the aforementioned variables. Complex Interdependence Theory analyses relations between nations and points out the realities.

Methodology

The study adopted historical and descriptive research design. The design traced the history of Nigeria – China economic relations and described how these relations have been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. The target population for the study includes government officials both for Nigeria and China. Government officials were chosen in view of the fact that they are the driving force behind Nigeria-China relations policies. These are Government officials working in the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Nigerian Investment and Promotion Commission (NIPC), Chinese Embassy in Nigeria, China Chambers of Commerce in Nigeria (CCCN), Centre for China Studies, Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA), Trade Unit of the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Abuja and Nigeria-China Joint Venture Company (Rifeng).

Therefore, the target population of this study stand at one hundred and forty - six (146) persons of the units/departments in charge of the subject of investigation in the organization mentioned above. The justification for this cross section is that the institutions are central in providing useful

insight as it regards the subject matter. This work adopted both primary and secondary methods of data collection. In-depth Interview (IDI) was used for the purpose of this study. In determining the interviews, the purposive sampling was used to identify nine (9) 'information-rich' individuals. The data collected was analyzed through thematic and content analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

How the Nature of Covid-19 Pandemic impacted on Nigeria - China Economic Relations

> The coronavirus has brought about low level of export of goods and services from Nigeria to China and the import of goods and services from China to Nigeria. The international trade has suffered much making the two countries suffer trade lost because of global challenges such as several numbers of infected persons and death. The Nigeria government had lost from the export of petroleum products since there is less demand for petroleum products in china and other countries of the world. This is because there was lockdown of economic activities in Nigeria and China. There was no international airline operating in Nigeria. It is only the seaport that was allowed to transport goods across the border (food and beverage products in Nigeria. The Chinese government benefited from Nigeria because they are the producers of ventilators, face and surgical marks used in Nigeria. The government of Nigeria also demanded medical experts and exported medical personnel from china to Nigeria to solve the problem of the coronavirus (IDI/Abuja/Male/41/September/2025).

Going further, Onochie (2020) stressed on the attacks and discrimination of Nigerians in China. Citing Onunaiju (2020), asserts that the glaring cases of discrimination and assaults of Nigerians in China should not be dismissed. He however went further to state that the relationship between China - Nigeria was essential to be distracted by the exigencies and nuances of transitional rules in epidemic control. He however blamed such acts on the works of overzealous Chinese citizens who had no government consent to carry out such actions. In his conclusion, he reaffirmed the strong Nigeria-China bilateral relations which started since 1971 that has grown over the years,

which now stands at its best, even during the covid-19 pandemic. The Nigeria-China relations during the Covid-19 era became strained as a result of the treatment of Nigerians in China.

The Nigeria government however debunked this claim and blamed it on stubborn Nigerians who refused to get tested or take the vaccine. However, Nigerians debunked that assertion on social media. The publicity between the Nigeria China relations became negative that the minister for foreign affairs, Mr Onyema Ogochukwu had to travel to China in order to quell the situation (Onochie, 2020). The Covid-19 era also affected the business relationship between Nigeria and China. This is so because China is the business hub of Nigeria businessmen, however, the lockdown in China affected a lot of businesses especially in Nigeria. Infact, during my interaction with some Igbo spare parts dealers in Delta state, they complained as a result of their delayed goods due to the lockdown, coupled with hiked price in the products and commodities sent from China (Akintarinwa, 2020). However, the end of the lockdown and the opening of China's borders to guests have seen an increase in the relationship between China and other countries including Nigeria. However, a lot still has to be done with regards with the bilateral relations between Nigeria and China.

Table 1: China–Nigeria trade relations as at 2021.

Indicators	**China**	**Nigeria**
Exports value	$22.5 billion	$3.04 billion
Top product export	Women suit/Telephones ($1.5billion)	Petroleum gas ($1.42billion)
GDP	$18 trillion (2nd)	$489 billion (39th)
Economic Complexity Index (ECI)	25th	126th

Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity [OEC] (2024).

The Economic Complexity Index (ECI) as shown in Table 1 is a set of metrics used in ranking the diversity of a country's export in international trade, by placing high rankings for countries that export finished and manufactured goods above others that export mainly agricultural and primary products. From Table 1, it is clear that Nigeria's economic diversity ranking is very low compared to China's. The annual flooding ritual of Nigeria's market with Chinese goods to the utter

disadvantage of Nigeria is no surprise considering that Nigeria was the highest importer of Chinese goods in 2021, as imports from China reached an all-time high of $22.5billion in spite of Covid-19 shocks, with Nigerian export been $3.05billion. This shows that Nigeria dwells more on (or is conditioned to) exporting primary goods like crude oil to China, while she imports manufactured goods like women suit, synthetic filament yarn and telephones as shown in the table. This is a clear unequal exchange regime between the two countries with an excessive dependence of Nigeria economy on China without remediation from the Nigerian government to bridge the gap through diversification of its economy, encouragement of local production and creating enabling environment for small businesses to thrive.

Table 2: Top articles of trade between Nigeria and China as at December, 2023

Chinese export to Nigeria	Value	Nigeria's export to China	Value
Synthetic filament yarn material	$84.8million	Petroleum gas	$46.6million
Vehicles, parts & accessories	$49.2million	Other minerals	$25.1million
Telephones	$42.1million	Uranium and Thorium ore	$7.05million
Bathroom ceramics	$41.3million	Niobium, tantalum, Vanadium and zirconiumore	$7.03million
Electrical transformers	$40.1million	Refined copper	$4.05million
+$184.95million	$257.5million	-$184.95million	$90.55million

Source: Observatory of Economic Complexity [OEC] (2024).

Besides the export of refined copper in December, 2023 as seen from Table 2, the trade relations between Beijing and Abuja represents a clear reinforcement of the primary-finished goods dichotomy for both countries. Beyond this, the Chinese state equally had a super favourable balance of trade in December, 2023 worth $184.95 million, which invariably was a corresponding loss and an unfavourable balance of trade for Nigeria. In the case of political gain, especially for support of its One China Policy, the Chinese government has prevailed upon Nigeria to jettison support for Taipei and embrace Beijing fully.

With 1.39 million Coronavirus cases and 79, 382 deaths globally, the world continues to battle covid-19 Pandemic even before the outbreak, the outlook for world economy and especially

developing countries like Nigeria-was fragile, as global GDP growth was estimated to be only 2.5 percent in 2020. Before the pandemic the Nigerian government had been grappling with weak recovery from the 2014 oil price shock, with GDP growth tapering around 2.3 percent in 2019 in February, the IMF revised the 2020 GDP growth rate from 2.5 percent to 2 percent as a relatively low oil prices and limited fiscal rate. Relatedly, the country's debt profile has been a source of concern for policy makers and development practitioners as the most recent estimate puts the debt service to revenue ratio at 60 percent. These constraining factors aggravate the economic impact of the covid-19 outbreak and make it more difficult for the government to weather the crisis.

In Nigeria, efforts were made to bolster aggregate demand through increased government spending and tax cuts for business. The public budget increased from 8.83 trillion Naira ($24.53 billion) in 2019 to 10.59 trillion Naira ($29.42 billion) in 2020, representing 11 percent of the national GDP, while small businesses have been exempted from company income tax, and the tax rate for medium-sized business has been revised downwards from 30 to 20 percent unfortunately, Covid-19 crises is causing all components of aggregate demand, except for government purchases to fall (Onyekwena & Ekeruche, 2020).

> It is important to recognize that China has proven to be a valuable ally of Nigeria during the COVID-19 health crisis that has affected both countries. The West, itself totally destabilized by the health crisis and predicting the flood to Africa, had mobilized an aid fund of nearly 15 million Euros for vulnerable countries. This fund considered by the United Nations as the first COVID-19 response mechanism almost went unnoticed due to China's support in Africa's fight against COVID-19. In fact, China was able to be at the bedside of the continent by multiplying donations that could help Africa cope with the pandemic and, as a result, made its aid more noticeable than that of Westerners. For example, more than 8 million kits, including pallets of masks, protective suits, respirators and screening kits have been offered to African States (by China) demonstrating that in these times of global crisis, China seems to be a powerful, supportive and important player for Africa (IDI/Abuja/Male/40/September/2025).
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> However, in the first quarter of 2020, the relationship of China with its "African friends" had been tinted with socio-political tensions. As it placed itself first in line for supporting Africans in the struggle against the

> COVID-19 pandemic, China had not escaped allegations of racism: some Africans of Nigerian nationality had been tested positive for Coronavirus but escaped their quarantine. The effect of this situation has been considerable on the African community in Canton, who were victims of reprisals and all forms of discrimination and stigmatization, bordering xenophobia. These socio-political tensions, which had almost ousted China's diplomatic success, could affect the economic relations between the two actors and strongly harm their common interests (IDI/Abuja/Female/38/September/2025).

However, corroborating the above conflicting contentions, Le Monde, (2020) avers that given the recent events and actions taken by the Chinese people against African nationals, Sino-African diplomatic relations are put to the test and could in the long run be shaken. African nationals claim to have been discriminated against in China's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic. There were mass images of Africans evicted from their apartments, forced to sleep on the streets, unable to rent hotel rooms online. In addition, Black people have been prohibited from entering certain businesses, including a McDonald's restaurant in China (Le Parisien, 2020). All these discriminatory situations have affected the diplomatic relations between Beijing and Africa.

How Covid-19 Pandemic has serious implications on Nigeria – China Economic Relations

Not just Chinese expatriates, but also products made in, or imported from China became suspicious in the eyes of many Nigerians (Obiezu, 2020). In the Nigerian popular imaginary, the Chinese made products became viewed as a (potential) host carrier of the virus or at least as a potential vector of the virus propagation. This somewhat reinforced all the age-old stereotypes which depict Chinese products as being fake and not reliable. The development also contributed to tarnishing the image of the made in China label. The growing "sinophobia" in Nigeria prompted Chinese diplomatic missions in towns like Lagos and Kano to develop communication strategies to neutralise the stereotype and mitigate the stigmatisation of Chinese in Nigeria. A good illustration of such efforts is Chinese Consul Mike Zhang's meeting with the emir of Kano in January 2020 where he called on Kano dwellers to develop more friendly attitudes towards the Chinese community in the town, in view of cultivating a more conducive business climate for both Chinese and Nigerian businessmen (BBC News, 2020).

> Threat to China's image in Nigeria emanated paradoxically from China's COVID-19 aid to Nigeria, particularly its "Mask Diplomacy" which remained tinted by its surrounding policies, which have not always or entirely been seen in a good light by many Nigerians. For instance, in a bid to boost Nigeria's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government sent an 18-person medical team to Nigeria. Although, Nigeria clearly needed foreign assistance to mitigate the pandemic on its territory, the Chinese aid witnessed a massive Nigerian backlash as local politicians, medical officials, journalists and other social critics promptly pushed back against Chinese medical team, claiming that the aid was not necessary. Several commentators have observed that the massive rejection of Chinese aid in such a period of dire need of foreign assistance, was more a way of expressing anti-China sentiments. The aid happened shortly after incidents of alleged racist treatment of Nigerians in China. This racist treatment influenced Nigerian politicians, journalists and medical officials in their reception of China's "Mask Diplomacy" (IDI/Abuja/Female/38/September/2025).

Besides the maltreatment of the Nigerian Diaspora in China, reports of the inefficacy of Chinese medical assistance in some other parts of the world fueled Nigerians' hostility to the envoy. In effect, reports of faulty Chinese test kits and Personal Protective Elements (PPE) in several nations fueled doubts about the relevance of the Chinese aid (Gupta, 2020). A third reason for the massive backlash is also found in the fact that the Mask Diplomacy has, like many other forms of Chinese investments in the country, been perceived as having neo-colonial strings attached to it. Although the Chinese diplomacy has devoted many resources in popularising the narrative that China is exclusively driven by a "win-win" partnership with Nigeria, many Nigerians have continued to see China as an opportunist. Thus, growing debates about the underlying motives of China's aid in Nigeria as well as its perceived neo-colonial influence on the country have been analysed by commentators as some of the reasons justifying the massive hostility to China's "Mask Diplomacy".

> Nigeria - China relations in the covid-19 era raises controversial questions especially during the extended invitations of Chinese

> doctors to come to Nigeria to assist the anti-covid struggle because of its rating as the African country with the highest number of covid-19 infection. The Nigerian government requested for the assistance of the Chinese doctors in order to combat the virus, which they responded favourably as a result of the years of trade and interactions between these countries. The Nigerian people however had mixed feeling about the involvement of China in Nigeria, reason being that the pandemic originated from China (IDI/Abuja/Male/42/September/2025).

Prior to the pandemic, the Nigerian economy had been underperforming due to negative effects of insecurity, falling oil prices, border closure and low fiscal receipts. Consequently, gross domestic output declined as unemployment and inflation rate rose. The arrival of the pandemic in Nigeria exacerbated the prevailing economic condition as the GDP growth rate declined from 2.55% in 2019 Q4 to 1.87% and -6.1% in 2020Q1 and 2020Q2, respectively. The economy started to recover gradually from -3.62% in 2020Q3 to 0.11%, 0.51%, 5.01% and 4.03% in 2020 Q4, 2021Q1, 2021Q2 and 2021Q3, respectively. Food poverty and hunger had made evident by covid-19 induced socioeconomic hardship which affects a patient's quality of life and medical care. In Nigeria, even when there is food in the market none is on the table, thereby taking hunger to a crisis level and hence, socioeconomic hardship in our country. With the COVID-19 contagion, many Nigerians have become more financially poor, financially distressed, and so wallow in socioeconomic hardship as reported in a low HDI of 0.532 (Nwagbara, 2020)

2000-2022			
Country	**Signed commitments**	**Sectors with highest Commitment**	**Major lenders**
Angola	$45billion ($2bnavg.peryear)	Transport and energy	CHEXIM/CDB
Ethiopia	$14.1billion ($641milavg.peryr.)	Transport, energy & ICT	CHEXIM/CIDCA
Zambia	$9.1billion ($414mil.avg.peryr.)	Transport, energy, & ICT	CHEXIM/CIDCA
Kenya	$9.7billion ($441mil.avg.peryr.)	Transport and energy	CHEXIM
Nigeria	$8billion ($363milavg.peryr.)	Transport, ICT & energy	CHEXIM

Table 3: Top 5 Chinese signed loan agreements with African countries

Note: N.B: CHEXIM- China's export and import bank; CIDCA- China international development cooperation agency; CDB- China development bank. Information and communication technology (ICT)

Source: China Africa Research Initiative (2023).

This line of economic interests and relations through the BRI can be observed in Table 3 where the Chinese state major loan agreement went to the transport sector for the purpose of building roads, ports and rails to pave way for the evacuation of resources (especially oil, gas, tantalum, gold, rosewoods, pangolins, etc.) and market for Chinese goods emanating from its Sichuan, Zhejiang, Guandong, Shandong and Shanghai Provinces (Observatory of Economic Complexity [OEC], 2024). However, while the preponderance of transport ($49.1billion), energy ($59.9billion), and ICT ($13.9billion) (see Figure 4.1) loans are commendable showing an impressive and public needs oriented African agency, indicating a slight departure from the European colonial era when they were weakened as a result of their lack of independence.

Statistics provided by China Africa Research Initiative (2023) in Table 3 reveal that Nigeria is among the top 5 countries currently indebted to China to the tune of $8billion. What is more worrisome are terms of these loan agreements, being shrouded in secrecy, remains a subject of controversy. Gelpern, Horn, Morris, Parks, and Trebesch (2023) examined 100 Chinese loan contracts and found that these loans have conditionality of non-disclosure and sovereign immunity waiver clauses to the extent that upon default in the loan agreement, debtor States are not allowed to plead sovereign immunity if Beijing decides to acquire the national infrastructure the loans were tied to. When this becomes the case the sovereignty of the State is undermined. Sovereignty in its purest and traditional form, as dogmatically practised by the Chinese government and other great powers, frowns at any form of interference under any guise.

First, China's economy has a solid foundation. In 2019, China's GDP stood at $14.1 trillion, increasing by 6%. This growth rate is much higher than the world average. It is in fact the highest in the trillion dollar club. Over the years, China has been contributing about 30% of world economic growth. China is the world's largest trader of goods, bigger holders of foreign exchange reserves, the biggest tourism market, second largest destination for foreign investment and a major trading partner with over 130 countries. China is the only country in the world that has all the industries under the industrial classifications issued by the UN. China has the world's most

extensive high speed rail network, with the length of rail in operating reading 35,000 kilometers. That is more than two third of the world's total high-speed rails. Secondly, China has enormous potential for further development.

> The Chinese government has benefited from Nigeria because they are the producers of ventilators, face and surgical masks used in Nigeria. Nigerian government imported ventilators from China since the country cannot produce effective and modern medical equipment used in fighting the outbreak of the coronavirus. The government of Nigeria also demanded medical experts and exported medical personnel from China to Nigeria to solve the problem of the coronavirus. This is turn is gain to China while there is a loss for Nigeria. The Chinese government used this virus called corona to gain from Nigeria or other countries of the world. So, it is a benefit to China while it is lost to Nigeria (IDI/Abuja/Male/47/September/2025).

> Sino-Nigeria relations have recorded some unfair policies and practices meted out to Nigerians. These unfair treatments find expression in the areas of unfair visa policies, racism, and poor wages to Nigerians, etc. It is very hard for Nigerian business men to access visas to China. When these visas are finally gotten, the process of extension upon expiration is usually stressful. Quite worrisome is the fact that despite claims to friendly relations, the age-long view by critics that China does not keep to its promises recurs in its relations with Nigeria (IDI/Abuja/Male/49/September/2025).

Though China has provided quick responses, there are some major challenges that China would face in its post Covid-19 international relations with Nigeria in particular and other countries at large. These challenges are discussed below. First, as China has also faced the cascading effects of the COVID-19, her economy is still not sufficient to share the responsibility of other countries including Nigeria. Rise of the unemployment rate, shutting down of many factories and industries, and the fall of the GDP is the current scenario of the Chinese economic arena. Besides, the sharp drop in international investment and export orders hindered China's economic development (Watts, 2020).

Discussion of Findings

i. Finding from the study shows that the pandemic has exposed the overreliance of Nigeria on Chinese goods to sustain its manufacturing sector. The decline of the global supply chain has adversely affected Nigerian traders as they are unable to access products from China, hence affecting the economic relationship of the two countries. This is so because China is the business hub of Nigeria businessmen, however, the lockdown in China affected a lot of businesses especially in Nigeria. The implication of the economic cost was that Nigeria's economy became stagnant and encountered no form of progress. In addition, economic activities were halted and this resulted in poverty, hunger and the quest for survival as the economy sank deeper, a development which led to social vices like robbery, theft and looting of stores belonging to marketers.

Bello & Gidigbi (2021) attempted to investigate the effect of trade on economic growth in Nigeria during the pandemic. The authors reviewed the trends in trade (Import and Exports), economic growth and other economic variables, without parametric analysis and concluded that the pandemic has negative impact on trade and economic growth. According to the World Bank (2021), Nigeria saw a decline of 1.8% in its real gross domestic product (GDP) in the year 2020. This data highlights the significant impact that the COVID-19 epidemic had on the country's economic performance. Sariakin et al. (2023) added that the implementation of lockdown measures, the imposition of travel restrictions, and disruptions in global supply networks as a result of the pandemic impeded the manufacturing sector and led to a decline in consumer demand, and resulted in a fall in overall economic activity. The theory of complex interdependence thus acknowledges and demonstrates the reality of unequal gains from trade among two or more cooperating nations. Because neither of the two nations has complete control over their means of existence, trade relations between Nigeria and China are the result.

ii. The study reveals that coronavirus has brought about low level of export of goods and services from Nigeria to China and the import of goods and services from China to Nigeria. The international trade has suffered much making the two countries suffer trade lost because of global challenges such as several numbers of infected persons and death. The Chinese government has benefited from Nigeria because they are the producers of ventilators, face and surgical marks used in Nigeria. Idris & Oruonye (2020) used analytical approach to investigate the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic in Nigeria.

The paper found that practically, the Covid-19 pandemic affected all aspects of economic activities. They advised government to broaden their revenue base and guard against future financial turbulence.

Conclusion

This study established how Covid-19 pandemic affected Nigeria - China economic relations from 2019-2024. The economic relation between china and Nigeria dates decades back and it has never been a balanced economic interest because China's has economic might not just in Nigeria but the world at large. Though China has its own peculiar interest in Nigeria, Nigeria also has benefited immensely from China through loans and other benefits. The coming of COVID-19 has change the economic strength of both countries there by making room for new policies to be adopted and implemented. The complex interdependence theory is relevant in explaining the modern world, where no country can exist in isolation. This theory's main contribution is that it draws attention to the fact that countries are extremely interdependent, to the point where no one country can completely make decisions for another.

The coronavirus has brought about a decrease in the export of goods and services from Nigeria to China and the import of goods and services from China to Nigeria. The international trade has suffered much making the two countries suffer trade lost because of global challenges such as several numbers of infected persons and death. The Nigerian government had lost from the export of petroleum products since there is less demand for petroleum products in China and other countries of the world. This is because there is a lockdown of economic activities in Nigeria and China. There is no international airline operating in Nigeria. It is only the seaport that is allowed to transport goods across the border (food and beverage products) to Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were suggested;

i. As of policy, government should introduce economic reform to diversify the economy and reduce over dependence on revenue from crude oil export. There is also the need to build a resilient socio-economic-environmental pathway to fight similar possible pandemics, and make advance towards digital technology which helps to drive digital economy.

ii. As noticed in Nigeria, her weak institutions could not adequately and effectively respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic as such, government should invest in health care infrastructure to improve on health facilities and the ability of the national health system to withstand the outbreak of contagious diseases. Government should make free health care a national policy as it is quite vital for tackling pandemics.

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ROLE OF KANO STATE CONTRIBUTORY HEALTHCARE PROGRAMME IN HEALTHCARE ACCESS AMONG RURAL WOMEN, 2017-2025

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Abstract

States health insurance schemes are becoming increasingly recognised as an instrument for financing healthcare in Nigeria. Taking the example of Kano State contributory health insurance scheme in Nigeria, this study investigated the role of Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in healthcare access amongst rural women, 2017-2025. The institutional theory was used as theoretical framework for the study. Primary and secondary methods of data collection were utilized; primary data was collected using structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The study reveals that provision of quality, affordable and accessible health services, free maternity service programme, lifesaving skills training for providers, strengthening of family planning programme and provision of modern equipment in health facilities are the roles played by Kano State contributory healthcare programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women. However, high poverty undermines rural women's productivity and lowers their purchasing power, thereby denying them access to quality education, health care, and basic needs. Health services in the State are more concentrated in the urban areas as opposed to the rural areas where most of the health problems exist. The study recommended that the Kano state contributory healthcare management agency need to involve private run Health Management Officers (HMOs) in their operations rather than managing it themselves to ensures efficiency and proper implementations of standard policies and procedures of the scheme. This will improve the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women.

Keywords: Contributory, Healthcare, Implementation, Kano, Rural, Women.

Introduction

The link between health and human behaviour is a major concern and hence an area of interest in public health. Globally, there are about 1.3 billion people without access to adequate health care because of weak health care financing systems (Abubakar & Saleh, 2021). Within African countries, the burden of dysfunctional health systems is felt by the poorest households in rural areas. Their access and use of services, such as immunizations and attended deliveries, tend to be half of those richer households. They have limited recourse to purchase quality services from private providers. Their enrollment in health insurance tends to be marginal. And they are unable to shield themselves from catastrophic health expenditures by drawing on accumulated wealth. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for 56% of the world's extreme poor (Obikeze & Onwujekwe, 2020).

Improving a mother's health in a family is both a means and an end because a population with bad health would produce less labor and resources, which would have an impact on productivity. Therefore, when assessing the level of health and happiness among household members, a woman is crucial. From past literature, inadequate use of maternal healthcare facilities leads to maternal mortality or morbidity, and maternal health, and a mother's well-being are intricately linked (Adejoorin, et al., 2024). So many factors contribute to a mother's level of well-being within the household, some of which include level of autonomy, health and nutrition, housing and sanitation, level of education, and a mother's employment status. All these factors directly or indirectly influence a mother's use of maternal healthcare facilities especially in rural areas.

The Nigerian healthcare industry is facing challenges associated with outbound medical tourism, deteriorating medical infrastructure, low government budget allocation, and poor compensation and subsequent emigration of skilled healthcare workers. Nigeria has one of the fastest growing populations globally with 5.5 live births per woman and a population growth rate of 3.2% annually. It is estimated to reach 400 million people by 2050, becoming the world's third most populous country. However, in Nigeria, the growing effort by government to provide effective ways of accessing quality and affordable healthcare coverage to attain universal health coverage has been contentious. The cost of health care delivery in Nigeria is high and this poses a serious challenge to the country's health care delivery system. The inefficient management of the health care funds overtime was observed as key contributor to the rising cost of healthcare services (Abubakar & Saleh, 2021).

In Kano State, rural women face difficulty in reporting health issues, affording and accessing health services probably due to the cultural influence, high moral and religious influence and availability of traditional care and healers operating under highly receptive and friendly manner. In addition to this, economic hardship facing the country, non-availability of health facilities and qualified personnel probably contributed to making many females in Kano Metropolis to shift their health care preference to traditional healers and fortune tellers as alternative to orthodox treatment. Like in many other states of the Federation, poverty is high in Kano State with 61% of the population living below the poverty line. Life expectancy is 51 years for males and 52.2 years for women. Only 37.6% of the population had access to running water (KSEEDS, 2025).

Between May to June 2024, Nigeria Health Watch conducted a community-based perception survey in Kano State to assess communities' perception of the accessibility and quality of primary health care available to them. Some of the key findings highlighted a significant shortage of human resources to enable Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) to function optimally. The survey also revealed disparities in healthcare access, with rural areas such as Ghari (Kunchi) and Kura wards facing limited access to healthcare services compared to urban areas. Additionally, since 2018, the state has consistently met the Abuja Declaration, allocating at least 15% of its budget to health. However, challenges persist, which include limited coverage of services and insufficient human resources. Therefore, this study seeks to fill the gap in literature by examining the role of Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in Healthcare Access Amongst Rural Women, 2017-2025.

Research Questions

The research is guided by the following questions:

i. What are the health service deliveries challenges facing rural women in Kano State?
ii. What are the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women?

Empirical Review of Related Literature

Roles played by Contributory Healthcare Programme in Ensuring Access to Healthcare among Rural Women

Ishaq (2023) re-examined the impact of state health insurance scheme on access and utilization of healthcare: An empirical examination of Kano State Contributory Health Insurance Scheme. The

study examined its impact on access and utilization of healthcare among the insured employees using two-part model and a binary logit model. Regarding the impact on the access to healthcare, the study noted that as of the time of conducting the research some employees were yet to register for the scheme even though the their contribution is being deducted monthly, those that are enroll provides a spectacular insight on access and utilizations within the metropolis, that empirical evidences from the research suggest that level of education, physical health condition, family size, level of income of the respondent, marital status, distance to the hospital, type of health facility as well as severity of sickness are increasing function of healthcare utilization.

The study established that although these socio economic and demographic variables are not easily influence by policy makers but they can be integrated alongside other health related variables and supply side intervention to poster access and utilization of healthcare not only among the insured but in the entire state because it's expected when the participating facilities are upgraded there will be an improvement in public health. The study only focused on the impact of state health insurance scheme on access and utilization of healthcare; therefore, a variation of research methods is necessary to generate new insights for understanding the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women.

Consequently, Yusuf, et al. , (2023) wrote on the assessment of the impact of Health Maintenance Organizations on Access, Utilization and Quality of Service among National Health Insurance Authority Enrollees in Kano, Kano State Nigeria. Quantitative and qualitative methods using interviewer administered questionnaire and Key stakeholders' interview were employed. Results from the general quantitative study (i.e., Data of all enrollees analyzed together) both agreed that, there was some level of improvement on the three key research domains as regards knowledge, utilization and satisfaction with respect to the roles of HMOs/contributory health care management agency in the state. However, analysis carried out separately with the three categories of health facilities (federal, state and private run hospitals) revealed that, enrollees in state-run hospitals managed by the State health contributory agency were mostly affected in terms of meeting their health care needs under the state healthcare insurance scheme.

Findings revealed that HMO accredited hospitals have not ensured adequate access of enrollees to healthcare services, their responsiveness to enrollees' healthcare requests have not been impressive, and quality of healthcare services to enrollees have also not been excellent. However, the study assessed the impact of HMOs on access and quality of service on enrollees under the

national health insurance scheme in Kano state, Nigeria. Thus, the study amongst other things assessed level of knowledge, utilization and satisfaction of enrolee of HMOs and contributory healthcare management agency as regards the national healthcare in selected health facilities in Kano State and explored strategies HMOs used to improve operational efficiencies in order to provide quality care services for enrollees whose health care they managed. There is a need for in-depth research about the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women.

Theoretical Framework

DiMaggio and Walter (1983) were the proponents of institutional theory. Meyer and Rowan (1964) examined the growth of three administrative services in California public schools (school health, psychology, and curriculum) from the standpoint of institutional theory. They found that when there is a high level of consensus and cooperation within the institutional environment, diffusion of innovative structures is steady and long-lasting. However, when the institutional environment is contentious and unfocused, adoption of innovative structures is slow and tentative.

According to Gumede (2018,.p 11) public sector institutions are integral to the public policy making process. Inherently, they influence public policies and their implementation. Fox, bayat and Ferreira (2016) claim that the Institutional theory is premised on the basis that public policy is the product of public institutions, whose structures are responsible for public policy implementation. This, therefore, highlights the dependency factor of public policy to Institutional model.

It can be further deduced that institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, have an impact on a public policy process. In that regard, the Institutional model remains a pinnacle for the implementation of public policy. Institutionalist claims that, policy is a product, authoritatively determined, implemented and evaluated by government institutions: Legislature, presidency, elective officials and the bureaucracies both at local and national level. It is further explained that, a policy does not become a public policy until it is legitimized by government entity concerned. Government policies provide legal powers that demand obligations from and command loyalty of its subjects. The structure of various government institutions contributes to the context of public policy implementation. The Constitution serves as the highest kind of policy to which all other policies must subscribe. Laws passed by legislature, executive orders and judicial decisions come second in terms of relevance and priority.

Public Programme like the Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme is determined by government institutions, which give its legitimacy. The Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme is authoritatively established to implement the aspect of National Health Policy in Kano State. Considers policy as an institutional output (Institutions refers to government institutions). Government institutions have long been a central focus in the determination of public goods. The relationship between public policy implementation and government institution is close, because, a public policy cannot become a public policy until it is opted, implemented and enforced by some government institutions. National Health Insurance Scheme as an institution is to ensure implementation of Social Health Insurance programmes intended to cover the entire Nigerians for the provision of access, qualitative and affordable health services.

Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design in generating data to answer the research questions as well as validate the propositions. Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used. The population of the study comprised of all residents of the nine (9) purposively selected local government areas in Kano State. These local government areas are; Gaya, Rano and Sumaila from Kano South Senatorial Zone; Kano Municipal, Nasarawa and Dawakin Kudu from Kano Central Senatorial Zone; Bichi, Dambatta and Gwarzo from Kano North Senatorial Zone. The justification for choosing these local government areas is that the people of the area are mainly farmers with low level of income and poor infrastructure.

The total population of the nine (9) purposively selected local government areas in Kano State base on the National Population Commission of Nigeria and National Bureau of Statistics 2022 projection in Nigeria stood at 4,065,100. The population also includes officials of Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme, Kano State Ministry of Health, Primary Health Care Development, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, as well as other officials of Kano State government whose respective roles might provide useful insight into the subject matter. The estimated population is 4,065,100 from which the sample size of 384 was drawn based on Krejcie & Morgan (1970) method of determining sample size.

The research drew upon both primary and secondary data. For the purpose of the research, questionnaire and in-depth interview method were used as the primary instruments of data collection. The study used both simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Simple random technique for the administration of questionnaire and purposive sampling for selection of respondents for interview. The data collected in this study were presented and analyzed using

qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative method that was employed is the descriptive statistics containing simple percentage, frequency and figure. For the qualitative method of data analysis, the research employed content analysis in ways that allows the researcher to see patterns, identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques or generate theories.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Three hundred and eighty – four (384) copies of questionnaire were administered to households in Gaya, Rano and Sumaila from Kano South Senatorial Zone; Kano Municipal, Nasarawa and Dawakin Kudu from Kano Central Senatorial Zone; Bichi, Dambatta and Gwarzo from Kano North Senatorial Zone.

However, three hundred and seventy (370) copies of questionnaire were duly completed and retrieved. Fourteen (14) copies of questionnaire were not retrieved and all efforts to retrieve them proved abortive as some literate respondents insisted to fill the questionnaire themselves and were not easy to manage. Therefore, the presentation and analysis was done based on the 370 retrieved copies of questionnaire. Interviews were equally held with members of the public. The interview results were supplemented with information from the extant literature, including newspapers, reports, and official documents.

Table 1: Responses on the health service deliveries challenges facing rural women in Kano State

Responses	**Frequency**	**%**
1. Lack of access and affordability	103	28
2. Time spent to see a doctor/health care giver	93	25
3. Low quality products and exclusion of some drugs	101	25
4. Poor staff attitude	73	22
Total	**370**	**100**

Source: Field Work, September (2025).

Table 1 above shows that 28% of the respondents expressed that lack of access and affordability are the health service deliveries challenges facing rural women in Kano State, 25% reported low-quality drugs and the and exclusion of some drugs under the scheme. Another 25% of the respondents indicated time spent to see a doctor/health care giver as the health service deliveries challenge facing rural women in Kano State while 22% indicated poor staff attitude. The high

level of dissatisfaction and problem with the services may be attributed to systemic failure of the health system. This is further supported by information supplied through interview and from secondary sources as follow:

> The free maternity care increased workload for all the staff of the maternity units. However, there has not been a matching increase in their remuneration. Therefore, attitude of health care workers is poor, morale is low and hence quality of services provided is also poor. The state government has taken a bold step in addressing poor staff remuneration (KII/Female/38/Kano/September/2025).

This made Yusuf, et al. , (2023) to earlier report that the Nigerian healthcare industry is facing challenges associated with outbound medical tourism, deteriorating medical infrastructure, low government budget allocation, and poor compensation and subsequent emigration of skilled healthcare workers. Nigeria has one of the fastest growing populations globally with 5.5 live births per woman and a population growth rate of 3.2% annually. It is estimated to reach 400 million people by 2050, becoming the world's third most populous country. The federal government allocated 5% of its budget to health in 2021, compared to the 15% it pledged as part of the 2001 Abuja Declaration.

> Frankly speaking, health care services is very poor, the health personnel need to be motivated so that they can improve their services. The premium needs to be increase, so that modern equipments such as laboratory machine can be purchased and genuine being stocked (KII/Female/31/Kano/September/2025).

However, Ishaq and Aminu (2025) notes that in Nigeria, the growing effort by government to provide effective ways of accessing quality and affordable healthcare coverage to attain universal health coverage has been contentious. The cost of health care delivery in Nigeria is high and this poses a serious challenge to the country's health care delivery system. The inefficient management of the health care funds overtime was observed as key contributor to the rising cost of healthcare services. About 3.9 percent of Nigeria's GDP is invested in the health sector, considerably below the average spending on healthcare among OECD countries. In 2019, on average, health care made up six percent of Nigerian household spending, with higher figures in rural areas than in urban zones. Also, on average, about 4% of households are estimated to spend

more than half of their total household expenditures on health care and 12% of them are estimated to spend more than a quarter expenditure.

> At the heart of every health system is the workforce, which is central to advancing health. There is an increasing inadequacy of supply of doctors, nurses/midwives, laboratory scientist, dentist, pharmacists, radiographers and beds for patients that need hospitalization, among other problems. This situation is being worsened by the fact that majority of the health personnel prefer to work in the urban areas because of the presence of superior social and health facilities including nature of roads. Most private hospitals would rather prefer to establish in urban centers because of the concentration of people with the earning capacity to pay for private medical services. The health manpower situation is also being worsened in the state by the fact that institutions for education and training of some of these categories of staff are not available in the state (KII/Female/33/Kano/September/2025).

Adebowale (2024) submits that the Nigerian health system has been chronically underfunded since independence. The health system competes with other social service systems like power, education, transportation, security, the environment and servicing of external debts. Public financing of healthcare in Nigeria has faced several challenges including lack of political will, corruption, poor institutional capacity, lack of data on health status and utilization. Other challenges include unstable political and economic climates. Undoubtedly, the future of all societies is dependent on the healthy wellbeing of its people, as such; no country could attain sustainable socio-economic development without a comprehensive, efficient and affordable healthcare system for its people.

The above analysis shows that despite its strategic importance on the wellbeing of the people, achieving access to adequate healthcare for all has always remain a daunting challenge for governments of developing countries. The challenge of establishing a sustainable and efficient healthcare model is one almost all nations have had to encounter as they develop and the fact that the world's developed nations can boast of an efficient healthcare delivery system is not unconnected with efforts by such countries to adopt various best practices in terms of healthcare delivery, globally. With the government lacking the funds to implement its health sector plans, the

private sector is emerging as the indispensable player to improve Nigeria's healthcare capacities. The federal and state governments are using the public-private partnership (PPP) model to attract private sector participation in health projects. Most private clinics cannot afford new equipment and therefore employ used equipment and most Nigerian hospitals still store patient records manually using traditional paper methods.

> In spite of Kano State government laudable health policy objectives, the health services have been unsatisfactory. Funding has consistently fallen below WHO recommended minimum of 15% of annual budget. This has resulted to dearth of adequate and accessible health services, decaying infrastructure, chronic drug shortage, poor quality services, poor staff attitude, and official bureaucracy. Furthermore, government spending on health, recurrent and capital expenditure is a subject of worry. This is because more total government expenditure went to recurrent items which were mainly for personnel costs, with little left for tools and materials. If this trend continues, the Kano State government may not meet the target of reducing maternal mortality (KII/Male/42/Kano/September/June/2025).

Table 2: Responses on the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	U	Total
Provision of quality, affordable and accessible health services	101 (27%)	105 (28%)	84 (23%)	66 (18%)	14 (14%)	370 (100%)
Free Maternity Service	89 (24%)	171 (46%)	45 (12%)	31 (8%)	34 (10%)	370 (100%)
Life Saving Skills Training for Providers	126 (34%)	118 (32%)	61 (16%)	59 (16%)	6 (2%)	370 (100%)
Strengthening of Family Planning Programme	115 (31%)	128 (34%)	69 (19%)	51 (14%)	7 (2%)	370 (100%)
Provision of modern Equipment in Health Facilities	91 (24%)	108 (29%)	74 (20%)	89 (24%)	8 (3%)	370 (100%)

Source: Field Work, September 2025.

Table 2 shows the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women. The result revealed that greater percentage of the respondents agreed that provision of quality, affordable and accessible health services, free maternity service programme, lifesaving skills training for providers, strengthening of family planning programme and provision of modern equipment in health facilities are the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women.

The overall development goal of Kano state, based on relevant policy documents, is to strive to reduce poverty and improve the wellbeing of its population through the provision of quality, affordable and accessible health services; while its health policy objective is to reduce maternal and childhood morbidity/ mortality by improving access to, availability, demand for, and use of appropriate maternal and childhood care. To achieve these lofty objectives, the government has undertaken a number of development projects aimed at improving health care delivery in the state. Some of the key interventions in the health sector include: the establishment of the Kano State Contributory Health Scheme; the employment of over 2500 health workers to improve healthcare service delivery in the state; building of eleven PHC Centers in collaboration with Dangote Foundation; renovation of thirteen PHC Centers in collaboration with MNCH2 of the UK Department for International Development (DFID); Adoption of "no embargo on employment of critical staff for health sector" policy institutionalized by the state (KSEEDS, 2025).

Under this policy, over 3000 critical healthcare staff were employed by the state. In addition, 96 MSS/Sure-P midwives and CHEWs were employed for PHCMB in December, 2016; adequate legislative provisions addressing the supply of drugs and medical consumables. Under this, was the expansion of Drug Revolving Fund (DRF) programme for the state where drugs worth more than N6,000,000 were distributed to 44 health facilities in the 44 Local Government Areas to make quality drug available and accessible at an affordable price and to reduce the circulation of fake drugs (KSEEDS, 2025).

> Until recently, efforts by the State Government and partners to promote health care financing through predictable sourcing, pooling and risk sharing have been met by religious and socio-cultural beliefs that frown at the concept of insurance. However, a ray of hope was rekindled when the Nigeria Maternal, Newborn and Child

> Health programme in Northern Nigeria (MNCH) in collaboration with the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and other partners supported the government to engage a wide range of stakeholders including legislators, labour unions, religious and traditional leaders through roundtable discussions, sensitisations and advocacy. These engagements culminated in religious leaders' concurrence and admission that the concept of the scheme is nothing but a system of helping one another, which is a cardinal principle of Islam. Thus, 'contributory' replaced 'insurance' and the Kano State Contributory Healthcare Scheme, recipient of mass appeal and acceptance, was born (KII/female/34/Kano/September/June/2025).

In addition, there was the supply of drugs worth over N270,000,000 in collaboration with MNCH2 for free distribution to pregnant women in the state. Under the same scheme, there was the supply of anti-malaria drugs (ACTs and SPs), Rapid diagnostic Test Kit, Insecticide treated bed nets, bulbs and other consumables and data tools for free distribution to 748 Health facilities in the state, in collaboration with National Malaria Elimination Program (NMEP) for malaria control and prevention worth over N234, 000,000. This is in addition to the launching of distribution of equipment and consumables worth over N300, 000,000 to 131 Health Facilities in the state in collaboration with PATHS and MNCH2 (KSEEDS, 2025).

In terms of policy initiatives, the Kano State government also took the following critical steps towards improving healthcare delivery in the state: the development of a long-term strategic health plan (SHDP II), 2017 -2022. At the primary health care level, the state also embarked on a policy implementation drive, using the concept of Primary Health Care Under One Roof (PHCUROR). This suggests that the administration, management, monitoring and evaluation of primary health care would be centralized under an agency - Kano State Primary Health Care Board. The Sector has developed its Medium Annual Operational Plans for 2018 which is aligned to the strategic plan, thus guaranteeing that proposed interventions are clearly linked to health needs of Kano people taking cognizance of the vulnerable and the under -served groups. Towards the improvement of accountability in the health sector, a Service Charter (Servicom) was developed for Ministry of Health, Health Management Board and State Primary Healthcare Management Board and Free Maternal Child Health Services (KSEEDS, 2025).

> As part of efforts geared towards reducing infant mortality rate, the state government also embarked on pursuing the following programmes: Improvement of Antenatal Clinic Services at PHC Level; Improvement of Immunization Services for all 6 – killer diseases; Community Health Education for mothers and fathers; Embarking on breastfeeding education; Raising awareness of traditional and religious Leaders; Implementation of Ward Level PHC Management and Provision of essential drugs and consumables. As regards reducing Child Mortality Rate, the following programmes were also embarked upon: Improving on School Health Services; Intensifying Health Education; Embarking on Mass De-worming Programmes; Provision of support for Sufferers from Sickle Cell Diseases; Prevention and treatment of Communicable Diseases; and Provision of essential drugs and Booster Doses (KII/female/32/Kano/September/June/2025).

To further leverage the government's leadership role towards creating the much-desired enabling policy and legislative environment to sustain the delivery of quality health services, the Kano State government established the Kano State Drugs and Medical Consumables Supply Agency Law, Kano State Primary Health Care Management Board Law, Kano State Healthcare Trust Fund Law and State Action Committee on AIDS (SACA) Law. There have also been steps to regulate private health facilities, especially the proliferation and activities of unregistered practitioners in the state, which is another big constraint in the health sector. The institutional arrangement for the involvement of civil society in the policy process of governance is still weak but growing. Also, efforts supported by development partners are ongoing to establish platforms for the engagement of civil society in the policy process of government. With particular reference to Maternal, Newborn and Child Healthcare interventions, the Kano State Government has intervene in the following areas: Free Maternity Service Programme; Life Saving Skills Training for Providers; Training of Traditional Birth Attendants; Establishing New Schools of Midwifery; Increasing Enrolment at School of Midwifery; Distributing Basic Midwifery Kit; Community Emergency Transport Scheme; Community Health Education; Strengthening of Family Planning Programme; Provision of modern Equipment in Health Facilities; Improvement of health infrastructure in the state and Establishing and strengthening of Ante and Post-Natal Services (KII/female/32/Kano/September/June/2025).

Table 3: The roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme have not been effective in ensuring affordability and access to healthcare amongst rural women.

Responses	Frequency	%
1. Strongly Agree	138	37
2. Agree	149	40
3. Disagree	27	7
4. Strongly Disagree	36	10
5. Undecided	20	6
Total	**370**	**100**

Source: Field Work, September (2025).

Table 3 seeks to understand whether roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme have not been effective in ensuring affordability and access to healthcare amongst rural women. The study found that 138 (37%) respondents strongly believe that roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme have not been effective in ensuring affordability and access to healthcare amongst rural women, 149 (40%) respondents agreed. 27 (7%) respondents disagreed, 36 (10%) strongly disagreed while 20 (6%) were undecided.

> High poverty undermines rural women's productivity and lowers their purchasing power, thereby denying them access to quality education, health care, and basic needs. Health services in the State are more concentrated in the urban areas as opposed to the rural areas where most of the health problems exist (KII/female/45/Kano/September/June/2025).

This made Yusuf, Mukhtar and Luximon-Ramma (2023) to earlier report that the Nigerian healthcare industry is facing challenges associated with outbound medical tourism, deteriorating medical infrastructure, low government budget allocation, and poor compensation and subsequent emigration of skilled healthcare workers. Nigeria has one of the fastest growing populations globally with 5.5 live births per woman and a population growth rate of 3.2% annually. It is estimated to reach 400 million people by 2050, becoming the world's third most populous

country. The federal government allocated 5% of its budget to health in 2021, compared to the 15% it pledged as part of the 2001 Abuja Declaration.

Discussion of Findings

i. The study reveals in table 1 that 28% of the respondents expressed that lack of access and affordability as the health service deliveries challenges facing rural women in Kano State, 25% reported low-quality drugs and the and exclusion of some drugs under the scheme. Another 25% of the respondents indicated time spent to see a doctor/health care giver as the health service deliveries challenge facing rural women in Kano State while 22% indicated poor staff attitude. This is in tandem with the submission made by Ishaq (2023), that the leading barrier to healthcare for Nigerian women and children is getting money for treatment. Like in many other states of the Federation, poverty is high in Kano State with 61% of the population living below the poverty line. Life expectancy is 51 years for males and 52.2 years for women. Only 37.6% of the population had access to running water (KSEEDS, 2025).

   In essence, lack of access to affordable healthcare continues to be a challenge for most of the state residents due to high levels of poverty (especially in the rural areas) and significant reliance on out-of-pocket payments. Beside it's on this background that the state comes up with its insurance scheme to ensure that every resident has access to good health care service, protect families from the financial hardship of huge medical bills and to ensure equitable distribution of health care cost among depreciate income groups.

ii. The study reveals that provision of quality, affordable and accessible health services, free maternity service programme, lifesaving skills training for providers, strengthening of family planning programme and provision of modern equipment in health facilities are the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women. However, high poverty undermines rural women's productivity and lowers their purchasing power, thereby denying them access to quality education, health care, and basic needs. Health services in the State are more concentrated in the urban areas as opposed to the rural areas where most of the health problems exist. This is supported by the questionnaire responses supplied on table 3 that 138 (37%) respondents strongly believe that roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme have not been effective in ensuring affordability

and access to healthcare amongst rural women, 149 (40%) respondents agreed. 27 (7%) respondents disagreed, 36 (10%) strongly disagreed while 20 (6%) were undecided.

Conclusion

The government have attempted to address the issue of healthcare service delivery through establishing and funding public hospitals and in addition made health insurance policies that address that need through public and private healthcare institutions. While some enrollees responded in favour of good performance of the Scheme because they are beneficiaries, it needs to be noted that the coverage of the Scheme has been very narrow and limited to the formal public sector. No attention has so far been given to the private sectors, individuals, and the rural communities that constitute the bulk of the public.

Consequently, much as the performance of the Scheme may be adjudged successful to some extent, the deception of this position is easily revealed when her performance is rated against its set objective of providing efficient, cost-effective and wide coverage of healthcare services to mostly women in rural areas and children under 5. The actual performance of the Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme will be made more manifest when it is viewed in relation to the teeming population of Nigerians needing healthcare services.

Recommendations

i. Kano State Government should endeavour to maintain and fully implement all existing policies on Health, and if possible, strengthen same. These policies include free maternal and antenatal Health care, free immunization, free vaccination and free emergency health care so as to address the health service deliveries challenges facing rural women in Kano State.
ii. The Kano state contributory healthcare management agency need to involve private run Health Management Officers (HMOs) in their operations rather than managing it themselves to ensures efficiency and proper implementations of standard policies and procedures of the scheme. This will improve the roles played by Kano State Contributory Healthcare Programme in ensuring access to healthcare amongst rural women.

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CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING INSECURITY AND ACHIEVING NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES

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Abstract

Nigeria suffers from security challenges which have been detrimental to the general well-being of the people with the resultant effect in the areas of illness, low life expectancy, low quality of life and death, destruction of business properties, relocation and closing down of business. All these have put Nigerian state at risk which has adverse effects on the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy. It is on this note that this study examines challenges in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives. Cooperative theory was used as framework for the study because it explains that cooperation has the potential of aggregating the interests of different groups thereby making them all stakeholders of a particular cooperative. Both primary and secondary methods were employed. Primary data were collected using interviews while relevant secondary sources such as books, journals, newspapers and web-based materials among others were used. The results of the study indicate that there are difficulty in implementing Nigeria's foreign policy since the emphasis was on addressing continental and global issues rather than domestic ones. Despite the efforts discussed in the study, insecurity has continued to worsen in many areas. Key challenges include: corruption and mismanagement especially within the military and security agencies have undermined efforts to combat insecurity effectively. Mismanagement of resources has also hindered the success of various initiatives. The study, therefore, recommended that government need to step up physical security measures around the country via the provision of security facilities and the development of stringent measures to be meted out on security defaulters. This implies that Government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through training, modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, logistics and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges.

Keywords: Foreign, Implication, Insecurities, Policy

Introduction

In regards to the contemporary nature of threats across the countries of the world, States resort to various forms of cooperation and pacts to improve their collective security which in this case known as National Security. Now, the notion of National Security captures the traditional security and human security. National Security is now perceived as total security which represent security of life and property, security of the economy and the economic resource areas of the country, security of food and raw materials resources, of general health of the people, of environment and national integrity, and preservation of all that society considers being important and valuable. These measures include military action and diplomatic agreements such as treaties and conventions. This is the core tenets of National Security which deals with the security of a state from any form be it external or internal threats (Omotuyi & Omotuyi, 2020).

Across the regions of the globe like North America, Africa, Europe, Asia, United Arabs Emirates etc., insecurities are a fundamental concern of leaders for the purpose of preserving their citizens. Presently, there are insecurities challenges in Sudan and other African States. This shows how important National Security is to international Security as a key concept for global peace and tranquility. Over the years, insecurity occasioned by terrorism, insurgency, communal violence, piracy, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking and cross borders crimes have become topical issues that have threaten the sovereignty and corporate existence of Nigeria. All these related security challenges have multiplying and snowballing implications on the foreign policy of Nigeria by labelling and targeting it as failed state, fragile political system, hostile environment, hide-out for terrorists, unfriendly country where foreign investors cannot invest and unstable country. The further implications for its foreign policy are that the Nigeria's regional global image may have been grossly affected as its commitment to regional and global campaign for peace and collective security against terrorism, insurgency and criminality toward collective efforts on security challenges are highly doubtful and skeptical of purpose and clarity (Mustapher, et al., 2020).

Over the years, insecurity occasioned by terrorism, insurgency, communal violence, piracy, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking and cross borders crimes have become topical issues that have threaten the sovereignty and corporate existence of Nigeria. All these related security challenges have multiplying and snowballing implications on the foreign policy of Nigeria by labelling and targeting it as failed state, fragile political system, hostile environment, hide-out for terrorists, unfriendly country where foreign investors cannot invest and unstable country. The

further implications for its foreign policy are that the Nigeria's regional global image may have been grossly affected as its commitment to regional and global campaign for peace and collective security against terrorism, insurgency and criminality toward collective efforts on security challenges are highly doubtful and skeptical of purpose and clarity (Mustapher, wt, al., 2020).

Nigeria is a state under perpetual internal security threat from various ethno-religious militias or political insurgents. At a more general level the threat has social, economic, political and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions, singly and conjointly, greatly affects the nation's stability and well-being. Threats to national security can be said to range from the menace of separatist demands, militancy, terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery and a host of other crimes which has negatively affected the security situation of the Nigeria. The Foreign Policy of Nigeria need to combine two issues which are; Foreign Affairs and National Security, but the current realities now in the nation amity with it counterparts off its shores is not close to achieving this stand.

The need for Nigeria to follow suit like its United States and Ethiopia counterparts to reboot and recalibrate its Foreign Policy to enhance its National Security necessitate this topic; challenges in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives, 2012-2023. Nigeria still suffers from security challenges which have been detrimental to the general well-being of the people with the resultant effect in the areas of illness, low life expectancy, low quality of life and death, destruction of business properties, relocation and closing down of business. All these have put Nigerian state at risk which has adverse effects on the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy. To show the path the nation Foreign Policy ought go or coast towards in times of its current insecurities quagmire that has posed as a threat to its citizens in areas of; Boko Haram menace causing colossal destruction and underdevelopment in the Northeast, banditry activities ravaging the Northwest, abduction and kidnapping of prominent Nigerians and defenseless and harmless Students.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the wealth of literature on Nigeria's Foreign Policy, there is lack of sufficient research exploring the challenges in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives from 2012-2023. Therefore, this present study is designed to address important knowledge limitations in the literature surrounding the challenges in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives. Since the adoption of Nigeria's foreign policy path

by the Balawa's administration in the 1960's and the consolidation of it pursuance by subsequent administrations both military and civilian, the gains it has garnered for the country haven't been able to help in healing or handling the insecurities challenges of the country in the past sixty-three years of its existence in the true sense as obtainable in other climes, foreign policy ought to be use as an instrument of national security to partner with willing friends and allies states to solve insecurities issues and cases.

Nigeria have been experiencing great degrees and varieties of internal insecurities ranging from; conflict, chaos, general restiveness and uprising over the years due to the activities of insurgents, bandits, terrorists, killer herders and Boko Haram groups among others which got to it picks in the year 2012 and expanded further in 2022. Those quests and negative roles have endangered the security network and architecture of the country and make National Security realisation to become almost as a mirage and foreign policy achieving seemingly impossible. The security situation in the country became very precarious, as projected in local and international dailies and reports of human rights organizations. One of these reports is from Amnesty International, which said that 1,126 Nigerians were killed within the short space of eight months by gunmen across the Northern states between January and August 2020 (Nigerian Tracker, August 26, 2020).

Despite the efforts made by government on tackling this worsening state of insecurities, it appears that it powers and influence alone cannot bring lasting and permanent solution as Boko Haram have killed over 350,000 Nigerians, herders have killed 60,000 people and displaced many in over 654 attacks across the country especially in Northwest and Northeast regions (Abass, 2023). Hence, the need to look into a new Foreign Policy perspective and front which will be a departure from the traditional Foreign Policy strategy of the nation that was espoused during the first Republic of the Tafawa Balewa regime has become necessary and important. Though, it can't achieve this without sound internal security stabilization in its shores as a country.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

i. What are the measures put in place to address the menace of insecurity and ensure the attainment of Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives?
ii. What are the challenges facing the government in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives?

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this work is to assess insecurities in Nigeria from 2012-2022 and investigate it implication for the implementation of Nigeria's Foreign Policy. However, the specific objectives of this research are to;

i. Examine the measures put in place to address the menace of insecurities in Nigeria for the attainment of Nigeria's Foreign Policy.
ii. Identify the challenges facing the government in addressing insecurities in Nigeria and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Insecurity

According to Achumba, et al. , (2023) insecurity is a condition of fear in a society where people can easily and physically be attacked, killed and their property destroyed by individuals or groups. It is a state of danger, hazard, uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe. Beland (2015) defined insecurity as "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to lack or inadequate freedom from danger. This definition reflects physical insecurity which is the most visible form of insecurity, and it feeds into many other forms of insecurity such as economic security and social security. Insecurity on the other hand, is the antithesis of security.

However, because of the very many ways in which insecurity affects human life and existence, the concept of insecurity has usually been ascribed different interpretations in association with the various ways which it affects individuals. Some of the common descriptors of insecurity include: want of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection; and unsafe, to mention a few. All of these have been used by different people to define the concept of insecurity. These different descriptors, however, run into a common reference to a state of vulnerability to harm and loss of life, property or livelihood.

Insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or injury. The anxiety that is experienced when one feels vulnerable and insecure. Keri (2017) affirms the above definition of insecurity as "a state of being not secure, lack of confidence'. To enable us understand this term, we now turn to the meaning of the word 'insecure' which the Advance English Dictionary defines as 'not confident about yourself or your relationships with ^other people; not safe or protected'. This

definition further expounds the meaning of the term to include not just the general meaning but it touches the individual person “not being confident about oneself”.

Concept of Foreign Policy

This concept has been defined in various ways by scholars, policy makers and diplomats. Indeed, there is no definite definition of the phenomenon called foreign policy. This is so because of the numerous definitions giving to it by many international relations Scholars. Foreign policy, also called foreign relations or foreign affairs policy are self- interest strategies chosen by the state to safeguard its national interests and to achieve goals within its international milieu. Looking at it from a purpose perspective, Alli (2024, p. 26) defines it as policy designed to project a nation's vital interests including the preservation of its sovereignty and security, and the promotion of its economic and other interest. It is thus a country’s response to the world outside and beyond its frontier or boundaries, responses which are products of environmental factors - internal and external.

The uses of foreign policy fall within four broad categories namely: national self-preservation, that is the pursuing of policies for the maintenance of existing values like national independence, territorial integrity of regime in powered; national self-extension, that is, furthering policies aimed at achieving external values such as national economic development; and self-abnegation, which connotes pursuit of policies meant to achieve international peace and solidarity.

> Foreign policy is a combination of aims and interests pursued and defended by the giving state and its ruling class in its relations with other states, and the methods and means used by it for the achievement and defense of these purposes and interests. Foreign policy is the category of actions a government takes which deals with defense, security, international political and economic relations. It is the activity whereby a state deal other states, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and certain individuals (Daniel, 2015).

From the above definition foreign policy is usually guided by and tailored to serve specific objectives of a country. These objectives are in furtherance of the 'national interest’, a nebulous concept with hardly a clear meaning. In the view of Ojukwu (2015) what is regarded as foreign policy or international relations policy is simply a set of explicit objectives with regard to world

beyond the borders of a given social unit and a set of strategies and tactics designed to achieve those objectives. He further explains that foreign policies, generally, are designed to help protect a country's national interests, national security, ideological goals and economic prosperity.

Measures to Address the Menace of Insecurity for the Attainment of Foreign Policy Objectives

Abraham (2018) in his work titled "Migration, National Security and the Changing Dynamics of Nigeria's Foreign Policy". The objective is to find out ways in which the problem of insecurity can be addressed in northeast Nigeria and by extension the nation in general. He makes use of linkage politics theory to explain the nexus and correlation between homeland security and external gains accrued through foreign policy attainment when security is achieved after the measures are put in place. Secondary method of data collection was use to gather data through empirical reviews. The study put forward the following measures that government must put in place to end insecurities to include; Adequate collaboration with other countries especially willing neighbours in the international system, to established a solid, viable, well-funded and strong Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency, banditry, killer herders, kidnapping etc. with countries like Chad, Niger, Chad, Cameroon and Benin with a clear mandate and focus to end insurrection, terrorism and insurgency. The study recommended that when these measures are fully in place, the nation will be able to pursue it foreign objectives in earnest. It is important to note that despite the uniqueness of the study it is silent in exposing the measures put in place to address the menace of insecurity and ensure the attainment of Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives.

In contrast to the above, Saliu (2023) in his work titled" Nigeria's Agitated Foreign Policy in Second term of president Buhari: A Focus on Africa". The objective of the work is to find out ways in which Nigeria foreign policy decisions can be more effective and efficient despite numerous challenges. Using qualitative approach, he posited thus; the Buhari government has shown commitment and a couple of steps taken in fighting Boko haram by taking the following eight steps to stop their spread. First, the government, embarked on a shuttle political diplomacy across the West African sub-region to repair the damaged relations that had existed between it and the immediate neighbours who are partners in progress to it successful fight against insecurities. In particular, the President traveled to Chad, Niger, and Cameroon to energize the previous efforts at containing the insurgent group. This tactical step led to a change of attitude on part of the

neighbouring countries and witnessed the reinvigoration of the low-key sub-regional approach to the fight against Boko haram.

Second, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJF) was reinvigorated through the injection of more funds into it and the re-affirmation of its headquarters in Ndjamena. Third, the Chad Basin Authority on whose platform the MNJTF was instituted was woken up from its slumber as Nigeria's president showed the link between the situations around Lake Chad and the criminality that has engulfed the sub-region in terms of displacement of persons and loss of sources of livelihood by the inhabitants of the Chad region and called for more support for it. Fourthly, in 2015, the administration calls for more support from the United States Government to help it fight insecurities. Fifthly, purchasing of more massive weapons to double the strength of the joint forces for the fight against insurgency this was deliberately done to achieve positive success to end insecurity. Sixthly, giving presidential directives and order time and again to the military to end insecurities in the region within record time.

Seventh, exchange of captured insurgents with the terrorists through negotiation for peace with government to protect lives and property and reradicalisation of the insurgents by government is the eight-step taken to bring insecurities to it kneels in the northeast by the Nigerian government over the years. These measures help the nation in a great extent in tackling insecurities especially in the Northeast that led to some degree of stability in record times. The author makes use of secondary method of data collections to garner adequate information for the work. The finding was that the moves made by the president in pursuance of his foreign policy should be emulated and that the nation must take foreign policy decisions very serious by ensuring peace in the home front. It is, therefore, noteworthy that the study would have been richer if the secondary sources used were complimented with primary source like interview.

Challenges Facing the Government in Addressing Insecurities and Achieving Foreign Policy Objectives

On the other hand, Obado-Joel (2020) examined the challenges of state-backed internal security in Nigeria, with focus on Amotekun. With the use of secondary method of data collection, the study acknowledged that the country faces huge internal insecurity which includes terrorism in the Northeast and headers attack of farmers in the Southwest and Northcentral region. The study posits that community responses have been diverse and included the establishment of armed groups to complement or act in parallel to the security efforts in Nigeria. It was observed further that the local security also known as the community-based armed groups is a contributor to local

order and normative conceptions of peace and security. The author concluded that rapid proliferation of community-based state support security forces shows no sign of slowing as conflict and insecurity continue to increase despite all efforts put in place. The work recommends the design of a coherent framework of engagement across different levels of government and stakeholders for Amotekun. However, the study is short in terms of exploring the challenges facing the government in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives.

Similarly, according to Onyeama (2023) in his paper titled Nigeria's Foreign Policy and National Interest stated that; In our internal fight against terrorism and insurgency, there have been different challenges and different responses due to lack of cooperation from foreign states that we look up to for assistance in our fight against insecurities over the years. The responses are often slow and low to this end, many strategic engagements that are time bound failed due to lack external support from supposed willing allies and friends. Policies and strategies were developed to engage in kinetic and non-kinetic warfare, to deal with the humanitarian crisis, to address issues of deradicalisation and religious extremism and to deal with the issues of internally displaced persons and a refugee crisis, as well as a food crisis mostly get ignored by our partners. This enables the enemies of the state to seem to have upper in some of their attacks against the nation. He find out that lack of swift response from countries that it is partnering with remain a setback to Nigeria foreign policy. He recommends good cooperation with willing states that will help restore security in the nation and solidifies foreign policy pursuance in Nigeria to success. It is pertinent at this juncture to note that the author unraveled and exposed the significance of Nigeria's foreign policy and national interest in societal development. However, it is still lacking because it did not delve into the challenges facing the government in addressing insecurity and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy objectives which is a gap this study seeks to address.

Theoretical Framework: Cooperative Theory

The proponent of this theory is Ivan Emelianoff in his work "Economic Theory of cooperation" in 1942. The theory is still very relevant because it assumes that cooperatives can be potentially more economically efficient than their non- cooperative counterparts according to the perspectives of Altman (2016). Cooperative theory also explains that cooperation has the potential of aggregating the interests of different groups thereby making them all stakeholders of a particular cooperative. The strength of this theory is the fact that, it assumes that even states that do not share common values can still cooperate, but only if their ruling elites have confidence in their common future and believe that working together is better than proceeding alone in the

perspective of Mihalka (2021) Cohen critique the theory that "the breath of Cooperative Security is probably limited by a lack of core value and common geo-strategic interests".

In relation to this study, Nigeria needs solid cooperation from good and friendly states in all ramifications in other to build a formidable strength to tackle it security challenges. A shift in global security environment and the growth of non-traditional security threats have increased the joint gains of the defense cooperation. Through defense cooperation, countries are able to modernize their militaries and improve their defense capabilities. These attributes of cooperative theory are among the imperatives of what Nigeria need as a country faced with insecurities of all kind. This cooperation would contribute to improving the capacity of the countries partnering together towards the development of the defense sector and contribute to economic development.

Methodology

This study adopted qualitative approach with descriptive research design. The targeted population of the study is 185 consisting of staff of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR), Nigerian Institute of International affairs (NIIA), Office of the National Security Adviser, Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS). The study used purposive or judgmental sampling technique to select ten (10) respondents for interview. For the research in-depth interview method was used as the primary instruments of data collection. Secondary sources include books, articles, magazines, journals, newspapers, government records and archives, well researched projects, thesis and dissertations, monographs, internet records and some excellent unpublished works from renowned thinkers and professionals' line with core objectives and key concepts of the topic under investigation. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse information from interview and secondary sources.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Measures put in place to address the Menace of Insecurities in Nigeria for the Attainment of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Participant 1 (P1) revealed that:

> It is remarkable to note that the Jonathan presidency worked closely with the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTTITF), the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), and other similar organizations, coupled with the fact that

> the government at that time equally signed the Terrorism (Prevention) Bill 2011 into law and the Anti-Money Laundering (Prohibition) Amendment Act in June 2012. All these developments put together necessitated strategic foreign policy initiatives and responses from the Nigerian government (January, 2025).

Udeala (2021) argues that the major objective of foreign policy goals is the promotion and protection of a country's national interest which determines its relations with other nations to a very large extent. The credible direction of foreign policy intentions is built on broadly established principles that help shape a country's profile in the international system. National interest covers three major components of national security, protection, and the maintenance of the prosperity of the state and national reputation.

> International terrorism became a major concern to Nigeria with the emergence of the Boko Haram Islamist group from around 2009, and the escalation of attacks on the country by the sect. The group has bases in neighbouring countries of Chad, Niger, and Cameroon. This made the governments of Presidents Goodluck Jonathan and Mohammadu Buhari to be involved in negotiations, dialogues, shuttle diplomacy, and the usage of other tools of foreign relations with these contiguous countries. The Multinational Task Force (MNTF) was established in 1993 by Lake Chad Basin Commission and had to be resuscitated and invigorated by the governments of Jonathan and Buhari. However, the insurgency lingered despite these concerted efforts (Interview with P4 - January, 2025).

Former President Buhari has since assumption of office, in 2015, been faced with innumerable domestic challenges that embarrassed foreign policy outputs. Odubajo (2017) states that the foreign policy agenda of this administration is directed at wooing regional cooperation in the fight against the Boko Haram hazard. It involves appealing for Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) and associating with states, particularly with Western nations, in the fight against corruption. The Nigerian government had to make exertions through bilateral and multilateral approaches to seek the backing, trust, and support of its neighbours such as Chad, Niger Republic, Cameroon. Other countries include France, the United States of America, China, Israel, Great Britain, among others, in fighting the dangers of international terrorism reinforced by the activities of Boko

Haram. Some countries within the international community will not be eager to have bilateral relations with a country that is extremely faced with terrorist operations. As an alternative to relishing multinational organizations venturing into Nigeria to boost the nation's economy, the country however is facing the departure of numerous foreign companies and industries from the country to other countries even in Africa, as a result of the unguaranteed security and uncontrollable actions of the Boko Haram sect.

> Buhari's shuttle diplomacy led to the resuscitation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) which consists largely of troops from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroun. It all intended to defeat Boko Haram terrorists and restoring peace and advancement to the Lake Chad area. However, there seemed to be a lack of cooperation among the member countries of MNJTF when a Chadian attack, led by the Chadian President, on Boko Haram in 2020 was not sustained. Yet, the Chadians had massive success as regards chasing Boko Haram out of their territory into Nigeria. Perhaps, if the expected collaboration had existed within MNJTF, the troops from other states would have combined with the Chadian towards total freedom of the Lake Chad Basin where Boko Haram have their control centre in the theatre of war. Likewise, if President Buhari had similar ideas and motivations with the Chadian President, the Nigerian troops would have been mobilised on a state of alertness to boost the efforts of the Chadian (Interview with P2 - January, 2025).

Without hesitation, when institutions are created for the joint benefits of countries concerned, such institutions should be sustained effectively by member states (Lewu, 2021). This lack of concerted effort has perpetuated the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Resulting from this lack of coordination, bilateral and multilateral relations of the countries in the international arena with Nigeria have continued to decline amidst issues of Boko Haram over the years. Boko Haram in Nigeria has been attributed to violent agitations, lack of patriotism, and religious intolerance. Nigeria needs to do more to restore its marred image; combating Boko Haram needs to be done with utmost sincerity and commitment on the part of the government (Enuka & Ojukwu, 2016).

> The government has tried different strategies, including deploying more security forces and negotiating with some of the violent groups. However, these measures have not been very successful, and the violence continues to spread. Many Nigerians have lost trust in the government's ability to protect them and are calling for more effective solutions to restore peace and security in the country. Insecurity is on the verge of becoming Nigeria's norm, as not a single day goes by without incidents of violence. More concerning is the fact that, for undisclosed reasons, the Nigerian government seems either unable or unwilling to address this threat. The Nigerian government's strategy to address the security challenges presented by kidnappings involves a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening law enforcement, socio-economic initiatives, legislative measures, regional cooperation, and community engagement (Interview with P10 - January, 2025).

The Nigerian government has made several efforts to curb the rising insecurity rate by changing the security chiefs and equipping them with more sophisticated arms and other security weapons. Despite these efforts by the Nigerian government, insecurity still thrives in Nigeria. As a result, multiple ways and techniques have been studied in the research literature by different writers to stop this insecurity. Most authors agree that political instability, religious manipulation, poverty, corruption, bad governance, high rate of unemployment, ethnic and religious divisions, favouritism, nepotism, marginalisation and tribalism in resource sharing and appointment to public office are key factors that contribute to the rise of insecurity in Nigeria (Momoh & Mai-lafia 2020).

P3 stated that:

> In order to bolster law enforcement and security operations, the government has deployed specialized police and military units to the most affected regions. These units are tasked with conducting targeted operations against kidnappers and armed groups, aiming to dismantle criminal networks and restore peace. The establishment of anti-kidnapping squads and an enhanced military presence in

> high-risk zones are part of these efforts to deter criminal activities (January, 2025).

P14 mentioned that:

> On the international front, Nigeria is working to strengthen regional cooperation with neighboring countries to improve border security and facilitate intelligence sharing. This collaboration is vital for addressing cross-border crimes and dismantling criminal syndicates that operate across national boundaries. Furthermore, community involvement in security efforts is also a key component of the government's strategy, with initiatives like community policing aimed at fostering a collaborative relationship between security forces and local communities. This approach leverages local knowledge and support to enhance security operations and build trust among the populace (January, 2025).

Nigeria has also engaged in regional cooperation through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with neighboring countries to combat cross-border terrorism. This has had mixed results, with some success in joint operations but also challenges in coordination and resource allocation (International Crisis Group, 2021). Despite these outlined efforts, Nigeria continues to face significant security challenges. Criticisms include the persistence of corruption within security forces, allegations of human rights abuses, and the inadequacy of socio-economic reforms. However, experts suggest that a more holistic approach, addressing both immediate security concerns and underlying socioeconomic and political issues, is essential for sustainable peace and security. The Nigerian government's multifaceted strategy underscores the complexity of the issue and the need for a balanced approach that combines effective law enforcement, socio-economic development, legislative support, regional cooperation, and community engagement to achieve lasting peace and security.

Challenges facing the Government in addressing Insecurities in Nigeria and achieving Nigeria's Foreign Policy

> Nigeria's foreign policy has failed to focus on protecting the national interest, the insecurity and fear of disintegration of the country these days ranked the highest fears among Nigerians.

> Essentially, any foreign policy that lacks human face is not productive. Hence, a foreign policy that ensures complete security for the nation would not in small measure tackle the "nerve center" of the national question. Therefore, the linkage between foreign policy and national questions is very deep to such an extent that the former, if not properly formulated and implemented could compound the worrying state of the latter. Therefore, it is worthy to suggest foreign policy has the potential the resolve national questions which in the case of Nigeria arose from the crisis of nation-building (Interview with P7 – January, 2025).

Soremeku (2023) posits that Nigeria has adopted various foreign policy approaches since 1960, starting from pro-west to non-alignment and from the policy of continuity to discontinuity, particularly within the West African sub-region. The aim of these policies was to secure and develop the Nigerian state. The objective of any national government's foreign policy towards the outside world should be to address problems facing that particular country. However, despite Nigeria's significant annual expenditure on foreign policy affairs, it has shown little or no impact in addressing the nation's key issues. It is noteworthy to suggest that only a few Nigerians are informed enough to understand the relationship between foreign policy and national development. Nigeria's foreign policy has faced various challenges over the years, resulting from the different policy approaches adopted by various leaders. These challenges have had an adverse impact on Nigeria's foreign policy. Moreover, Nigeria's declining status has been attributed to its poor and failing economy, leadership style and character, and how it handles ethno-religious diversity.

> Inadequate funding is a major impediment to implementing Nigeria's foreign policy. The country's growing foreign responsibilities require significant capital, which is currently unavailable, hindering economic possibilities. The appointment of Ministers and other Diplomats in Nigeria often seems to contradict the idea of a merit-based system. Many non-career diplomats are selected based on political favoritism and ethnic background, despite lacking a thorough understanding of the complex art of diplomacy'. As a result, these Diplomats may struggle to develop effective policies. This issue contributes to foreign policy being

> poorly drafted and positioned to address national issues in Nigeria (Interview with P8 – January, 2025).

P6 identified that:

> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is facing a significant problem with regards to the recruitment of Foreign Mission staff. The adoption of federal character over merit and competency is hindering the level of productivity and quality of service delivery. This has resulted in Nigeria's corps of diplomatic officers being inadequate to compete with their counterparts in terms of recruitment and training. The lack of competitiveness and persistence in on-the-job training is partly to blame for this (January, 2025).

> In Nigeria, government at all levels from the federal, states, and local governments have not fared well in the provision of public goods such as infrastructure, health, education, employment and security despite the enormous oil revenues accruing into their coffers. Many people provide all the services that otherwise would have been provided by the government including security. Monies are allocated to the various tiers of government for the development of their areas but it is diverted by those in position of authority into their private purse (Interview with P9 – January, 2025).

Gwom (2021) opines that kidnapping and terrorism are signs and consequences that formal authority is ineffectual and checks and balances in governance are not working. Despite stupendous wealth in the country, majority of the youths are not gainfully employed while some lack the requisite skills to acquire a befitting job. This is made worst by the inexplicable wealth displayed by those whose rise to fame could only be traceable to few moments of lawlessness or defiance of order rather than to hard work. Most of the youth learn from those they see as models even if they are not doing the right thing. Some of the super rich men were former coup plotters, retired armed robbers, internationally acclaimed kidnappers turned into Heads of States and their retinue of appointees. In addition, they are those who looted the ministries and parastatals by taking advantage of the loose judicial and weak enforcement arms of government.

> Corruption is the antithesis of progress and development as it creates political instability, social unrest and crime infested environment, it breeds inefficiency, incompetence, mediocrity, unethical values and other negative instincts in man such as greed, malice, envy, avarice and rapacity. Corruption is so entrenched and endemic in Nigeria that it has become a household issue and all elements of the economy are caught in corruption web, such that Nigeria ranked among the top ten most corrupt nations in the world. Corruption and injustice in Nigeria must be totally eliminated. Nepotism and a culture of impunity must also be eschewed from our national psyche and life to ensure national growth and sustainable development in Nigeria (Interview with P8 – January, 2025).

Amnesty International (2020) reveals that corruption within the military and security agencies has undermined efforts to combat insecurity effectively. Mismanagement of resources has also hindered the success of various initiatives (Transparency International, 2019). A lack of adequate intelligence and poor coordination among security agencies has often resulted in reactive rather than proactive measures. The heavy-handed approach of the military has led to numerous human rights abuses, further alienating local populations and sometimes driving support towards insurgents (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Despite these challenges, it is very conspicuous that the major challenge confronting Nigeria's foreign policy at present is still high rate of insecurity. It is crystal clear that insecurity is detrimental to general wellbeing of the people with its resultant effects in the areas of illnesses; low life expectancy; low quality of life and even death. Therefore, with the incessant security challenges and the inability of the security agents to guarantee safety and security in the country, many factories have been burnt down, lives and properties lost, investors on the run, relocation and closing down of businesses. All these bottlenecks hamper smooth industrial growth and Nigeria's foreign policy for development.

> Nigeria has been facing unprecedented security challenges over the past decades, ranging from criminalities such as hostage-taking, pipeline vandalism, kidnapping for ransom, to ethno-religious religious threats in forms of riots, demonstrations, agitations for

> resource control by the Niger Delta militants, herdsmen attacks and violent extremism epitomized by in the Boko Haram (BH) insurgency that is ongoing in the North Eastern part of the country. The growing trend of insecurity expectedly poses a serious challenge to the economic development as it scares away foreign direct investment with the attendant problems of poverty, unemployment, electoral malpractices, corruption, economic marginalization, governance failures that result in a circle of violence thereby affecting the attainment of Nigeria's foreign policy (Interview with P2 – January, 2025).

The insecurity challenge in Nigeria has assumed more threatening dimensions with the current increasing state where kidnapping has become the order of the day. At the same time, the lives of innocent citizens, foreigners and even members of the nation's security personnel are destroyed daily. According to the report released by Skill-Based Morgen (SBM) Intelligence, 10 366 people in Nigeria lost their lives to insecurity in 2021 (Daka et al. 2022). This report shows a worsening state of insecurity in Nigeria when compared with the statistics of the death rate of 2000 lives from insecurity in 2018, as recorded by the Global Terrorism Index (2019). Their report further shows that Nigeria rose from 36th to 3rd place in the terrorism index during the period 2002–2018. The insecurity situation has also led to the destruction of individual and government-owned property, as citizens' businesses and government institutions are burnt down daily.

Discussion of Findings

i. The study revealed that Nigeria engaged in regional cooperation through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) with neighboring countries to combat cross-border terrorism. This has had mixed results, with some success in joint operations but also challenges in coordination and resource allocation. In response to rising banditry and kidnappings, the government has attempted community-based security initiatives, such as the establishment of local vigilante groups. While these have provided some immediate relief, they have also been criticized for lack of coordination and potential to exacerbate local tensions (Osumah, 2020; Yusuf, 2022). The Nigerian government also deployed various military operations, such as Operation Lafiya Dole, aimed at combating Boko Haram and ISWAP in the northeast. Despite some successes in reclaiming territories, these operations have often been criticized for their lack of sustainability and human rights abuses (Aghedo & Osumah, 2021).

ii. The results of the study indicate that there are difficulty in implementing Nigeria's foreign policy since the emphasis was on addressing continental and global issues rather than domestic ones. Despite the efforts discussed in the study, insecurity has continued to worsen in many areas. Key challenges include: corruption and mismanagement especially within the military and security agencies have undermined efforts to combat insecurity effectively. Mismanagement of resources has also hindered the success of various initiatives. This made Amnesty International (2020) to conclude that a lack of adequate intelligence and poor coordination among security agencies has often resulted in reactive rather than proactive measures.

Conclusion

Over the years, insecurity occasioned by terrorism, insurgency, communal violence, piracy, banditry, kidnapping, human trafficking and cross borders crimes have become topical issues that have threaten the sovereignty and corporate existence of Nigeria. All these related security challenges have multiplying and snowballing implications on the foreign policy of Nigeria by labelling and targeting it as failed state, fragile political system, hostile environment, hide-out for terrorists, unfriendly country where foreign investors cannot invest and unstable country. The further implications for its foreign policy are that the Nigeria's regional global image has been grossly affected as its commitment to regional and global campaign for peace and collective security against terrorism, insurgency and criminality toward collective efforts on security challenges are highly doubtful and skeptical of purpose and clarity.

Overall, government efforts in tackling Boko Haram have not yielded the desired result. Some of the issues and challenges hampering government effort in completely overcoming insecurity include but not limited to lack of strong political will, over-politicization and sabotage by enemies from within. On one way or the other, conversations that give regional, religious and ethnic coloration to the crisis not only deepens it but further brings to the fore the national consciousness and national ownership which Nigeria does not have to confront the situation.

Recommendations

The study thus recommends some solutions that can help in tackling insecurity and also boost the success of her foreign policy attainment:

i. Government needs to step up physical security measures around the country via the provision of security facilities and the development of stringent measures to be meted out on

security defaulters. This implies that Government must be proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through training, modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, logistics and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges.

ii. In order to better align Nigeria's foreign policy with its core national interests, it is crucial that officials responsible for formulating and implementing foreign policy, such as the Foreign Affairs Minister, Heads of Missions, Foreign Ministry officials, and Ambassadors, are appointed based on merit. Other factors to be considered include effective training, improved funding for Missions, and good remuneration for officials. The Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs should work towards strengthening Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and responding promptly to changes in the international environment in order to achieve national interests.

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