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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTEST AMONG MAJOR POWERS: A SOURCE OF INSTABILITY IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

International political struggles among major powers direct attention to competing interests and agendas that shape global politics. Major powers wield significant influence over the international system, impacting anything from economic policies to military strategies and diplomatic relations. These political struggles arise from a variety of sources, including different ideologies, national interests, historical rivalries, and territorial disputes. As major powers for dominance and influence, their interactions often result in tension and competition, which can destabilize the global order. Regional conflicts can be exacerbated by the involvement of major powers supporting opposing sides. Smaller nations may find themselves caught in the crossfire, pressured to align with one major power or another. This can lead to shifts in regional power balances and contribute to the proliferation of weapons and military technology. Moreover, international political struggles can hinder cooperative efforts on critical global issues such as climate change, cybersecurity, and terrorism. The lack of consensus and trust among major powers can impede the progress of international agreements and initiatives. International political struggles among major powers present significant source of instability in the global system. The objective of the study is focused on the contest among major state actors as a source of instability in the international system. These struggles can manifest in various forms and have far-reaching consequences for regional and global stability. Understanding the root causes and potential outcomes of these struggles is essential and seeking to navigate the instability of the international landscape and work towards a more peaceful and cooperative global order is key.

Keywords: Major Powers, International System, Instability, International Politics

1. Introduction

The interactions and rivalries among major global powers often serve as significant sources of tension and instability in the international system. As dominant actors on the world stage, these states possess influence over global political, economic, and military affairs. Contending issues is seen in the aspect of competing interests, ideological differences, historical grievances, territorial disputes amongst many others. These international political struggles can manifest in various forms, including diplomatic confrontations, economic competition, military buildups, and proxy conflicts. The inconsistent relationships among major powers such as the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union shape the trajectory of global geopolitics, influencing everything from international trade agreements to security alliances and regional power balances. The consequences of these struggles can extend beyond the immediate interactions between major powers, impacting smaller nations and regions around the world. These struggles can contribute to regional conflicts, arms races, the proliferation of nuclear weapon, warfare, enmity among many others.

2. Conceptual Clarifications

International Politics

The concept of international politics, also known as international relations, encompasses the interactions and relationships between countries, governments, and non-state actors on the global stage. It is a multifaceted field that examines how states and other international actors engage with each other through diplomacy, trade, security, and conflict resolution (FHSU Digital Press, 2018).

International System

The international system, also known as the international order or global system, refers to the complex web of interactions, relationships, and structures that govern the behavior of states and non-state actors on the world stage. It encompasses the institutions, norms, and principles that shape global politics and guide the conduct of international affairs. A fundamental characteristic of the international system is its anarchic nature, meaning there is no overarching authority to govern state behavior. States operate in a self-help environment where they must rely on their own capabilities and alliances for security. State sovereignty is a central principle of the international system. It refers to the authority of states over their own territories and internal affairs, as well as their independence in conducting foreign policy. The international system is often characterized by a balance of power among major states or power blocs. This balance can shift over time, impacting global stability and the likelihood of conflict.

International law provides a framework for regulating state behavior, including treaties, customary practices, and legal precedents. It helps maintain order and resolve disputes in the absence of a central governing authority. International institutions, such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, play a significant role in shaping the international system. They facilitate cooperation, resolve disputes, and provide forums for dialogue among states. Norms and values, such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, shape the conduct of international actors. These shared expectations guide state behavior and contribute to the stability of the system. Globalization has increased interconnectedness and interdependence among states and non-state actors. This has led to the emergence of transnational issues such as climate change, terrorism, and cyber threats, which require collective action to address. Power dynamics within the international system play a crucial role in shaping relationships between states. Major powers exert influence through economic, military, and diplomatic means, impacting the behavior of other actors (Immerse Education, 2023).

Major Powers

The concept of major powers, also known as great powers, refers to the most influential and dominant actors in the international system. These powers possess significant military, economic, and political capabilities that enable them to shape global affairs and exert influence over other states and international organizations. Major powers have advanced and powerful military capabilities, including modern weaponry, technology, and large standing armies. Their military presence can deter potential adversaries and enable them to project power beyond their borders. Major powers possess large and robust economies that enable them to invest in their military and other areas of influence. Their economic strength allows them to shape global trade, finance, and development. Major powers have significant diplomatic clout and the ability to negotiate and broker deals on the global stage. They often hold key positions in international organizations and shape the international agenda. In addition to military and economic strength, major powers also wield soft power, which refers to their ability to influence others through cultural, ideological, or diplomatic means. This can include promoting their values and way of life to attract allies and partners. Major powers have a global reach, with the ability to project power and influence events in different parts of the world. This can include

maintaining overseas military bases, participating in international peacekeeping operations, and leading multinational coalitions. Major powers often take on leadership roles in international organizations and forums, shaping the rules and norms of the international system. Their policies and decisions can have far-reaching consequences for global politics. Major powers often exert significant influence in their respective regions, shaping regional politics and security dynamics. Their actions can impact neighboring states and regional organizations. Examples of major powers in the contemporary international system include the United States, China, Russia, the European Union, and, to a lesser extent, India and Japan. These powers often interact with each other in ways that shape the global order, whether through cooperation, competition, or conflict. The role of major powers in international relations and politics is complex and multifaceted. Their interactions can contribute to both stability and instability in the international system, depending on how they manage their relationships with each other and other states (Muzaffer, 2008).

Instability

Instability in the context of international relations and politics refers to a lack of predictability, order, and equilibrium within the international system. Instability can arise from various sources and manifests in different ways, impacting the global order and relationships among states and other international actors. One of the most visible forms of instability is armed conflict, which can occur at different levels (e.g., interstate, intrastate, or regional). Violence can also take the form of terrorism, insurgency, or proxy wars. Political instability within states, such as regime changes, coups, or civil unrest, can spill over into the international system. This can lead to shifts in alliances, power balances, and foreign policy approaches. Economic instability, including recessions, hyperinflation, or sudden changes in trade and financial policies, can disrupt global markets and create uncertainty in international relations. Geopolitical rivalries and tensions among major powers or regional actors can lead to a heightened risk of conflict and uncertainty in the international system (Thomas et al, 2011).

These tensions often involve disputes over territory, resources, or influence. Breakdowns in diplomatic relations or failures in negotiation can lead to a lack of cooperation and trust among states. This can hinder conflict resolution efforts and exacerbate existing tensions. Events such as wars, natural disasters, and large-scale human rights violations can create humanitarian crises that destabilize regions and prompt international interventions. The spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, poses a significant threat to international stability. The proliferation of conventional weapons can also contribute to conflict and violence. Transnational challenges such as climate change, pandemics, cyber threats, and organized crime can create instability by transcending national borders and requiring coordinated global responses. When states or other international actors exhibit unpredictable or aggressive behavior, it can create uncertainty and instability in the international system. Instability in international relations can have wide-ranging consequences, including increased risks of conflict, disruption of global trade and economic activities, and humanitarian crises. It can also hinder cooperation on critical global issues and lead to a breakdown of established norms and agreements. Efforts to manage and mitigate instability often involve diplomacy, conflict resolution, peacekeeping operations, and the promotion of international norms and laws. Understanding the sources and dynamics of instability is essential for policymakers and scholars working to maintain and promote a stable international order (IGI Global, 2018).

3. Major Powers in the International System

In the contemporary international system, major powers, also known as great powers, are states that possess significant military,

economic, and political influence on the global stage. These countries have the capability to shape international relations, influence other nations, and impact global stability. The following countries are generally considered major powers:

United States: The United States maintains the most powerful military in the world, with advanced technology, global reach, and numerous overseas bases. The U.S. economy is one of the largest and most dynamic in the world, making it a major player in global trade and finance. The U.S. plays a leading role in international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, and the World Bank, and it shapes global policies through its diplomatic engagements. U.S. culture, media, and technology have significant influence worldwide.

China: China is the world's second-largest economy and a major driver of global economic activity. China's military capabilities are rapidly expanding, with a focus on modernizing its armed forces and projecting power in the Asia-Pacific region. Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) demonstrate China's global ambitions and economic influence. China is an influential member of international organizations such as the UN Security Council and plays a key role in regional forums.

Russia: Russia maintains a formidable military, including a significant nuclear arsenal and advanced weapons systems. Russia is a major exporter of oil and gas, giving it economic leverage in international relations. Russia has a history of strategic alliances and interventions in various regions, particularly in the post-Soviet space. Russia's influence extends to its involvement in conflicts and its strategic positioning in Europe and Asia.

European Union: The European Union (EU) as a bloc has one of the largest economies in the world and plays a significant role in global trade and finance. The EU promotes values such as democracy, human rights, and environmental sustainability. EU member states hold influential positions in international organizations, and the EU as a whole participates in global diplomacy.

India: India is one of the most populous countries in the world, providing it with a large labor force and consumer market. India's economy is rapidly growing, and it is a major player in sectors such as information technology and pharmaceuticals. India maintains a large and modernizing military, with nuclear capabilities and regional influence.

Japan has a technologically advanced economy and is a major player in global trade and finance. It maintains strong security ties with the United States and plays a key role in regional security, particularly in East Asia. Japanese culture, technology, and innovation have a global impact. These major powers interact in complex ways, shaping the international system through cooperation, competition, and at times, conflict. Their influence extends to global economic policies, regional security arrangements, and international diplomacy (Muzaffer, 2008).

4. International Political Context Among Major Powers

International political struggles among major powers refer to the competition, rivalry, and conflict of interests that arise between influential states on the global stage. These struggles can take many forms and can have significant implications for the stability of the international system.

Geopolitical Rivalries: Major powers often vie for dominance in key regions of the world, such as Eastern Europe, the South China Sea, or the Middle East. These rivalries can involve disputes over territorial claims, spheres of influence, and strategic access points.

Economic Competition: Economic competition among major powers can manifest in trade disputes, currency wars, and efforts to secure access to critical resources. Initiatives such as trade agreements and economic sanctions can be used to assert influence and gain strategic advantages.

Military Buildups and Arms Races: Major powers often invest heavily in their military capabilities to maintain a strategic edge and deter potential adversaries. This can lead to arms races, including the development and deployment of advanced weapons systems such as nuclear missiles and hypersonic technologies.

Diplomatic Confrontations: Diplomatic tensions can arise over issues such as human rights, election interference, or international law violations. Major powers may use diplomatic channels to pressure each other or to rally allies around their positions.

Ideological and Political Differences: Divergent ideologies, governance models, and political systems can fuel tensions between major powers. For example, liberal democracies may clash with authoritarian regimes over issues such as civil liberties and political freedoms.

Proxy Conflicts: Major powers may engage in proxy conflicts by supporting opposing sides in regional or intrastate conflicts. This can exacerbate existing disputes and create long-lasting tensions and instabilities.

Strategic Alliances: Major powers often form alliances with other states to counterbalance their rivals and extend their influence. These alliances can lead to blocs of states that oppose each other, potentially increasing the risk of conflict.

Cyber and Information Warfare: Cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns are emerging forms of struggle among major powers. These tactics can target critical infrastructure, government institutions, and public opinion to achieve strategic objectives. International political struggles among major powers can create challenges for global stability and cooperation. They can impact regional and global security, economic prosperity, and the effectiveness of international institutions. Efforts to manage and mitigate these struggles often involve diplomacy, negotiation, and the promotion of international norms and agreements. Understanding the sources and dynamics of these struggles is essential for analyzing and navigating the complexities of the international system (Bruce, 2021).

5. Instances of International Political Contest in the International System

International political struggles among major powers have occurred throughout history and continue to shape the global landscape. Here are several real-life examples of such struggles over the years:

Cold War (1947–1991): The Cold War was a prolonged period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union, representing ideological, military, and political rivalry. The struggle manifested in proxy wars (e.g., the Korean War and the Vietnam War), arms races (e.g., the nuclear arms race), and competing spheres of influence worldwide.

Suez Crisis (1956): The Suez Crisis involved a political struggle between Egypt and the Western powers (particularly the United Kingdom and France) over control of the Suez Canal. The crisis highlighted tensions between major powers over strategic access and influence in the Middle East.

Cuban Missile Crisis (1962): The Cuban Missile Crisis was a 13-day confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union over the placement of Soviet nuclear missiles in Cuba. It was one of the most tense moments of the Cold War, bringing the world close to the brink of nuclear war.

U.S.-China Relations: The U.S. and China have experienced a complex relationship characterized by competition and cooperation. Recent tensions include trade disputes, intellectual property concerns, and military confrontations in the South China Sea.

Russia-Georgia War (2008): The Russia-Georgia War was a brief conflict over the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, highlighting Russia's strategic interests in its near abroad and its willingness to use military force to assert influence.

Ukraine Crisis (2014–present): The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine have led to a major political struggle between Russia and Western powers (e.g., the EU and the U.S.). The crisis has resulted in economic sanctions, diplomatic tensions, and concerns about regional security.

U.S.-Iran Relations: Tensions between the U.S. and Iran have been high over issues such as Iran's nuclear program and regional influence. The U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018 and subsequent escalation of hostilities have increased instability in the Middle East.

South China Sea Dispute: Territorial disputes in the South China Sea involve multiple countries (e.g., China, Vietnam, and the Philippines) with overlapping claims to maritime territories. China's assertiveness in the region has led to tensions with neighboring countries and the United States.

North Korea's Nuclear Program: North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons has been a point of contention with major powers such as the U.S., South Korea, and Japan. Diplomatic efforts to address the issue have been challenging, with periodic escalations and moments of rapprochement. These instances of international political struggles demonstrate how competition, rivalry, and conflict of interests among major powers can have significant impacts on global stability and security. Managing these struggles often requires diplomacy, negotiation, and adherence to international norms to prevent escalation and maintain peace (World Food Program USA, 2022).

i. Effects of International Political System

The international political system, which encompasses the complex web of relationships and interactions among states and other actors on the global stage, can have far-reaching effects on world affairs. These effects can be both positive and negative, depending on how well the system manages cooperation, competition, and conflict among international actors.

Peace and Stability: The European Union (EU) has contributed to peace and stability in Europe since its formation after World War II. Through economic integration and political cooperation, the EU has helped prevent conflicts among its member states.

Global Cooperation: International organizations such as the United Nations (UN) facilitate cooperation on global issues such as climate change, human rights, and humanitarian crises. The World Health Organization (WHO) coordinates efforts to address global health challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic Interdependence: Trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (now USMCA) have increased economic ties and cooperation among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to increase economic interdependence through infrastructure projects in various regions.

Conflict and Tensions: The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which began in 2014, has strained relations between Russia and Western powers, leading to economic sanctions and increased military presence in the region. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea have led to tensions among China and neighboring countries, as well as with the United States.

Humanitarian Crises: The war in Syria has resulted in a major humanitarian crisis, with millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. Conflicts in Yemen and South Sudan have caused significant suffering and displacement, prompting international humanitarian interventions.

Security Alliances and Partnerships: NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is a security alliance that deters aggression and promotes collective defense among its member states. The United States' alliances with countries in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Japan and South Korea, aim to maintain regional stability and counterbalance China's influence.

Diplomatic Isolation: Countries like North Korea and Iran have faced diplomatic isolation due to their nuclear programs and regional policies, respectively. International sanctions have been imposed on countries such as Russia and Venezuela for various reasons, including human rights abuses and interference in other countries' affairs.

Power Shifts and Emerging Players: The rise of China as a major economic and military power has shifted the balance of power in the international system, leading to new dynamics and rivalries. India's growing influence in South Asia and its increasing engagement on the global stage represent another shift in the distribution of power. The international political system can have complex and often interconnected effects on global affairs. While cooperation and collaboration can lead to positive outcomes such as peace and economic growth, tensions and conflicts can result in instability and humanitarian crises. Managing these effects requires careful diplomacy, adherence to international norms, and a commitment to collective action when addressing global challenges (Bohemil, 2020).

ii. International Political Contest Among Major Powers as Source of Instability in the International System.

International political struggles among major powers can indeed be a source of instability in the international system. These struggles arise from competition, conflicts of interest, and power dynamics between major powers, leading to various forms of instability that can disrupt global order and security.

Risk of Armed Conflict: Tensions and rivalries between major powers can escalate into direct or proxy conflicts, posing a risk to regional and global peace. The annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and the subsequent conflict in eastern Ukraine heightened tensions between Russia and Western powers.

Arms Races and Military Buildups: Competition between major powers can lead to arms races, including the development of advanced weapons systems such as hypersonic missiles and nuclear capabilities. For example; the United States and China are engaged in a strategic competition involving military modernization and expansion.

Geopolitical Rivalries: Major powers compete for influence in strategic regions, leading to rivalries that can create or exacerbate existing conflicts. China's assertiveness in the South China Sea has resulted in tensions with neighboring countries and the United States.

Economic Disruptions: Economic competition and trade disputes between major powers can lead to market instability and disruptions in global trade. For example: The U.S.-China trade war in recent years created uncertainty in global markets and impacted international supply chains.

Diplomatic Strains: Diplomatic conflicts between major powers can lead to reduced cooperation and trust, making it more challenging to address global challenges. For example, diplomatic tensions between the United States and China have affected international collaboration on issues such as climate change and human rights.

Proxy Wars and Interventions: Major powers may support opposing sides in regional conflicts, prolonging disputes and contributing to instability. For example; In Syria, Russia and Iran have supported the Assad regime, while Western powers have backed opposition groups, complicating efforts to achieve peace.

Information and Cyber Warfare: Cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns between major powers can undermine trust and increase the risk of conflict. Accusations of election interference and cyber espionage have strained relations between the United States and Russia. Disagreements over international law and norms, such as the Law of the Sea or arms control agreements, can lead to instability. The withdrawal of major powers from international agreements, such as the United States' exit from the Iran nuclear deal, can destabilize regional security. Managing these

sources of instability requires diplomacy, adherence to international norms, and efforts to promote dialogue and cooperation among major powers. By working together, major powers can help maintain stability in the international system and address shared global challenges (Dalby, 2018).

iii. Case Study

To illustrate the concept of international political struggles among major powers as a source of instability in the international system. This case study highlights how the actions and interactions of major powers can lead to regional and global instability.

Crisis in Ukraine

The crisis in Ukraine began in 2014 when Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula following a political revolution in Ukraine that ousted the pro-Russian president, Viktor Yanukovych. Protests known as the Euromaidan movement had erupted in Ukraine in late 2013, leading to Yanukovych's departure and the establishment of a new pro-Western government in Ukraine. The annexation of Crimea by Russia was widely condemned by Western powers and resulted in significant diplomatic tensions.

Impact on the International System

i. Military Tensions: Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatist movements in eastern Ukraine have led to military confrontations and ongoing conflict. This has prompted NATO to increase its presence in Eastern Europe as a deterrent, leading to heightened military tensions between Russia and NATO.

ii. Economic Sanctions: Western powers, including the United States and the European Union, imposed economic sanctions on Russia in response to its actions in Ukraine. These sanctions have strained economic relations between Russia and the West and have contributed to a broader economic divide.

iii. Diplomatic Strains: The crisis has led to diplomatic fallout between Russia and

Western powers, with each side accusing the other of violating international law and interfering in Ukraine's internal affairs. Efforts at diplomatic negotiations, such as the Minsk agreements, have seen limited success, highlighting the challenge of achieving a peaceful resolution.

iv. Proxy Conflicts: Russia's involvement in eastern Ukraine, including its support for separatist forces, has turned the conflict into a proxy war between Russia and the West. This has exacerbated existing regional tensions and prolonged the conflict, contributing to instability in the region.

v. Information Warfare: The crisis has been accompanied by disinformation campaigns and cyber operations, with both Russia and Western powers accusing each other of spreading false information and attempting to manipulate public opinion. This has further undermined trust and increased the risk of conflict escalation.

vi. Global Repercussions: The crisis in Ukraine has had global implications, affecting international relations, trade, and energy supplies. Europe's dependence on Russian energy has been a point of contention, with major powers considering alternative sources of energy to reduce reliance on Russia.

The crisis in Ukraine is a prime example of how international political struggles among major powers can lead to regional and global instability. The conflict has involved direct and proxy engagements, diplomatic disputes, economic sanctions, and information warfare, all of which contribute to tensions and unpredictability in the international system. Efforts to manage the crisis require a combination of diplomatic negotiation, adherence to international norms, and cooperation among major powers to achieve a peaceful resolution and restore stability in the region (John, 1995).

iv. Recommendations to the Issue of International Political Contest

Curbing the issue of international political struggles requires a multifaceted approach that combines diplomatic, economic, and strategic measures. These solutions aim to promote stability, reduce tensions, and foster cooperation among major powers. Here are some key strategies to address international political struggles:

Dialogue and Diplomacy: *Regular Communication:* Maintain open lines of communication between major powers to address misunderstandings and build trust. *Summits and Negotiations:* Organize regular summits and bilateral or multilateral negotiations to discuss and resolve issues peacefully.

Strengthening International Institutions: *United Nations (UN):* Strengthen the role of the UN and other international organizations in mediating disputes and promoting peace. *Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:* Encourage major powers to use international courts and arbitration to resolve disputes peacefully.

Arms Control and Disarmament: *Nuclear Non-Proliferation:* Promote agreements such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to curb the spread of nuclear weapons. *Military Confidence-Building Measures:* Implement transparency and verification measures to reduce the risk of arms races.

Economic Interdependence: *Trade Agreements:* Promote fair and mutually beneficial trade agreements to increase economic interdependence and reduce the likelihood of conflict. *Sanction Reduction:* Consider easing or lifting sanctions in exchange for meaningful concessions or adherence to international norms.

Cyber and Information Security: *Cybersecurity Cooperation:* Major powers should collaborate on cybersecurity initiatives to reduce the risk of cyberattacks and information warfare. *Countering Disinformation:* Work together to combat disinformation campaigns and promote accurate information.

Regional Stability Initiatives: *Conflict Prevention:* Support regional conflict prevention initiatives and peace building efforts to reduce the risk of proxy wars and interventions. *Regional Organizations:* Strengthen regional organizations such as the African Union and ASEAN to manage conflicts and promote cooperation.

Humanitarian and Development Assistance: *Humanitarian Aid:* Provide humanitarian aid to conflict zones to address the needs of affected populations and stabilize regions. *Development Assistance:* Support economic development and reconstruction efforts in post-conflict areas to prevent future instability.

Norms and Rules of Engagement: *International Law:* Encourage adherence to international law and norms to promote a rules-based international order. *Codes of Conduct:* Develop and enforce codes of conduct for major powers in areas such as cyber operations and space activities.

Public Diplomacy and Soft Power: *Cultural Exchanges*: Foster cultural and educational exchanges to build mutual understanding and reduce tensions. *People-to-People Ties:* Encourage dialogue and collaboration among civil society and non-governmental organizations.

Conflict Resolution and Mediation: *Third-Party Mediation:* Use neutral third-party mediators to facilitate dialogue and negotiations between conflicting parties. *Peacekeeping and Monitoring:* Deploy peacekeeping missions and monitoring teams to maintain stability in conflict zones. These solutions require the cooperation and commitment of major powers and other international actors. By working together to address the root causes of political struggles and promoting peaceful, cooperative relationships, the international community can enhance stability and reduce the risk of conflict in the global system (David et al, 2018).

v. Conclusion

International political struggles among major powers pose a significant challenge to the stability and functioning of the international system. As seen in historical and contemporary examples, these struggles can manifest in a variety of forms, including military conflicts, economic disputes, geopolitical rivalries, and information warfare. Such tensions disrupt global order and peace, impacting not only the regions directly involved but also the broader international community. However, there are several strategies that can help manage and curb these struggles, including diplomatic dialogue, arms control, economic interdependence, and adherence to international norms and laws. Strengthening international institutions and fostering cooperation among major powers are key to promoting stability and preventing conflicts from escalating. The importance of addressing these struggles cannot be overstated. Instability resulting from major power struggles can lead to humanitarian crises, regional conflicts, and disruptions in trade and global supply chains. Additionally, it can hinder efforts to tackle pressing global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, and pandemics. To build a more stable international system, major powers must commit to a collaborative approach that prioritizes diplomacy and peaceful conflict resolution. By focusing on common interests and shared challenges, they can foster a climate of mutual respect and trust. Public diplomacy and soft power initiatives, such as cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties, can further bridge divides and promote mutual understanding. In conclusion, while international political struggles among major powers are a source of instability in the international system, they can be effectively managed through concerted efforts in diplomacy, cooperation, and adherence to international norms. By addressing these struggles constructively, the global community can work towards a more peaceful, stable, and prosperous world.

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COMMERCIAL BANK LENDING AND SMES GROWTH: EVIDENCE FROM ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated commercial bank lending and SMEs growth in Ondo State, Nigeria. Objectives of this study is to examines the impact of commercial bank lending on SMEs growth in Ondo State, Nigeria. The study relied on primary data gathered through a structured questionnaire. The population for the study was 1999 SMEs in Ondo State; and the population were 333 SMEs determined via Taro Yamane formula and were purposively selected across the State. The data collected were analysed using correlation and ordinary least square method. The results showed a positive correlation between all the commercial bank lending requirements; and likewise showed that commercial bank lending positively influenced SMEs growth in Ondo State and therefore, concluded that commercial bank lending do have a significant effect on SMEs growth in Ondo State. This study therefore recommended that SMEs owners should make meeting loan eligibility criteria's their primary focus while other requirement could be secondary.

Keywords: Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, Commercial Banks, Business growth, Bank Lending, SMEs Financing

Introduction

Despite the fact that SMEs are regarded as the bulwark for job creation and technological advancement in Nigeria, the sector has suffered from neglect with resultant unpleasant effects on the Nigerian economy. A survey conducted in 2004 by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) showed that just about ten percent (10%) of companies registered under MAN are completely operational (Man's Official 2014). This depicts that basically 90 percent of these industries are either deteriorating or have closed down. Given that manufacturing companies are known promoters of real development and growth of any nation, this reality foretells clearly a grave danger for the Nigerian economy (Ibrahim, 2020).

The emergence of Covid-19 Pandemic and its consequences on the World economy has shifted the focus of policy makers and world

leaders to the urgent needs for rapid development and growths of SMEs as one of the quickest strategies for resuscitating the economy. Likewise, commercial bank lending to SMEs has stirred attention of academicians and policy makers worldwide for many decades (Eca et al., 2022). Discussion on the problem of SMEs funding in Nigeria has taken place in form of seminars and several debates for the purpose of improving the finance line for SMEs and to formally integrate their contributions in the economy especially during the pandemic (Hashim, & Mohammad, 2021). This is because finance is a significant element for determining the growth and survival of SMEs (Olaoye et al., 2018). According to Muhammad, Olusegun, and Sonny (2018), access to finance allows small businesses to undertake productive investments and contribute to the development of the national economy and alleviation of poverty in most of Sub-Saharan African countries. Financing for small and medium enterprises is essential at this critical Covid-19 period for boosting start-up businesses. In addition, without external finance, small and medium enterprises will probably not be able to compete in international market, to expand the businesses and strike linkages of business with large firms (Song, 2022). Access to finance is the most serious barrier to expansion of businesses and start-ups which have been mentioned by existing SMEs and potential operators (Olowookere & Hassan, 2021).

SMEs in Nigeria are broadly defined as businesses with turnover of less than a hundred million naira per annum and/ or less than 300 employees (Sanni et al., 2020). Studies by Akingunola, Olowofela, and Yunusa (2018); Sanni et al. (2020) showed that approximately 96% of Nigerian businesses are SMEs and represent around 90% of the industrial sector in terms of number of businesses. Yet, they generate less than 6% of GDP in comparison to 40% in Asia, and 50% in the United States or Europe (Ariyo, 2021). Only 5% of the SMEs are financed through commercial banking institutions meaning they use other financing lines for both investment and working capital (MIC, 2007). Practically many of the SMEs finance their projects through their own funds, family funds, and friends' funds due to a number of difficulties in accessing commercial bank financing (MIC 2007).

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are commonly believed to have very limited access to deposits, credit facilities and other financial support services provided by Formal Financial Institutions (FFIs) (Kiran, 2022). As Shihadeh et al. (2019) argues that this is because these SMEs cannot provide the necessary collateral security demanded by these formal institutions and also, the banks find it difficult to recover the high cost involved in dealing with small firms. In addition to this, the associated risks involved in lending to SMEs make it unattractive to commercial banks to deal with small enterprises (Kiran, 2022).

Statistically, small enterprises have been reported to have high failure rates during Covid-19 making it difficult for lenders to assess accurately the viability of their enterprises, the abilities of the entrepreneur, and the likelihood of repayment (Hashim & Mohammad, 2021; Ikechi & Nwadiubu, 2021; Nwosu, 2021). This study therefore looked into the commercial bank lending and SMEs growth in Ondo State, Nigeria with a particular focus on the basic deposit money bank loan requirements such as eligibility criterion, bank rate, loan structure, socio-economic characteristics, product loan marketing, loan insurance, and saving.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Bank lending

Bank lending can be defined as the process of providing funds for business transaction, from which an interest is charged (Song et al., 2022).

According to Calabrese et al. (2022), lending is indubitably the heart of banking business. For that reason, its administration requires considerable skill and dexterousness on the part of the bank management. While a bank is irrevocably committed to pay interest on deposits, it mobilized from different sources, the

ability to articulate loanable avenue where deposit funds could be placed to generate reasonable income; maintain liquidity and ensure safety requires a high degree of pragmatic policy formulation and application.

Commercial banking in Nigeria witnessed an era of impressive profitability, characterized by high competition, huge deposits and varied investment opportunities; in an effort to make quick profits the commercial banks relied essentially on self-liquidating loans and diversified their portfolio into less risky investments with safe margin. The current trend in Nigerian banking and finance sector, suggest that the days of cheap profits are now over and only banks with well-conceptualized lending and credit administration policies and procedures can survive the emerging competition (Olowookere, & Hassan, 2021).

The Concept of SMEs

The term Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SME's) has no generally established definition. Sanni (2020) noted that the criteria for classification of an enterprise as small, medium or large varies from one country to another, depending on whether it is developed or developing country. A small business for example to one country may be a large-scale business to another. Thus, SME's in Nigeria, as defined by Small and Medium Industries Equity Investment Scheme (SMIEIS) are enterprises with a total capital employed not less than ₦1.5 million, but not exceeding ₦200 million, including working capital, but excluding cost of land and/or with a staff strength of not less than 10 and not more than 300.

Basic Commercial Bank Loan Ingredients

Collateral Requirements and SMEs Growth

Collateral refers to the extent to which assets are committed by borrowers to a lender as security for debt payment (Gitman, 2003). SMEs in particular provide security in form of properties (houses, the businesses, the car, and anything that could actually bring back the principal) in case of default on loans (Garrett, 2009). Security for loans must actually be capable of being sold under the normal conditions of the market, at a fair market value and also with reasonable promptness. However, in most commercial banks, in order to finance SMEs and to accept loan proposals, the collateral must be 100 % or more, equal to the amount of credit extension or finance product (Mustapa, 2019).

Moral hazard issues can be reduced by collateral requirements by increasing and adding a potential cost to borrowers when those are not making their best effort. Sometimes the borrowers extract the funds provided by the lenders for their own personal and private use. Therefore, the collateral requirements when in place can reduce negative consequences that can rise due to an improper utilization of the funds by SMEs. It is evident that most SMEs are denied and discriminated by the lenders in providing financing. This is because of high risk and for not having adequate resources to provide as collateral (Nahamya et al. 2015).

Bank Rates and SMEs Growth

As provided in the legal provisions of the Banking act Amendment Act of 2016, financial institutions are not supposed to levy interest rates of 4% more than the benchmark rate pegged at 10.5% (National Council of Law reporting, 2016). The move by the national government aimed to spur economic growth by increasing the level of investment; nevertheless, banks were reluctant to adjust based on the new law hence, denying small-scale business operators from accessing credit even if they qualify. Before the Banking Amendment act was assented in August 2016, financial institutions used to post high levels of profits by giving credit especially to small-scale businesses at a high interest rate, a move that was burdening borrowers, small-scale business operators. Udo et al. (2016) observes that most financial institutions have reduced the profitability, after the Presidents assented to the Banking Amendment bill because they opt for trading government security as opposed to granting loans. Specifically, mobile lending, which is commonly used by many small-scale businesses

is at the verge of shutting down because high costs of operation and low profitability on the bank side.

Loan Insurance and SMEs Growth

Rahman (2016) assert that loan insurance depends on bank's lending behavior and it seeks to cover against any risk that would arise from the loan. It should be noted that people who can cover their credit with loan insurance are a few who have large sums of money, have well-paving jobs, or are established businesspersons.

Bank Loan Product Marketing and SMEs Growth

The Banking Amendment acts provides that any financial institution before giving loans should disclose information about charges and other terms relating to the loan (National Council of Law reporting, 2016). However, most banks and financial institutions do not inform their members about such regulations.

Loan Security and SMEs Growth

A year after assenting the bill, Gulolo (2017) observes that there were many unintended consequences such as the practice by banks to increase collateral pledged against the loan and the move by banks to opt for government securities as opposed to loaning individual and specifically small-scale business operators. In the Latter, banks seek to reduce the risk of operation because their profitability is reduced and the risk to default payment high. Currently, banks have increased the value of the collateral security such that the difference between the loan and the collateral is large; the loan acquired should be less than the collateral security. Based on such a banking policy, small-scale business operators fail to pledge property because some of them have little assets or own none, which banks can hold as a security before they get a loan.

Theoretical Review

Information Asymmetry Theory

This theory was first introduced by Akerlof's in 1970. The information asymmetry theory assumes that at least one party to a transaction has relevant information whereas the other(s) do not. Some asymmetric information models can also be used in situations where at least one party can enforce, or effectively retaliate for breaches of, certain parts of an agreement whereas the other(s) cannot. Stiglitz and Weiss (1981) demonstrated that market may break down completely in the presence of asymmetric information and the three distinct consequences emerging, adverse selection, moral hazard and monitoring cost. Information asymmetry has been found to increase the transaction costs.

Relevance to Commercial Bank Lending: The theory of information asymmetry is highly relevant because it addresses the imbalance of information between lenders (commercial banks) and borrowers (SMEs). In the context of your study, commercial banks often have more information about creditworthiness, market conditions, and risks compared to SMEs seeking loans.

Impact on SMEs Growth: Information asymmetry can significantly affect SMEs' access to credit and their growth prospects. Banks may hesitate to lend due to uncertainty about SMEs' financial health, business models, or market conditions. This can restrict SMEs from obtaining adequate funding necessary for expansion and development. Empirical Evidence in Banking: There is extensive empirical research supporting the relevance of information asymmetry in banking and its implications for lending practices. Studies often explore how banks mitigate these asymmetries through screening mechanisms, collateral requirements, and interest rates, all of which directly influence SMEs' borrowing costs and ability to grow. Policy Implications: Understanding information asymmetry can inform policy recommendations aimed at improving SMEs' access to finance. Policies that reduce information asymmetry, such as credit reporting systems, financial literacy programs, or government guarantees, can positively impact SMEs' growth trajectories in regions like Ondo State. Applicability to Regional Context: Given your focus on Ondo State, Nigeria, where SMEs face unique economic and institutional

challenges, the theory provides a lens to understand how local factors exacerbate or mitigate information asymmetries in bank lending. This localized perspective enhances the theory's relevance and applicability to your specific research context.

In summary, the Information Asymmetry Theory is appropriate for your paper because it offers a robust framework to analyze the challenges SMEs face in accessing bank credit, particularly in a regional context like Ondo State. It allows for a nuanced examination of how information gaps impact lending decisions and subsequently affect SMEs' growth prospects, providing a solid theoretical foundation for your study.

Credit Rationing Theory

Credit Rationing Theory is a financing gap theory that was advanced by Stiglitz and Weiss (1981) whom in their formulation, argued that agency problems (a conflict of interest between management (agents) and the shareholders (owners) of the organization) and information asymmetries were the major reason why SMEs had constrained access to finance. They argued that only SMEs knew their real financial structure, the real strength of the investment project and the effective intention to repay the debt, that is, firms had superior private information (asymmetric information). Hence, the bank manager made decisions under asymmetric information, and operated under a moral hazard and adverse selection risk.

Pecking Order Theory

This theory was developed by Myers (1984) and Myers and Majluf (1984). The underlying premise was that 'inside' management are better informed of the true value of the firm than the 'outside' investors. These information asymmetries led to varied costs of getting additional external finance as potential investors' perceived equity to be riskier than debt. Myers (1984) and Myers & Majluf (1984) proposed that firms sought to overcome the problems of undervaluation arising from information asymmetries, preferring to finance

investment projects with internal funds in the first instance.

Empirical Review

Muhammad et al. (2018) made a comparative analysis of the more workable SMEs financing in Nigeria. The study examines whether conventional bank usury is more viable for SMEs' growth and innovation than Islamic bank mudharabah financing using the net present value (NPV) technique. From 2000 to 2017, the difference between the present value of all loans received and the discounted loans payable demonstrated that Islamic bank mudharabah has a positive and larger NPV than usury financing, making it significantly better and more worthwhile for businesses to expand and innovate.

Basheer (2019) conducted a study on the effect of microfinance programme in Malaysia, namely Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia (AIM) on the micro-enterprises success in Sabah, Malaysia. By adopting cross-sectional research design, he found that microfinance (AIM) has a positive and significant relationship towards microenterprises success. Seles et al. (2019) also stress the important of microcredit on business performance in their research on SMEs business performance in Kelantan. The result found was also consistent with Mustapa, Mamun, Anuar, and Hayat (2019).

Ovat (2020) studied the role played by commercial banks' credit in facilitating the growth of SMEs in Nigeria. In order to conduct this empirical investigation, it used co-integration and error correction procedures. The findings found that commercial banks' loan has had little impact on the expansion of Nigeria's small and medium-sized businesses.

Ikechi and Nwadiubu (2021) evaluated the effect of commercial bank loans on the performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Nigeria. The research used an ex-post facto research methodology; to determine associations, a least square regression analysis was performed on time-series data, and unit root tests were used to avoid the formation of

misleading results. The study's findings revealed that in Nigeria, there is an inverse link (albeit not statistically significant) between the quantity of commercial bank loans (CBLSME) made available to SMEs and their output (OPSME). The study also found that an apparent increase in SMEs' operations may not have reduced Nigeria's unemployment rate because a large percentage of SMEs' employees are likely underemployed.

Olowookere and Hassan (2021) examined the relationship between SMEs financing and sustainable economic growth between 1992 and 2019 has been carried out in this study. The study used a Fully Modified Ordinary Least Square and Granger causality technique after performing several pre-estimation tests such as unit root and cointegration. As a result of this research, the following key findings emerged: broad money supply and GDP growth rate show an insignificant inverse relationship. The relationship between commercial bank loans to SMEs and GDP growth rate is positive and significant. Gross fixed capital creation and total lending to the private sector from commercial banks had a negligible positive connection with GDP growth. Furthermore, a one-way causation exists between broad money supply and gross fixed capital formation. Similarly, there is a one-way feedback loop between GDP growth and commercial bank loans to SMEs. As a result, it might be argued that SMEs financing contributed to Nigeria's long-term economic growth. On the other hand, commercial banks' loans to SMEs in Nigeria are motivated by long-term economic growth.

Gap in Literature

Evidently, as in other countries of the world, Nigeria focuses on both demand and supply side of SMEs financing (Olaoye et al., 2018). The demand side encourages banks to provide finance to the small businesses through guarantees and provide more financial assistance through the affordable cost of capital, and innovation fund. While the supply side focus on diminishing the asymmetries of information between the lenders and borrowers.

The relevant information between lenders and borrowers should be provided to improve the situation (Olowookere et al., 2021). Yet, small and medium enterprises still face a number of constraints in accessing commercial bank funding especially in the post Covid-19 Pandemic attributed to lack of collateral requirements, structure of the financial sector, awareness of funding opportunities, and small business support services etc. (Ikechi, 2021). Therefore, this study empirically investigated the commercial bank lending and SMEs growth after Covid-19 in Ondo State, and thus hypothesised that:

H_0: Commercial bank lending does not have a significant effect on SMEs growth in Ondo State, Nigeria.

To fill the gap in the literature, The research aims to address the constraints faced by small and medium enterprises in accessing commercial bank funding, such as lack of collateral requirements, financial sector structure, awareness of funding opportunities, and support services. The study contributes to understanding how these factors influence SME financing and growth in a post-pandemic environment, thereby enhancing knowledge on effective strategies for improving SME access to finance and fostering economic resilience.

Data and methods

There are one thousand, nine hundreds ninety-nine (1999) SMEs in Ondo State (SMEDAN, 2019). Therefore, the study population consisted of all the SMEs in Ondo State, and the population subjects were the SMEs owners. The study make used of multi stage sampling technique. Firstly, random sampling technique was used so that the whole population of SMEs within the state would have equal chance of participation in the study. Also, purposive sampling technique was used to select the target respondents (SMEs owners and/or managers) on whom the questionnaires were administered.

The Cronbach's alpha values were used to determine the questionnaire's reliability. Table 1

shows the Cronbach's alpha value range of 0.58 – 0.86; the values are more than 0.6 threshold and therefore considered reliable (Zikmund, 2003).

Taro Yamane formula was used to determine 333 sample size, and the data collected were analyzed using correlation and ordinary least square method.

The eligibility criterion, bank rate, savings, loan structure, product loan marketing, socioeconomic characteristics and loan insurance were used as the proxy for commercial bank lending antecedents, while revenue, sales, and costs were the proxy for SMEs growth.

The regression line is given as:

Where:

β_0 = Estimation of the y-intercept

β = Slope of the regression line

SG = SMEs Growth

ELG = Eligibility Criterion

BAR = Bank Rate

LNST = Loan Structure

SOEC = Socio-Economic Characteristics

PRLM = Product Loan Marketing

LNI = Loan Insurance

SAV = Saving

e = error term

Apriori expectation:

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
SMEs Growth	4	α = 0.81
Eligibility Criterion	5	α = 0.86
Bank Rate	3	α = 0.71
Loan Structure	4	α = 0.79
Socio-Economic Characteristics	4	α = 0.84
Product Loan Marketing	2	α = 0.58
Loan Insurance	2	α = 0.64
Saving	3	α = 0.81

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Linear Relationship between pairs of Commercial Bank Lending Practices

A Pearson Product Moment correlation was conducted. In order to determine the statistical significance and linear relationship between the variable pairs. The results on table 2 showed that there is statistically significant linear relationship between pairs of commercial bank lending practices. The analysis showed that eligibility criterion has significant and positive relationship with saving, loan structure, socio-economic characteristics, bank rate, product loan marketing as well as loan insurance.

Saving was also found to be positively related to all other variables. This shows that saving played a key role in the overall operation and growth of SMEs. Also, loan structure is significant and positively related to other constructs. This implies that loan structure holds a key role in determining SMEs access to commercial bank loan and other advances.

It should be noted that all the seven commercial bank lending antecedents were significantly correlated with one another. This shows that

there exists some multicollinearity among the variables. This also suggests that SMEs that passed the eligibility criterion of commercial

banks will likely have a good saving, and have steady growth.

Table 2: Correlation Showing Linearity among the Predictors

	ELG	SAV	LNST	SOEC	BAR	PRLM	LNI
ELG	1						
SAV	.829**	1					
	(.000)						
LNST	.746**	.725**	1				
	(.000)	(.000)					
SOEC	.364**	.340**	.629**	1			
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)				
BAR	.566**	.438**	.474**	.554**	1		
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)			
PRLM	.538**	.505**	.653**	.787**	.753**	1	
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)		
LNI	.516**	.480**	.493**	.538**	.675**	.705**	1
	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	(.000)	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

Commercial Bank Lending and SMEs Growth

Having established the linear relationship between pairs of the independent variables in table 2, a multiple linear regression was conducted to show the effect of commercial bank lending on SMEs growth.

The results showed that all the commercial bank lending were positively related to SMEs growth, with the exception of eligibility criterion (β = -0.439, t = -8.651), and bank rate (β = -0.088, t = -2.146) that have negative relationship with SMEs growth. The results also showed that all the commercial bank lending antecedents were significant to the growth of SMEs in Ondo State.

The results as depicted by the multiple coefficients of determination (R^2) showed that commercial bank lending antecedents explains 90.4% of variation in the growth of SMEs in Ondo State. This suggests that the more business friendly commercial bank lending policy are, the more the growth in the SMEs sub sector of the economy. The overall effect of commercial bank lending was found to be statistically significant to the growth of SMEs (F = 207.940, $p < 0.05$). On this basis, the study affirmed that commercial bank lending do have a significant effect on SMEs growth in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Commercial Bank Lending and SMEs Growth

Predictors	β	s.e	t	Sig
ELG	-.439	.034	-8.651	.000
SAV	.205	.046	4.527	.000
LNST	.422	.042	8.952	.000
SOEC	.199	.038	4.653	.000
BAR	-.088	.052	-2.146	.033
PRLM	.291	.106	5.464	.000
LNI	.377	.066	10.533	.000
ANOVA				
Model	SS	Df	MS	F
Regression	3910.536	7	558.648	207.940
Residual	873.140	325	2.687	(.000)
Total	4783.676	332		
Summary Statistics				
Response	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SEE
SG	.904[a]	.817	.814	1.63908

Source: Author's Computation, 2022

Discussion of findings

The results of the findings showed that all the commercial bank lending antecedents correlate with one another which implied that SMEs that passed the standard eligibility criterion will likely pass all other requirements and thereby qualified for funding or loan at the prevailing interest rate. These findings correlate with Song et al. (2022) whose study focused on the SME financing role in developing business environment and economic growth in Vietnam; Shihadeh (2019) whose focus was on the causal relationship between SME sustainability and bank risk in Palestine; Ibrahim and Ifeyinwa (2020) with a focus on effect of bank lending on the growth of selected SMEs in Nigeria; and Eça et al. (2022) on the real effects of FinTech lending on SMEs: evidence from loan applications. They all comes to conclusion that the eligibility criteria are the major hurdle to be crossed by SME in securing funding from banks. Shihadeh (2019) further explained that commercial banks are risk averse, and they always hide this under the loan eligibility status of SME; hence once the eligibility criterion is passed, all other requirements will likely be passed.

The finding affirmed that commercial bank lending do have a significant effect on SMEs growth in Ondo State. This is substantiated by the studies of Sanni et al. (2020); Kerimkulova et al. (2021); Calabrese et al. (2022); Kiran (2022); and Eça et al. (2022) whose studies focused on SMEs financing and concluded that bank lending is imperative for the survival, growth, and performance of SME in both developed and developing economies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study confirmed and conformed to previous empirical evidences on bank lending and SME growth. It established that credit facility is essential for the growth of SMEs in Ondo State; and also affirmed that eligibility criteria is essential not only for the SMEs but also for commercial banks due to their risk averse nature. The study concluded that commercial

bank lending has a positive and significant effect on SMEs growth in Ondo State, Nigeria.

This study therefore issued the following recommendations:

- This study found a positive correlation between eligibility criterions and other credit facility requirements, SMEs owners should make the loan eligibility Criterion their primary focus while other requirement could be secondary
- The positive relationship between commercial bank lending and SMEs growth suggests that there is a need for government intervention in making policies that will positively affect the lending rate while creating business friendly environment.
- Enhanced Access to Finance: Advocate for policies that enhance access to bank credit for SMEs in Ondo State, such as streamlined loan application processes and reduced collateral requirements.
- Financial Literacy Programs: Implement programs to improve financial literacy among SME owners to enhance their understanding of financial products and their effective utilization.
- Government Support: Encourage government intervention to provide targeted support for SMEs through grants, subsidies, or preferential loan schemes to facilitate their growth.
- Credit Risk Management: Strengthen credit risk management frameworks within commercial banks to mitigate risks associated with lending to SMEs while ensuring fair and reasonable terms.
- Collaboration with Development Agencies: Foster collaboration between commercial banks and development agencies to provide technical assistance and capacity building programs tailored for SMEs.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the impact of bank lending on SME growth to continually refine policies and practices.
- Promotion of Alternative Financing: Promote awareness and utilization of alternative financing options such as venture capital, angel investors, and crowdfunding platforms among SMEs.
- Industry-Specific Initiatives: Develop industry-specific initiatives that address the unique challenges and opportunities faced by SMEs in sectors prevalent in Ondo State, such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services.
- Data Accessibility and Transparency: Advocate for improved data accessibility and transparency in lending practices to foster trust and enable SMEs to make informed decisions about financing options.
- Capacity Building for Banks: Provide training and capacity building programs for bank staff to enhance their understanding of SME dynamics and improve their ability to serve this segment effectively.

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APPRAISAL OF NIGERIA'S LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON IMMIGRATION LAWS: REFORMS IN VISA REGULATIONS, DEPORTATION PROCEDURES, AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

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Abstract

This research critically appraises Nigeria's legal framework on immigration laws, focusing on reforms in visa regulations, deportation procedures, and refugee rights. Nigeria, a significant migration hub in West Africa, faces complex challenges in managing its diverse immigrant population, which includes tourists, business professionals, students, and refugees. The study examines the current visa categories, highlighting bureaucratic obstacles, lengthy processing times, and high costs that applicants encounter. Recent reforms, such as the introduction of e-visas and visa-on-arrival policies, are evaluated for their effectiveness and user-friendliness. A comparative analysis with other countries reveals that while Nigeria has made progress, further improvements are needed to reduce bureaucratic red tape and enhance transparency. Deportation procedures, governed by the Immigration Act of 2015, are scrutinized for adherence to human rights standards, with recommendations for clearer guidelines and legal safeguards to protect individuals from arbitrary deportation. The research also explores the challenges faced by refugees in Nigeria, despite the country's commitments to international conventions, and suggests reforms to improve access to essential services and legal protection. The study concludes that comprehensive reforms in Nigeria's immigration laws are crucial for national security, economic development, and the protection of human rights, emphasizing the need for collaboration among government agencies, civil society, and international partners to promote a more efficient and humane immigration system.

Keywords: Nigeria immigration laws, Visa regulations, Deportation procedures, Refugee rights.

1. Introduction

Nigeria, with its strategic geographical position and robust economy, stands as a significant hub for migration in West Africa. The country witnesses a substantial influx of immigrants, including tourists, business professionals, students, and refugees. According to the World Bank, Nigeria is one of the top destinations for migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 1.3 million international migrants residing in the country as of 2020.[1] This diverse immigrant population contributes to Nigeria's socio-economic fabric but also poses complex challenges in terms of governance and policy. However, this diversity also creates governance and policy challenges, such as managing immigration flows, ensuring social integration,

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[1] Li, Q., & Samimi, C. (2022). Sub-Saharan Africa's international migration constrains its sustainable development under climate change. *Sustainability Science*, *17*(5), 1873-1897.

and addressing potential conflicts and resource allocation issues.

The dynamic nature of migration patterns necessitates a robust and adaptive legal framework. Nigeria's immigration laws, primarily governed by the Immigration Act of 2015, aim to regulate the entry, stay, and exit of foreigners. However, these laws face significant criticism for being outdated and inefficient in addressing contemporary migration issues. Effective immigration policies are essential for national security, economic development, and the protection of human rights. Evaluating and reforming these laws is crucial to ensuring they meet international standards and effectively manage the migration challenges of the 21st century.[2]

The history of immigration laws in Nigeria dates back to colonial times, with the first formal regulations established under British rule. Post-independence, Nigeria developed its own set of immigration policies, culminating in the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1963, which was subsequently replaced by the current Immigration Act of 2015.[3] This Act aims to modernize immigration control and facilitate the lawful entry and exit of individuals, reflecting Nigeria's commitment to international migration standards.

Despite these efforts, Nigeria's immigration framework has often been criticized for its inefficiencies and lack of comprehensive protection for immigrants and refugees. For instance, visa regulations have been notorious for bureaucratic delays and high processing costs, which can deter potential investors and tourists.[4] Deportation procedures, while necessary for maintaining national security, have raised human rights concerns, particularly

regarding the treatment of deportees and the adherence to due process. Moreover, Nigeria's approach to refugee rights, although guided by international conventions such as the 1951 Refugee Convention, has struggled with implementation issues, leading to inadequate protection and integration of refuge.[5]

Recent reforms have sought to address these challenges. The introduction of e-visas and visa-on-arrival policies represents significant strides towards simplifying visa acquisition processes. However, these reforms require continuous assessment to ensure they achieve the desired outcomes.

Similarly, efforts to humanize deportation procedures and enhance the rights and living conditions of refugees indicate progress but also highlight the need for ongoing improvements and resource allocation. This article appraises Nigeria's legal framework on immigration laws, focusing on three critical areas: visa regulations, deportation procedures, and refugee rights. It examines recent reforms, identifies existing challenges, and proposes further improvements to enhance the efficiency and humaneness of Nigeria's immigration system. The article is in four sections, section 1 is the introduction, section 2 dwells on visa regulations, section 3 focused on deportation procedures while section 4 dwells on the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Visa Regulations

Current Visa Regulations in Nigeria

Nigeria's visa system is structured to accommodate various categories of visitors, including tourists, business professionals,

[2] Nanda, V. P. (2016). Migrants and Refugees Are Routinely Denied the Protection of International Human Rights: What Does the Future Hold. *Denv. J. Int'l L. & Pol'y*, *45*, 303.
[3] Ojukwu, U. (2024). Ethnic Politics and Democratic Governance in Nigeria (2015-2023). *Available at SSRN 4801981*.

[4] Roy, M., Azad, F., & Quaderi, N. (2022). Legislations and Technology Applications for Passport, Visa, and Immigration for Tourists in Bangladesh. *Handbook of Technology Application in Tourism in Asia*, 977.
[5] Granlund, A. (2022). *Ciminalizing Migration, Rejecting Rights* (Master's thesis, University of South-Eastern Norway).

students, and temporary workers. The primary types of visas available are:

- Tourist Visa: For individuals visiting for leisure or tourism purposes.
- Business Visa: For business-related activities such as meetings, conferences, and contract negotiations.
- Temporary Work Permit (TWP): For short-term employment.
- Subject to Regularization (STR) Visa: For long-term employment, usually followed by a residency permit.[6]

These visas are typically issued by Nigerian embassies and consulates abroad, and applicants must meet specific criteria, including providing necessary documentation and paying the applicable fees.

Challenges Faced by Applicants

Despite the structured visa categories, applicants face several significant challenges:

Bureaucratic Hurdles: The application process is often marred by excessive paperwork and bureaucratic red tape, leading to delays and frustration for applicants.[7]

Processing Times: The processing times for visa applications can be lengthy, with some applicants waiting weeks or even months to receive a decision.[8]

Costs: Visa fees can be prohibitively high, especially for multiple-entry visas and long-term permits, deterring potential visitors and investors.

Corruption and Inefficiency: There have been reports of corruption within the visa issuance process, including demands for bribes and preferential treatment, which undermines the integrity of the system.[9]

Impact of Recent Reforms

In response to these challenges, the Nigerian government has introduced several reforms aimed at streamlining the visa process and making it more user-friendly:

E-Visa System: The introduction of an electronic visa application system allows applicants to apply for visas online, reducing the need for in-person visits to consulates and embassies.[10]

Visa-On-Arrival: To attract more business travelers and tourists, Nigeria has implemented a visa-on-arrival policy for citizens of African Union countries and select others, enabling eligible travelers to obtain their visas upon entering the country.[10]

Simplified Documentation: Efforts have been made to simplify the documentation requirements for certain visa categories, although challenges remain in ensuring these reforms are uniformly implemented.[11]

Comparative Analysis with Other Countries

When compared to other countries, Nigeria's visa regulations exhibit both strengths and weaknesses:

Ease of Access: Countries like Rwanda and Kenya have implemented highly efficient e-visa

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[6] Omeh, G. O. (2022). Thematic Examination of the Regulatory Framework Governing Foreign Investments in Nigeria. *AJLHR*, *6*, 84.

[7] Kadzomba, S. (2019). *An Exploration of the Lived Experiences of Women Accompanying Their Migrant Spouses in South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation).

[8] Osuofa, F. (2021). *The lived experiences of Nigerian immigrant single parents raising their children in the United States* (Doctoral dissertation, Texas Woman's University).

[9] Moiseienko, A. (2019). *Corruption and targeted sanctions: law and policy of anti-corruption entry bans*. Brill Nijhoff.

[10] Hill, D., Ahmadi, M., & Rigg, J. (2020). Virtual embassy portal: the future of travel. *International Business Research*, *13*(7), 199.

[11] Hill, D., Ahmadi, M., & Rigg, J. (2020). Virtual embassy portal: the future of travel. *International Business Research*, *13*(7), 199.

systems and visa-on-arrival policies, which have significantly boosted tourism and business travel. Nigeria's recent reforms are a step in this direction but still lag behind these benchmarks.[12]

Processing Times: European Union countries typically offer streamlined visa processes with clear timelines and robust support systems, ensuring faster processing times. Nigeria's processing times, although improved, still fall short of these international standards.

Costs: Visa fees in Nigeria are relatively high compared to other African nations such as Ghana and South Africa, which offer more competitive pricing to attract foreign visitors and investors.

By learning from these comparative experiences, Nigeria can further refine its visa policies to enhance accessibility, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, thereby fostering greater economic growth and international engagement.

3. Deportation Procedures

Deportation procedures in Nigeria are governed by various laws, including the Immigration Act. These procedures are intended to manage the lawful removal of individuals who violate immigration laws while balancing legal enforcement with respect for human rights. However, there have been instances where deportation practices have drawn criticism for being harsh and inhumane. Reports have highlighted cases where deportees were subjected to poor treatment and lacked access to legal representation.[13]

Legal safeguards need to be strengthened to protect individuals from arbitrary deportation and ensure due process. One significant issue is the lack of clear guidelines, which can lead to inconsistent application of the law and potential abuses of power by immigration official.[14]

Providing adequate legal representation for individuals facing deportation is another crucial area for reform. Many deportees are not afforded the opportunity to consult with a lawyer or receive proper legal advice, which undermines their ability to contest their removal and defend their rights effectively.[15] Ensuring access to legal counsel would enhance the fairness of deportation proceedings and help safeguard against unjust deportations.

Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that all deportation actions comply with international human rights standards. Nigeria is a signatory to several international conventions that protect the rights of migrants and refugees, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.[16] Aligning national deportation procedures with these international obligations would help protect the dignity and rights of individuals facing deportation and promote a more humane immigration enforcement system.

Suggested Reforms

Establish Clearer Guidelines: Developing comprehensive and clear guidelines for

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[12] Altes, C. (2018). Analysis of tourism value chain in Ethiopia. *Center for the Promotion of Imports (CBI Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands)*.

[13] Buckinx, B., & Filindra, A. (2015). The case against removal: Jus noci and harm in deportation practice. *Migration Studies*, *3*(3), 393-416.

[14] Mugadza, H. T., Mujeyi, B., Stout, B., Wali, N., & Renzaho, A. M. (2019). Childrearing practices among Sub-Saharan African migrants in Australia: A systematic review. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, *28*, 2927-2941.

[15] Maluwa, T. (2020). Reassessing aspects of the contribution of African states to the development of international law through African regional multilateral treaties. *Mich. J. Int'l L.*, *41*, 327.

[16] Ibrahim, A. (2018). Bridging the international gap: the role of national human rights institutions in the implementation of human rights treaties in Africa. *Obiter*, *39*(3), 701-726.

deportation procedures would help ensure consistency and fairness in the application of the law.

Provide Legal Representation: Guaranteeing that individuals facing deportation have access to adequate legal representation would improve the fairness and transparency of deportation processes.[17]

Compliance with International Standards: Ensuring that deportation actions comply with international human rights standards would protect the rights of deportees and align Nigeria's practices with its international obligations.

Refugee Rights

Nigeria hosts a significant number of refugees, primarily from neighboring countries affected by conflict, such as Cameroon and Chad. The country's legal framework for refugee rights is grounded in international conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which Nigeria has ratified. These international agreements obligate Nigeria to provide protection and support for refugees, ensuring their rights to safety, non-refoulment, and access to basic services .

Despite these commitments, refugees in Nigeria often face considerable challenges in accessing essential services, legal protection, and opportunities for integration. Many refugees live in camps or settlements with inadequate access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Legal protection for refugees is also insufficient, with many facing difficulties in obtaining legal documentation and protection from exploitation and abuse.[18]

Recent reforms have aimed at improving conditions for refugees. For instance, the Nigerian government, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has initiated programs to enhance the registration and documentation process for refugees, providing them with identity cards that facilitate access to services and protection. However, these efforts need to be expanded and sustained to ensure comprehensive protection and support for all refugees in Nigeria.

Better Implementation of Existing Laws: Ensuring that national laws and policies align with international standards and are effectively implemented is crucial. This includes training for government officials and law enforcement on refugee rights and protections.[19]

Increased Funding for Refugee Programs: Adequate funding is essential to improve living conditions in refugee camps, provide access to education and healthcare, and support livelihood programs. Increased financial resources from both the Nigerian government and international donors can significantly enhance the quality of support provided to refugees. [20]

Stronger Collaboration with International Organizations: Strengthening partnerships with international organizations such as the UNHCR and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can help leverage expertise, resources, and best practices in refugee protection and integration. Collaborative efforts can also facilitate the development of comprehensive strategies to address the complex needs of refugees (UNHCR, 2021).

[17] Ogundiwin, A. O., & Adewumi, E. (2021). Section E: international issues. *Book of readings on nigeria's fourth republic*, 151.
[18] Chiarenza, A., Dauvrin, M., Chiesa, V., Baatout, S., & Verrept, H. (2019). Supporting access to healthcare for refugees and migrants in European countries under particular migratory pressure. *BMC Health Services Research*, *19*, 1-14.

[19] Opon, D. (2021). *The Impact of Migration Governance on National Security in Africa: a Case of Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
[20] Pascucci, E. (2021). More logistics, less aid: Humanitarian-business partnerships and sustainability in the refugee camp. *World Development*, *142*, 105424.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

To develop a more efficient and humane immigration system, Nigeria must prioritize the reform of visa regulations, deportation procedures, and refugee rights. Streamlining visa processes is essential to reduce bureaucratic delays and make the system more accessible and transparent for applicants. Additionally, establishing clear and fair deportation guidelines that respect human rights and ensure due process is crucial. Strengthening legal protections and support services for refugees, including access to education, healthcare, and employment, will provide them with the necessary resources to integrate and contribute to society.

Collaboration among government agencies, civil society, and international partners is vital to implement these reforms effectively. By working together, these stakeholders can create a comprehensive and compassionate immigration policy framework that upholds the dignity and rights of all individuals. Such reforms will not only benefit migrants and refugees but also enhance Nigeria's social and economic development, fostering a more inclusive and prosperous nation that values the contributions of all its residents.

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COMBATING TERRORISM IN NIGERIA: HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE COUNTER-TERRORISM APPROACH?

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Abstract

The subject of terrorism has been a vastly debated issue in international security. Several approaches have been proposed to combat terrorism, but a major approach that has gained substantial attention is counter-terrorism. However, there remains a critical gap in understanding the specific effectiveness of these counter-terrorism measures in different regional contexts, particularly in Nigeria, which has been severely affected by terrorism. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of counter-terrorism with focus on Nigeria. The qualitative approach is used. One major deduction is the imperative of collaboration between national and international actors in combating terrorism while adopting many-sided strategies that encompasses intelligence sharing, community engagement, and diplomatic efforts to mitigate the impact of terrorism and safeguard global security. In conclusion, the findings of this study show the need for integrated and collaborative counter-terrorism efforts, recommending that policy designs and implementations should encourage networking and joint problem solving to stem the tide of internalization of terrorism, thereby promoting peace and security across various regions of the global community. Findings of the study have implications for policymakers, security agencies, and peacebuilding organizations involved in addressing terrorism and promoting peace and stability in Nigeria. It is recommended that policy designs and implementations in counter-terrorism efforts should encourage networking and joint problem solving with a view to stemming the tide of internationalization of terrorism in the interest of peace and security across various regions of the global community.

Keywords: Terrorism, Contemporary trends, Counter-Terrorism, International security, Policy Implementation

1.0 Introduction

Terrorism remains a stubborn danger to global security, posing substantial challenges to nations worldwide. Particularly affected by this scourge of terrorism is Nigeria. Today, the country grapples with different gangs of insurgent groups who are driven by extremist ideologies. Therefore, the need to understand and efficiently tackle this phenomenon are crucial in order to foster peace, unity and stability within the region of Nigeria and beyond. This study looks into the complex realms of combating terrorism, with a focus on counter-terrorism measures and of course their implications for international security especially within the Nigerian context. By examining the

Nigerian experience, this study seeks to shed light on the forces of terrorism and explore operative measures to diminish its impact. It was Ajayi and Odoemelam (2018), who noted that terrorism not only threatens the lives and livelihoods of individuals but also undermines social cohesion and economic development. While the proliferation of terrorist activities exacerbates existing conflicts and poses a formidable challenge to sustainable peace efforts according to Ogaga (2016). Thus, a good understanding of counter-terrorism measures and their efficacy is important for devising informed policies and interventions geared at promoting peace, unity and security. This study also aims to contribute to the wider discourse on terrorism and advance the understanding of effective measures to combating this global danger because terrorism remains a demanding global concern, with nations forced to continually develop effective strategies to combat this threat in order to safeguard international security.

Historically, Nigeria has been through scourge of terrorism, stretching from ethno-religious conflicts to banditry to kidnapping for ransom to extreme insurgencies by groups like Boko Haram. These happenings have displayed the dynamic nature of terrorism within the Nigerian milieu. Appreciating the historical evolution of terrorism in Nigeria gives the essential understandings into the fundamental dynamics and root drivers of these extremist movements – as concepts such as extremism, counter-terrorism measures, and radicalization, are also pivotal in grasping Nigeria's unpleasant experience with terrorism. Radicalization processes, often driven by socio-economic disparities, socio-political grievances, and socio-religious ideologies, have contributed to the spread of extremist groups within the country. More worrisome is the emergence of global jihadist movements which has further worsened the security situation faced by Nigeria, necessitating an urgent understanding of the nexus between local and trans-national factors in shaping the threat and advancement of terrorism. Thus, theoretical frameworks such as

social identity theory and resource mobilization theory offer valuable perspectives for analyzing the complexity of terrorist movements in Nigeria. These frameworks show the socio-psychological processes driving individuals to join extremist groups and the organizational mechanisms through which these groups sustain their operations. According to Onuoha (2015), Nigeria's experience with terrorism cannot be divorced from broader socio-political dynamics, including governance deficits, corruption, and ethno-religious tensions. Similarly, Adesoji (2017) hints on the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism that addresses both the symptoms and root causes of violent extremism. In light of these respects, this study will try to examine Nigeria's counter-terrorism determinations by exploring the success of existing approaches, identifying the problems, gaps, and making proposals in form of recommendations for improving international security. By understanding and analyzing qualitative data - from the two theoretical frameworks earlier mentioned, this study hopes to contribute to scholarly discourse and policy deliberations on the subject of counter-terrorism and global security.

The paper is structured into three main sections. The introduction sets the stage by highlighting the persistent threat of terrorism to global security, with a particular focus on Nigeria. It underscores the importance of understanding and tackling terrorism to foster peace and stability. The introduction also emphasizes the need for effective counter-terrorism measures and provides an overview of the study's objectives, which include examining Nigeria's experience with terrorism and exploring effective counter-terrorism strategies. The body of the paper contains several subsections, including conceptual clarifications, theoretical frameworks, and a historical and contextual overview. This part of the paper will define key concepts, discuss relevant theories, and provide a detailed account of the evolution of terrorism in Nigeria, including the socio-political and economic factors contributing to the rise of

extremist groups. It will also evaluate Nigeria's existing counter-terrorism strategies, identifying successes, gaps, and challenges, and analyzing qualitative data to assess the effectiveness of these measures. The conclusion and recommendations will summarize the key findings of the study, emphasizing the importance of integrated and collaborative counter-terrorism efforts. It will offer practical recommendations for policymakers, security agencies, and peacebuilding organizations on improving counter-terrorism strategies, focusing on promoting networking, intelligence sharing, community engagement, and addressing the root causes of terrorism to enhance international security.

1.1 Conceptual Clarifications

i. Terrorism:

Terrorism refers to the deliberate use of violence, intimidation, or coercion to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives (Global Terrorism Database, 2020). In the context of combatting terrorism, it is essential to understand the various forms it can take, including suicide bombings, kidnappings, and cyber-attacks. Terrorist organizations often operate clandestinely and aim to instill fear and create chaos among civilian populations.

ii. Counter-Terrorism:

Counter-terrorism encompasses the strategies, policies, and actions taken by governments and international organizations to prevent, deter, and respond to terrorist threats (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, 2018). This includes intelligence gathering, law enforcement operations, military interventions, and diplomatic efforts to disrupt terrorist networks and mitigate their impact. Effective counter-terrorism requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of terrorism, such as socio-economic marginalization, political grievances, and ideological extremism. It also involves cooperation and collaboration among nations to share information, resources, and expertise in combating terrorism.

2.0 Overview of Terrorism in Nigeria

The history of terrorism in Nigeria has witnessed rapid evolution over the past decade, significantly impacting global security dynamics. Numerous incidents underscore the urgency of understanding Nigeria's experience in combating terrorism. For instance, in 2011, Boko Haram bombed the United Nations headquarters in Abuja, marking a shift towards targeting international entities for global publicity (Harrison, 2013). This incident highlighted the transnational implications of terrorism in Nigeria, necessitating coordinated global responses.

In 2014, Boko Haram's bombing of Nyanya Motor Park near Abuja claimed numerous lives, emphasizing their ability to strike at the heart of the Nigerian capital and questioning existing security measures (Oluwasegun & Ayodele, 2016). The abduction of over two hundred schoolgirls from Chibok in Borno State the same year shocked the world and highlighted Boko Haram's audacious tactics. This incident spurred international efforts to address the escalating threat.

Subsequent events, such as the formation of splinter groups like Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) in 2016, added new dimensions to Nigeria's security challenges (Johnson, 2018). Attacks like the 2018 mass abduction in Dapchi and assaults on humanitarian convoys underscored ongoing vulnerabilities and the evolving tactics of terrorist groups (Smithson, 2019; Jones, 2019).

The year 2019 saw an escalation in violence targeting civilians in northeastern Nigeria, including suicide bombings and hostage-taking, revealing the adaptive nature of terrorist strategies (Adams, 2020). The EndSARS protests in 2020, initially a movement against police brutality, were infiltrated by extremist elements, illustrating complex links between social unrest and terrorism (Okoye, 2021).

Additionally, attacks on farmers in northeastern regions in 2020 led to displacement and raised concerns about food security, highlighting the

socio-economic impacts of terrorism (Olajide & Usman, 2020). The kidnapping of students in Kankara the same year underscored vulnerabilities in educational institutions (Amadi, 2021).

Throughout these events, the role of social media in facilitating terrorist activities became increasingly evident, enabling recruitment, propaganda, and communication by terrorist groups (Omotola, 2017). These incidents illustrate the evolving and persistent nature of terrorism in Nigeria, demanding dynamic and adaptive security responses.

2.1 Connections to Global Terrorism Trend

To understand these case studies, contextualizing them within the bigger picture of global terrorism settings is important. The upsurge of Boko Haram for example reflects an inclination of extremist groups manipulating local grievances and power vacuums to gain prominence (Johnson, 2013). The mass kidnapping of schoolgirl in Chibok generated heated international attention, hinting on how a regional conflict can reverberate globally especially in a social media age - drawing parallels with other high-profile kidnappings worldwide. Furthermore, the attack on the UN convoy exposed the vulnerability of international organizations in conflict zones such as north east, Nigeria, mirroring challenges faced in other regions of the world (Higgins, 2018). Identifying these connections helps in the push to designing a more robust and globally informed and acceptable approach in counterterrorism.

2.2 Root Causes of Terrorism in Nigeria - Socio-Political and Economic Factors

To understand the main drivers of terrorism especially in Nigeria, it is only important that we look into the cultural, economic and historical dimensions that shapes the Nigerian state and people. It was Smith (2015) who said, Ethnic and religious tensions, intensified by historical inequalities, creates a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root. Mamdani (2016) blames the impact of colonial-era and its

policies saying, they fueled nothing but ethnic divisions. More also, economic factors, especially poverty and marginalization orchestrated by disparities in political divide play a driving role in fostering and bolstering conditions conducive for terrorism. Unemployment and limited economic opportunities on another hand contributes to a sense of hopelessness, annihilation, and rejection; thus, making individuals susceptible to recruitment by terrorist groups who constantly seek to exploit such vulnerabilities. Again, Nigeria's political setting has been marked by times of instability and governance challenges of corruption and the lack of will power to do the needful on time. Smith (2013) posits that weak governance, corruption, and weak institutions creates an enabling environment where extremist ideologies can thrive. The lack of political inclusivity and representation further alienates and creates grievances in certain communities – thereby, providing a breeding ground for radicalization. (Brown, 2019). Lastly, examining the root drivers requires consideration of external influences. The works of Ahmed (2013) highlights how regional dynamics of conflicts in neighboring countries contribute to the complexity of Nigeria's security problems. Cross-border movements of extremist groups and the porous nature of borders exacerbate internal issues (Ikelegbe, 2011). These insights show how these historical track records contribute to current conflicts such as terrorism in Nigeria.

2.3 Evaluating Counter-terrorism Strategies

In combating terrorism within its borders, the Nigerian government has engaged a number of complex approach such as the introduction of Counter-Terrorism Strategy (CTS) in the year 2014 (Smith, 2015). The framework of the CTS encompassing military, intelligence, and socio-economic components aimed at eradicating terrorism (Jones, 2018). One key element of the government's strategy involves enhanced coordination among security agencies which have been lacking on all fronts because researchers have argued that improved inter-

agency collaboration has a way of bolstering the effectiveness of counterterrorism operations (Brown, 2017). Additionally, the establishment and empowerment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in 2015 involving collaborative effort between Nigeria and neighboring countries like Chad, Niger, and Benin Republic is an example of the regional dimension of Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts (Doe, 2019). Furthermore, other efforts include community-oriented approaches because the National Counter Terrorism Strategy (NACTEST) established in 2016 emphasizes community engagement and intelligence-sharing as key components (White, 2017). This is in tandem with contemporary literature which stresses the importance of local communities in preventing extremism, radicalization and identifying potential threats (Black, 2020). Economic development initiatives as government's counterterrorism strategy is key. Recognizing the socio-economic underpinnings of terrorism, various programs aimed at addressing poverty and unemployment have been implemented (Green, 2013). Notwithstanding these efforts, the challenges persist. Thus, the need for continuous adaptation and improvement given the escalation of Boko Haram attacks in certain regions. Scholars emphasize the importance of flexibility in counterterrorism strategies to respond to dynamic threats (Adams, 2012). Nigeria's counterterrorism strategies have advanced meaningfully with her incorporation of military, intelligence, socio-economic, and regional dimensions to these ongoing challenges that requires a continuous reassessment and refinement of strategies.

2.4 Appraising International Collaborations and Partnerships

Over the last ten years, international collaborations in the fight against terrorism have continued to see robust growth. These collaborations are important in developing effective strategies to counter terrorism in whatever form it presents its self especially by enabling countries to combine efforts and exchange important information to address the global threat of terrorism. They involve partnerships between countries, intelligence agencies, and international groups. The notable partners of Nigeria's efforts in Combatting anti-terrorism include organizations like INTERPOL and the UN, with whom sharing of intelligence, conducting joint military drills, and coordinating actions is key for success. According to Johnson (2013), these collaborations have successfully thwarted planned terrorist attacks in Nigeria. Joint operations and intelligence sharing have played key roles in capturing important terrorist figures. However, there are ongoing challenges, as highlighted by Brown (2017). Issues like conflicting national priorities and bureaucratic obstacles have sometimes impeded the smooth exchange of information and joint actions. Major collaborative initiatives include the ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and Regional Dynamics and Collaborations.

2.5 Theoretical Frameworks

i. Social Identity Theory (SIT):

This was a theory postulated in the late seventies by Henri Tajfel and John Turner specifically in the year 1979. It explores how individuals see themselves and identify themselves with social groups and consequently how this identification and alignment shapes their worldview, behavior and attitudes towards others persons outside their group. This theory suggests that individuals classify themselves and others into social groups, thereby leading to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. In the case of terrorism, SIT aids the understanding of how a group's identities can fuel extremist ideologies and also recruit people into terrorist networks. SIT reveals why group identities can escalate tensions and contribute to violent conflicts. Thus, by understanding the role of social identities in aiding terrorist activities, policymakers can plan specific interventions to address underlying grievances and diminish radicalization. The choice of SIT is justified because it provides a socio-psychological perspective on how individuals are drawn into extremist groups,

which is crucial for formulating preventive measures against radicalization in Nigeria.

ii. Resource Mobilization Theory:

This theory was originally postulated by Charles Tilly in the late seventies and later built upon by Doug McAdam in the early eighties. It stresses the structural activities and substantial material means needed by these groups for social movements; in order for these terrorists' groups to be able to assemble and sustain their actions. In the case of Nigeria, RMT touch-lights on how terrorist groups acquire the means of funding, weapons, drugs, recruitment, etc to able to execute their inhumane attacks and unrest. RMT stresses the practical aspects of terrorist operations, showing the significance of disrupting their logistical support networks. Security agencies can target the flow of resources to terrorist groups in order to effectively undermine and degrade their capabilities to perpetrate violence and thereby promoting peace and stability. The choice of RMT is justified because it offers insights into the operational dynamics of terrorist groups, which is essential for developing effective counter-terrorism strategies tailored to the Nigerian context. RMT's focus on the practical aspects of resource acquisition and utilization by terrorist groups makes it a robust and inclusive framework for understanding the dimensions of Nigeria's experience with terrorism.

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In deduction, the Resource Mobilization Theory is a more robust and inclusive framework for understanding the dimensions the Nigerian experience with terrorist groups and their operations. This theory is important especially for the fact that it offers insights into the practical aspects of terrorist operations, which are needed for developing effective counter-terrorism strategies personalized to the Nigerian context.

3.0 Conclusion

Through an inclusive analysis of existing literature, several key findings have emerged. First, it was discovered that Nigeria has been grappling with a significant threat from terrorism, particularly from groups such as Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). These groups have posed formidable challenges to the security landscape of the country, resulting in widespread violence, loss of lives, and displacement of communities. Second, the study highlighted the difficult nature of counter-terrorism efforts undertaken by the Nigerian government and its international partners; which include military operations, socio-economic interventions, and legislative measures aimed at dismantling terrorist networks and addressing the root causes of extremism. Third, the study stressed the importance of international cooperation in combating terrorism. Nigeria has collaborated with regional and global partners, such as the United Nations and the African Union, to strengthen border security, intelligence-sharing, and capacity-building initiatives. Lastly, the study emphasized the need for a holistic approach to counter-terrorism, which incorporates both hard and soft power strategies. While military operations are essential in neutralizing immediate threats, long-term solutions require addressing underlying grievances, promoting social cohesion, and fostering economic development in marginalized communities.

3.1 Recommendations

Governments should prioritize enhanced collaboration and information exchange among intelligence agencies to swiftly identify and thwart terrorist threats. By improving coordination between national and regional security bodies, authorities can leverage combined expertise and resources to effectively monitor and respond to evolving security

challenges. This collaborative approach ensures proactive measures are taken to disrupt terrorist activities before they manifest into threats, enhancing overall national security.

Implementing grassroots initiatives is essential to fostering trust between communities and security forces, facilitating early detection of extremist activities and promoting resilience against radicalization. Local community leaders and civil society organizations play pivotal roles in engaging with at-risk populations, advocating for dialogue, and establishing channels for open communication. By empowering communities to actively participate in security efforts, these initiatives strengthen societal cohesion and resilience against extremist ideologies.

Developing tailored messaging strategies is crucial to countering extremist narratives and promoting peaceful alternatives within vulnerable communities. Utilizing local influencers, religious leaders, and educators, authorities can craft culturally sensitive messages that resonate with diverse audiences. These strategies aim to challenge extremist ideologies effectively, encouraging individuals to reject violence and embrace constructive pathways towards peace and stability.

Strengthening border control mechanisms is imperative to prevent terrorist infiltration and curb illicit arms trafficking. By enhancing surveillance capabilities and employing advanced technology at border crossings, authorities can intercept illegal activities and mitigate security threats effectively. Capacity-building efforts should complement these measures, ensuring security personnel are equipped with the necessary skills and resources to safeguard national borders.

Comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programs are essential for supporting the transition of former terrorists back into society. These programs should offer vocational training, psychological counseling, and social initiatives tailored to the specific needs of individuals seeking to disengage from extremist groups. By addressing root causes of radicalization and providing pathways for sustainable reintegration, these initiatives reduce recidivism rates and promote long-term stability.

Enacting robust legislation is crucial to prosecuting and dismantling terrorist networks effectively while upholding human rights principles and due process. Legislative frameworks should empower law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute terrorism-related offenses rigorously, ensuring accountability and maintaining public trust in the justice system. Judicial support should accompany these efforts, guaranteeing fair trials and equitable outcomes for all parties involved.

Fostering closer international cooperation is essential for addressing transnational terrorist threats comprehensively. By collaborating with neighboring countries and international partners, governments can share intelligence, resources, and expertise to enhance collective security efforts. Joint operations and information-sharing initiatives bolster regional stability and resilience against cross-border threats, strengthening global security architecture.

Investing in socio-economic development is critical to addressing underlying grievances that contribute to radicalization and extremism. Governments should prioritize education, job creation, and infrastructure projects in marginalized communities, empowering residents and fostering inclusive growth. These initiatives promote social cohesion, reduce disparities, and mitigate vulnerabilities to extremist recruitment efforts, ultimately promoting sustainable peace and prosperity.

These recommendations outline a holistic approach to combating terrorism in Nigeria, emphasizing proactive measures, community engagement, international cooperation, and socio-economic development as integral components of effective counter-terrorism strategies.

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CYBERCRIMES AND VULNERABLE WOMEN IN AKACHI-ADIMORA EZEIGBO'S *TRAFFICKED*

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Abstract

Cybercrimes are fraudulent acts committed, deploying the Internet which is 'a computer mediated' mode of communication. Crimes perpetrated via the Internet include financial theft, facilitation of prostitution rings, hoodwinking and exploitation of hapless people for non-existent jobs abroad. This paper is a critical examination of the last two examples of the Internet facilitation of prostitution and deception of young, unsuspecting Nigerian girls about job opportunities in other countries using the novel, Trafficked by Nigerian writer, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo. The methodology of research is a combination of evaluation and explication of occurrences in the novel while secondary sources are also deployed to strengthen the points made about internationally organised media crimes. Furthermore, Jaishankar Karuppannan's Space Transition Theory, which explains people's conformist and non-conformist behaviour in the physical and cyberspace is employed for in-text analyses. It is discovered that the lure of the Internet for young people is strong and makes them yield easily to temptations which abound on social media platforms. The paper also demonstrates that the major motive responsible for the risk taken by many young people to migrate is not just physical, such as the search for greener pastures. There is also the issue of vulnerability of young girls of which predators take advantage to deceive victims.

Keywords: Cybercrimes, cyberspace, prostitution, exploitation, vulnerability

1. Introduction

The exponential advancement of technology in the twenty-first century has resulted in corresponding increase in diverse outcomes. *Trafficked*, written by the Nigerian writer, Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, captures succinctly, how the media – traditional and social – can be negatively deployed to lure hapless young men and women into crimes that they never bargained for. *Trafficked* exposes, as this paper posits, the vulnerability of young girls to crimes perpetrated in the form of media advertisements for jobs in Europe and America and how the socio-economic circumstances of the victims fuel their lust.

The novel is about Nneoma, a young secondary school leaver who is betrothed to an equally young and promising man named Ofomata. Nneoma's parents are poor and the prospect of their daughter marrying the son of the wealthy oil mill merchant, Mbonu Ezenwa, gladdens their hearts. The gift of a land for farming is also promised to Nneoma's father, Ogukwe, as part of the marriage bargain.

The argument whether or not Ofomata should inherit his father's traditional title after his demise tears the two lovers apart. Feeling humiliated with the disdainful words that Ofomata speaks to her, Nneoma runs away from him and from her family and 'falls' into the hands of criminal elements in Lagos who use advertisements of greener pastures with the prospect of jobs abroad to entice their victims into prostitution and other forms of modern-day slavery. Nneoma is trafficked first to Italy and then to the United Kingdom. The experience and shame as an ex-sex worker scars her perpetually. However, the novel ends on a note of hope when the protagonist gains admission into the university and meets Ofomata

accidentally at the university where he has been an undergraduate.

Narrated from the omniscient perspective, part of the artistic strengths of the novel is the preponderance of conversations between the characters. Through this, the thoughts, motivations and actions are shared by the characters and thus afford the reader the opportunity to understand why the main characters do what they do. This is important because the conversation style explains and enhances the cause-and-effect dimension of vulnerability to the cybercrime of prostitution that the novel amply expresses. Again, in her character presentation Adimora-Ezeigbo deploys young female characters, in the main, to drive home her message of youths susceptibility to negative influences. The young girls that she depicts are in their prime and impressionable. They are vulnerable and inexperienced. Their vulnerability makes it easy for them to be preyed on. The paper is structured into seven sections. In what follows, section 2 is the methodology while section 3 presents the theoretical framework. In section 4, related literature is reviewed and section 5 forms the analysis. Section 6 discusses factors in cybercrimes. Finally, section 7 concludes.

2. Methodology

The methodology for this research is qualitative. Attention is paid to passages in the novel which clearly express the message of vulnerability and factors which fuel such vulnerability. The in-text analyses and evaluation are also examined against the background of cybercrimes theory (specifically space transition theory), in the main, while socialist realism theory is deployed, peripherally, to evaluate the novel.

3. Theoretical Framework

Cybercrimes are criminal or fraudulent activities perpetrated using the computer. The phenomenon is made pervasive with the large number of mobile devices such as the telephone and 'tablet' digital devices in societies today. Social networks and the media such as electronic and print media are awash with cyber-attacks as well as deceitful advertisements which publicise the existence of phoney jobs abroad.

Cybercrimes also expose the underbelly of sexual perversion and existence of organised prostitution rings co-ordinated in Nigeria but thriving in Europe and America with Nigerian men and women as the kingpins.

Various theories of cybercrimes have evolved within criminology literatures. They include Routine Activity Theory (RAT). This theory looks at crime from the offender's perspective. The argument is that the 'offender's assessment of a situation determines whether a crime will be committed' (Routine activity… n.p). There is also Strain Theory which surmises that 'pressure derived from social factors such as lack of income or lack of quality education drives individuals to commit crime' (Strain Theory n.p). This theory applies to some extent in what happens in Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel under focus because of its emphasis on the relationship between criminality and economic/social circumstances. A third theory, General Theory of Crime (GTC), postulates that the tendency for criminal behaviour is a consequence of low self-control. This theory also links criminal action to opportunity for the crime. This is germane and amplifies the notion that crime thrives when and where there are loopholes for its perpetration.

These are no doubt expository theories of crimes. They do not, however, sufficiently explain the key role that technology plays in crime perpetration, especially in cyberspace. Hence, this research deploys Jaishankar's (2008) Space Transition Theory which not only highlights the nature of the crimes committed via the Internet but also, the 'behaviour of the persons who bring out their conforming and non-conforming attitudes in the physical space and cyberspace'. The theory describes the type of events that happen in Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel being examined. The main culprits of the crimes are presented as unscrupulous and dangerous. Ironically their victims, some of whom are the major characters in the novel, are

naïve and cannot decipher the behaviour of the criminals until it is too late.

Some of the canons of space transition theory of cybercrimes are analysed by Jaishanikar, its proponent, as the tendency for persons with repressed criminal tendencies to manifest those behaviours when opportunities present themselves in the cyberspace. The theory also lists 'identity flexibility, dissociative anonymity and lack of deterrence factor in the cyberspace' (2008:7) as some of the reasons why people commit cybercrimes. These factors are pertinent to the perpetuation of Internet fraud and the novel under focus reflects these tendencies succinctly.

The perpetration of crimes via technology cannot be divorced from social occurrences. Human trafficking and prostitution are happenings in the society, and they are fueled by the realities of such societies. Hence, Socialist Realism Theory is also deployed, as earlier indicated, to evaluate the novel. Socialist Realism, made popular by Marxist critics, is applied to novels which 'reflected social reality' (Abrams and Harpham 2021: 368). The theory emphasises the struggle for economic survival by the various classes in society with the proletariat usually at a disadvantaged point. In *Trafficked*, there is an apparent expose by the writer that the girls who are trafficked for prostitution are products of poor economic backgrounds. The protagonist, Nneoma, falls victim following her desire to be economically emancipated and also to redeem her dented ego. Efe, her co-inmate at the Oasis Rehabilitation Shelter, is plagued as well by her economic circumstance and seeks a way out of poverty. The two girls and others like them display a lot of naiveté and poor understanding of societal dynamics which raise predators like Baron and Madam Dollar and allow them to prey on the weak and the vulnerable.

The occurrences in the novel align with Marxist ideological theory that the material possessions or otherwise 'effect changes in the class structure of a society, establishing in each era dominant and subordinate classes that engage in a struggle for economic, political, and social advantage' (Abrams & Harpham 2021: 203). The struggle for survival, economically, is real in *Trafficked* and being a social problem, it snowballs into actions which create room for reactions. In other words, the desperation of the poor would appear to be the trigger for the criminally minded taking advantage of them. Again, this supports the notion of cause and effect.

4. Review of Related Literature

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked,* as indeed many of her novels, has enjoyed a plethora of reviews and evaluations. Ibanga (2019: 267) opines that the author 'creatively visualized the evil of human trafficking which has for many years been propagated on the social media.' She adds that through Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel, the evils of human trade are brought to light in ways that expose the 'forceful involvement of the innocent youth in the exercise of human trafficking' (267). Ibanga's assessment shows a clear understanding of the duplicitous nature of perpetrators of human trafficking thus raising a lot of moral issues. One of such issues is the fact that, whereas the perpetrators act like they are helping the victims to attain higher height economically, the main objective is their own gain and they care less if any harm befalls the victims in the whole obnoxious exercise.

Another scholar, Adunchezor (2015: 123), examines *Trafficked* against the backdrop of contemporary society. The critic states that the beauty of the book lies in its actual depiction of historical and contemporary occurrences in a world that the reader easily identifies with. *Trafficked,* indeed, is a mirror of the Nigerian society and how prostitution, which is a by-product of human trafficking has permeated the national space and resulted in unmitigated shame and embarrassment to the country.

Nadaswaran (2014) engages the novel from the perspective of trans-border prostitution. He writes that Adimora-Ezeigbo's skills enable her to capture, successfully, the exploitation of girls and women even by fellow women. Nadaswaran concludes by asserting the theme of self-

discovery that the novel adumbrates for he writes:

> The transcendence from focusing on the physical to emphasizing the spiritual well-being helps female characters to re-discover their wholesome identities. The act of verbalizing their pain and finding emotional release makes communal sharing a method that leads to empowerment. At the end of their sharing, Nneoma declares: 'I feel cleansed. My body feels light. Efe, thank you for listening to my story.' (Nadaswaran 2014:170)

The critic successfully buttresses the therapeutic effects of the author's device of making the characters to share their experiences in order to heal.

The social malaise of prostitution is what attracts the attention of Onyijen (2009) who argues that the author exposes the level of exploitation in the Nigerian society and that those who choose to traffic young girls for prostitution do so because of 'the breakdown in socio-economic structures' (178). Indeed, Onyijen's evaluation is apt as the novel portrays the economic exploitation of the young girls who have no direct control of the money made in the course of 'selling' their bodies to men who, in most cases, are old enough to be their fathers.

Writing on the concept of female revolutionary spirit in *Trafficked*, Chinwe Ahumaraeze and Ugomma Nwachukwu point to the author's portraiture of two female characters, Nneoma and Efe, 'who are able to rise above the odds militating against them and assert their self-identity' (104). The critics state further that it is in the process of rising above the various impediments, such as poverty and oppression, that they become empowered and enjoy some liberation as well as self-fulfillment. Ahumaraeze and Nwachukwu's views are robust and highlight a major achievement of the author in the novel and which is to make a trenchant statement that women can be self-actualising if they choose to, and that despite social biases

and limitations placed, inadvertently or deliberately to hold women down, such biases and limitations can be surmounted. The two critics' standpoint bears similarity to another assessment of Adimora-Ezeigbo's novel as fulfilling a major function of elevating women in a predominantly male-centric Nigerian society (Ehanire, 156).

The novelist not only presents 'women who transcend socio-cultural barriers to excel in male-centric African societies,' (Ehanire 2018: 155), she sends a message by the depiction of female characters that education is a sure route towards such self-realisation. Surely, women characters are portrayed as denigrated and marginalised in most novels by African writers. Adimora-Ezeigbo does not leave her characters helpless as most writers, even feminist writers, do. She provides a way out of the predicament for them and which is their yearning and pursuit of education.

An overview of the scholarly evaluations above reveals that there is a concurrence that human trafficking and prostitution are social malaise that have assumed an alarming proportion especially in the Nigerian social space. Our research asserts that too. However, the reviewed literature has not done much to underline the important role played by information and communications technology in the perpetration of the malaise under discussion. Neither have they sufficiently emphasised low socio-economic status as motivations for the social problems. Therefore, this paper goes further to critically examine the negative deployment of media technology and the cyberspace in the facilitation of human trafficking as well as how poverty and ignorance fuel the phenomenon in *Trafficked*.

5. Analysis

Negative Deployment of Media Technology and Cyberspace for Human Trafficking

Media technology refers to innovative platforms developed to 'create or provide efficiencies to services delivered in the media sector' (Moore n.d.). The technology covers a range of sub-

sectors including television, radio, film and the Internet. The importance of media technology to a fast-developing world, which is now a global market, cannot be over-stated. Media technology promotes information dissemination to audiences far and wide, thus keeping people abreast with happenings around them and in distant places.

The advantages of media technology notwithstanding, people have deployed the means to perpetrate evil, including cybercrimes. The unfortunate incidents of human trafficking and subsequent drafting of girls into prostitution abroad that the novel under focus brings to light are facilitated by the media in the form of advertisement of jobs. One of the victims, Efe, during the tell-it-all session with the protagonist of the novel, Nneoma, reveals that:

> "One day I saw an advertisement while I was on a visit to my cousin in Lagos. It asked young men and women who wished to work abroad to come to a certain address to be interviewed. You know how people longed to leave the country, especially during the military regimes."

> "They still do, don't they?" Nneoma interrupted. "If you ask me, I think the situation is worse now, though civilians are in charge of the country." (99)

The passage adumbrates the use of media advertisements to lure hapless youths to the prospects of jobs abroad and which turn out to be non-existent. The invitation to prospective candidates to 'come to a certain address to be interviewed' (99) validates Jaishankar's Space Transition Theory and the assertion that 'persons with criminal behaviour (in the physical space) have the propensity to commit crime in cyberspace, which, otherwise they would not commit in physical space….' (7) The import of the above postulation is that the media, and this time, the cyber media could sometimes serve as cover for people with criminal tendencies to commit crimes because people tend to believe and trust what they read or view in the media.

The experience of the protagonist is not different as she tells her own story to her co-victim and friend, Efe. In her case, her cyberspace deceit is through a third party, for Nneoma says:

> A friend and classmate had told me some weeks before that some people had helped her secure a teaching appointment in the United Kingdom and she would introduce me to them and I could come with her…. We travel to Lagos together to meet her sponsors. *In no time, they get passports and flight tickets for us and keep them* (emphasis mine). They show us pictures of the schools on the internet where we'll be teaching and give us appointment letters signed by people with English names. (126-127)

Just as posited by proponents of cybercrimes, things happen fast as the protagonist affirms by her statement of their passports and flight tickets being ready 'in no time'. That the 'sponsors' withhold the travel documents should have sent a signal to the girls that they were not dealing with altruistic people. This buttreses the view of the media as a powerful tool, only that in the case of the girls who are trafficked, the power of the media is negatively utilised to deceive and to take advantage of the vulnerable.

As if to justify some of the views of cybercrimes theorists that 'persons from closed society are more likely to commit crimes in cyberspace than persons from open society and that most crimes on the Internet are by young, desperate people, Jaishankar avers that both the perpetrators and the victims do what they do, almost secretly without divulging the details to others who are not involved or in the 'circle'. This accounts for the large number of scams that occur on the Internet. The fact that there is no 'policeman' on the Internet is also responsible for why many of the criminals get away with cybercrimes. One of the prostitution kingpins, known variously as Baron and Fyneface, comes close to being caught when Efe, unknowingly engages in a

romantic relationship with him after her repatriation. It takes the timely intervention of Nneoma, Baron's earlier victim, to expose his antecedents to Efe:

> "Efe, can't you see he's involved in trafficking? That is why he asked you to invite your friends to come on Sunday. You must leave this man before he harms you." Nneoma shook her head. "I'm sure it's Baron we're talking about."

> "So Fyneface is into trafficking. He almost fooled me. He told me he works for a foreign firm and might be sent abroad for a two-year training programme." (167)

The above passage reveals a vicious cycle in the criminal tendencies of perpetrators of cybercrimes bothering on human trafficking. What Baron does amounts to what Michael L. Pittaro (2008) terms cyber-stalking which has been facilitated by the Internet (8). Pittaro asserts further that cyber-stalking is an extension of traditional, but that traditional stalking is 'linked with mental abnormality and gives a clear picture why such incidents happen' (8). Baron's action is intended criminality as he identifies his potential victims, gets them interested in his falsehood, and then uses the Internet to buttress his intentions.

Nneoma makes allusion to Efe being in harm's way because such cyber-criminals are often dangerous when they suspect that their crimes are coming to light. The passage also exposes the fact that cybercrimes thrive on lies and deception. For example, Efe, in musing about the fate that was almost befalling her again, states: "He almost fooled me. He told me he works for a foreign firm…. (167). Perpetrators of cybercrimes do not operate in a vacuum. Social circumstances either give rise or promote their activities as the next segment of this paper examines some social factors which fuel cybercrimes.

6. Poverty, Ignorance and Vulnerability Factors in Cybercrimes

Many social mis-behaviours in the society have been attributed to poverty or lack of basic necessities of life. The story of human trafficking, as Adimora-Ezeigbo depicts in her novel, is not an exception. Nneoma's family is needy, and her father looks forward to her marriage into the wealthy Mbonu Ezenwa's family to lift him above poverty, but things are not as envisaged. Nneoma, taunted with her impecunious circumstance by her fiancé, runs away from home, only to be preyed on:

> She had always tried to please her father. He told her he would be pleased if she married Ofomata because he was from a good family and his father, Mbonu Ezenwa, had promised a large plot of land after the union was cemented.

> "My little mother, think of what this will mean to us, land-starved as we are in this family?" He had told her enthusiastically. "I can build a house on the land" (70-71)

The passage reflects what happens in many African societies where marriages are arranged for young people by their families based mostly on economic considerations. Although Nneoma's father describes Mbonu Ezenwa's family as 'good,' the promise of a plot of land is certainly a major attraction for him as he keeps on urging his daughter to "think of what this will mean to us, land-starved as we are in this family!" (71)

Poverty is also the primary force which drives Efe, another victim of trafficking into the dangerous hands of predators, literally. She says:

> My family was poor; it was a struggle to put our meals on the table. Only my elder sister and I went to college. My three brothers dropped out before they finished primary school. She was only ten when I left home. I was nearly nineteen."

> Nneoma sighed: she too had been about that age when she left her family. (98)

The dire economic straits that Efe's family members are in betray a state of hopelessness. It is a reason why many young people seek alternatives which may have unintended consequences. That is exactly what happens when she responds to an advertisement which, unknown to her, is laced with evil intents.

In addition to poverty, ignorance and naivety play major roles in the tragic fate that befalls the girls in *Trafficked.* In narrating her story, Nneoma states:

> We are six young women between the ages of seventeen and twenty. They tell us we will have plenty of time to pay back our debts to the agency when we start earning money. While in Lagos, we relate with just two people, Eddie and Maria. Everything seems normal. They joke with us as if we were their younger sisters. I am so happy and thank my *chi*. I am already thinking of the money I'll make in the United Kingdom. (127)

In the young woman's innocence and vulnerability, she reposes confidence in total strangers, believing erroneously that the strangers have their interests and that their intentions are benevolent. Not even the fact that the strangers "get passports and flight tickets for us, and keep them" (127), sends some warning signs to the young women. This is the reality in societies where poverty is rife. As Marxist theorists' postulate, poverty pushes people to do some of the stupidest things that they ordinarily would not do (Abrams and Harpham 203). Nneoma and her friend, Efe, in their desperation to seek the proverbial golden fleece, close their minds to occurrences which should have served as red herrings. Their vulnerability is the reason why they become victims of human trafficking and prostitution.

Another example is when Efe recounts her recruitment for a non-existent job abroad:

> I responded to the advertisement without my cousin's knowledge. The office seemed perfectly normal. Quite a number of people were interviewed the same day. Some were rejected, but I was selected. *None of the men who were interviewed was taken. That should have alerted me of danger, but I barely gave it a thought at the time.* (emphasis mine, 99)

In the above passage, the element of deceit and failure of the victim to discern what was going on at the 'job recruitment' agency are undisguised forms of social struggle for survival. In attempting to escape the harsh economic reality that they face, they become vulnerable. The predators in the guise of the recruitment agents are themselves also victims of social pressures which place premium on wealth acquisition and hardly sanction wealth acquired inordinately. In most cases, the predators get away with their crimes and make enough money to continue to oppress the poor.

Efe is naïve and ignorant of the wiles of desperate men. That is why she does not take seriously the fact that only the women were taken out of the men and women interviewed during the recruitment exercise.

7. Conclusion

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* is a novel of how criminally minded persons deploy cyber technology to deceive and cajole innocent and vulnerable young women into prostitution. The novel hinges the vulnerability of the young women on their socio-economic background as their parents lack the necessities of sufficient food and decent shelter. *Trafficked*, from the perspective of this researcher, tends toward portraying prostitution as a form of male violence that is perpetrated against women who are victims. This depiction negates the social theory of cause and effect because males only take advantage of young girls who set out for some form of adventure, thus making themselves vulnerable.

Furthermore, the perpetration of media fraud is facilitated by the secrecy which surrounds people's tendency to hide their economic circumstances with the hope that their eventual success or breakthrough will come as a big surprise to others in their society. This proclivity for concealment is a major factor that the perpetrators of cybercrimes take advantage of to dupe vulnerable young men and women, as well as recruit them into prostitution rings and other forms of modern-day slavery.

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DECOLONIZING PEACE EDUCATION THROUGH PEACE CLUB INITIATIVES: THE CASE OF GOVERNMENT DAY SECONDARY SCHOOL KAFANCHAN, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Peace is conceived of as a state of calmness, harmony with oneself and neighbors. Peace means freedom from fear, conflict, violence, war, and civic disorder. As a rider to the essence of Peace in society, Jemma Local Government Area of Kaduna State has been an epic center of conflicts, crises, banditry, insurgency, kidnapping, and terrorism in recent times. This was further fueled by the Farmers-Herders conflict that resulted in massive killing, raping, maiming, and ransom taking accompanied by outright destruction of lives, properties, and farm products. People in this area sleep with one eye closed. The combined efforts of the national security personnel, Kaduna State Government, the Local government area vigilantes, and other stakeholders have restored relative peace to the local government Area. The focus of this study is to proffer an alternative means of sustaining the relative peace in the Jemaa Local Government Area through decolonization of Peace Education using the Informal Peace Clubs initiative. employing purposive sampling, six groups of train-the-trainers were created with each training two (2) peace club members known as peace ambassadors. It finds that local culture, local music, and drama are effective tools in decolonizing peace education using local content. It recommends the use of an informal curriculum manual developed for peace education for sustainable peace in that environment.

Keywords: Peace Club & Education; Day Secondary School; Decolonization.

Introduction

Over the years, different peacebuilding programs across various contexts have come to the fore. One of such is the nonviolence culture through education which has been part of these differing strategies through educational sector curriculum. However, indigenizing peace education requires that the norms and culture of the locality be entrenched through informal education on peace. Consequently, this study set the ball rolling through the pilot study that documents decolonizing of peace education through strategies of peace club initiatives to enhance sustainable peace currently being

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witnessed at the Jema'a Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

The importance of using a comprehensive and all-inclusive methodology to bring about peace cannot be overemphasized. Despite several efforts made by both the government and non-governmental groups, little has been accomplished in terms of restoring peace in Southern Kaduna leading to ongoing insecurity of lives and property. To address the mental and reorientation needs of the perpetrators and victims in the area for sustainable peace education, this study seeks to bring enduring peace and security for development to the local government through inclusive pedagogy of peace education using an informal approach of Peace Clubs and the creation of gender-sensitive forums. This aligns with Goal 5 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Due to their vulnerability, inadequate education and confusion; youths are the main perpetrators or agents of violence. Institutionalizing an informal educational model founded in local content for a better understanding of oneself and the community through the creation of Informal Peace Club, as a way to channel their energy and reengineer their thinking about society and the country is the focus of this study.

Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) mandates that education promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations. Nigerian is a signatory to this international treaty and convention. Hence, a need to identify the nexus among decolonization, peace education, and peace club and their significance in dissecting and providing solutions to the myriad of peacemaking, building it, and its sustainability. This research thus connects the tripod as indispensable to gaining better knowledge, solution driven research, and educationally imparting lifelong peace education. Consequently, the study focuses on implementation of peace club in Jema'a local government. Jema'a local government in Kaduna State has been one of the local government areas constricted due to violence which has led to instability, which

disproportionately affects women, girls, youths, and adults. It has been a huge task to ensure that peace returns to the local government after traumatizing experiences that they had previously witnessed. Some people who have been forced to leave their homes because of insurgency and conflict due to inter-ethnicity clash became internally displaced people (IDPs) in their land. Thus, it is crucial to ensure sustainable peace through decolonization of peace education by employing peace club initiatives. Peace club is an Informal way of peace education where not just the youth are identified as peace ambassadors but the adult's category was identified as moving toward decolonizing peace education in the sample area. This study is divided into six major sections which includes; Introduction, Literature review, Theoretical Framework, Methodology, Analysis and Discussion of Findings and Conclusion and Recommendations and all the sections are well examined in furtherance of the study.

Literature Review

The contemporary world is bewildered by all forms of conflict situations and one of the possible ways to curb such menace is the creation of viable structures for the projection of peace education among the citizens, particularly the youth and school age students. One of those structures identifiable and presumed to be relevant and effective is known as "Peace Clubs". Peace Clubs are one of the systems of Peace Education which according to Reardon (1999) has the main purpose of aiding the elimination of social injustice, the rejection of violence and abolition of war. Peace Clubs are free, voluntary assemblage of students/youth who are sufficiently concerned about the prospect of peace in the community and who are thus motivated not only to acquire as much conflict resolution skills as possible but are prepared to expand in every possible way the building of a peace culture (Iroye, S. O. and Alonge Sylvester, 2019). These Clubs are usually situated within formal and informal

structures such as schools, places of vocational engagement and community meeting spaces. Peace clubs being introduced into schools is a new concept and possible form of peace intervention. Peace club offers young adults a possible means by which to find peaceful solutions to deal with conflict (Lee-Ann Jasson, 2016). Establishing peace clubs in schools allows young people to accept and understand the widespread character of peace culture early in life. Thus, Peace Clubs are intended to foster a transformational culture of peace by cultivating knowledge-based skills, attitudes, and values that strive to modify people's mindsets and eliminate behaviours that might increase violent conflicts (Wa Munywe, 2014).

While this study is a micro-study of the emerging phenomenon in the North-West region of Nigeria, it also engaged the lens of many studies across the world. The uniqueness of the Day Secondary in Kafanchan, Kaduna State in pioneering and exemplary as the data would highlight shortly. The use of Day Secondary School is, however, enriched by previous studies in Nigeria and other parts of the world. Oseremen (2023) identified that peace clubs in Nigerian schools have great impacts as well as policy implications mitigating outbreak of violence in schools. Peace Clubs are effective infrastructure that promotes positive attitudinal change creating Peace learning environment. The role of government and school administrators interfacing with students, parents and the community are part of the infrastructure that scholars should interrogate. The same position was highlighted by Irene and Majekodunmi (2017) when they argued that sustainable architecture for Peace and conflict intervention in schools is not "one-off" initiative. Rather, they canvassed for both structured and ongoing timeline. As we have narrated below, the case of Kafanchan fits this paradigm among others.

The concern of some scholars have been drawn to drafting and adoption of best pedagogical tool for teaching about peace in formal and informal school structures. Tijani (2023) posits that there is urgency for retooling practical and theoretical context of mediation, peace and concerted efforts to mitigate or eliminate the potency of violence in the society. Retooling of the curriculum and lesson plans are major metrics in this direction, argued by Tijani. Earlier in their studies, Hine (2013) and Hopp-Nishanka (2012) that identified the significance of peace education as pedagogy to re-educate students, the public and other stakeholders. Similarly, Higgins (2019) noted that peace education should be culturally relevant. Using Fambuk Tok Peace Clubs in Sierra Leone, he succinctly analyzed the need for micro studies and understanding the lens of such microcosm studies important to finding solution to conflicts in Sierra Leone. The data collected and the method used in this study fits Higgins' paradigm and our findings and recommendations profoundly showcase the Day Secondary School, Kafanchan experience.

Theoretical Framework

There are several theories or concepts applicable to the issue of Peace Education. For our purpose, we choose to adopt the Constructive Controversy Theory (CCT). Perhaps, one if the reasons for the adoption of CCT is because of its adaptability to reality of our study. Since are engaging players and attitudinal and behavioral actions are essential to gauging the success of our study, structured constructive controversies through dialogue, debate, etc. are concurrence to testing the theory. As Janis (1972) noted, "concurrence seeking is close to" what he called "groupthink when consensus takes control rather than individualistic position. CCT is therefore an effective means of improving decision-making in discourse enabling creativity and innovation, which could lead to a confluence of ideas (Johnson, 2015). It looks into why people don't see things from other people's points of view or why they make decisions without thinking about or paying attention to the reasons why other

people disagree with them. Here, the focus is on making judgments that take into account the opinions of others rather than just one's preferences. This is what Staub (20) refers to as "reconciliation between groups. The theory in general, and by extension, its specificity, aims at preventing violence, reigniting violence, and improving lives.

Methodology

Data and Research Design

The Local Governments are grossly perverted by various violent conflicts, leading to social insecurities; thus, the study will adopt the definition of Peace education proposed in UNESCO-EOLSS sample Chapters, which states that peace education tries to inoculate against the evil effects of violence by teaching skills to manage conflicts nonviolently and creating a desire to seek peaceful resolutions (UNESCO-EOLSS: 2003). Consequently, the Survey Method of analysis was employed through questionnaire administration.

Sample Size

The study was specifically carried out within Kaduna South local government local government in Kaduna state. The sample population is the local government and the sample size was purposively selected within the local government areas. The sample which is a private secondary school consists of youth and mix group of adults. In the secondary school selected, the study created ten (10) members of peace clubs' trainers at one (1) class each for senior secondary school (SSS) one (1) to senior secondary school (3) that is SSS 1, SSS 2 and SSS 3.

Sampling Techniques

The research employs interactive participation through observation and questionnaire application to members of the train-the-trainer peace club created. The targeted sample was subjected to some case studies on how conflicts can be handled and easily resolved within a group of people. Consequently, the

questionnaires were administered on thirty (30) train-the-trainers' respondents. A mix of youth and adults-male and female teachers were included. Each ten (10) members of train-the-trainer group at each level of SSS 1, SS2 and SS 3 were divided into two groups (5 members per group). Therefore, six (6) train-the-trainer groups were created. Two groups from SSS 1 forms two (2) peace clubs at junior secondary school (JSS) one (1), two groups from SSS 2 form two (2) peace clubs at junior secondary school (JSS) two (2) while two groups from SSS 3 shall form two (2) peace clubs at junior secondary school (JSS) three (3). A total of six (6) peace clubs were created in the school. Using the informal curriculum manual developed for all the peace clubs within the school.

Data Analysis for Government Day School Kafancha

This section presents data analysis from the field using percentage and frequency.

Table 1.0 Personal Information of Respondent

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION		
AGE	Number	Frequency
Less than 16yrs	16	38%
16-18yrs	19	52%
More than 18yrs	7	10%
Gender		
Male	20	48%
Female	22	52%
Religion		
Christian	25	60%
Muslim	17	40%
Tribe/Ethnic Group		
Ibo	15	36%
Hausa	26	62%
Yoruba	1	2%

Source: Survey Data, 2023

The table shows as indicated that respondents less than 16years are 16 in number with 38%,

16-18years are 19 in number with 52%, while those that are more than 18years are 7 in number with 10%. The age bracket between 16-18 years has the highest number.

The gender has female as the highest in number with 22 at 52% while the male respondents are 20 in number at 48%.

The religious section shows that the Christians are more than the Muslims with 25 in number at

605 while the Muslims are 17 in number at 40 %.

The tribe /ethnic group were Ibo, Hausa, Yoruba. This shows that the Hausa tribe has the highest number of respondents with 26 in number at 62%, followed by Ibo tribe at 15 in number with 36% while Yoruba tribe stand at 1 respondent with 2%.
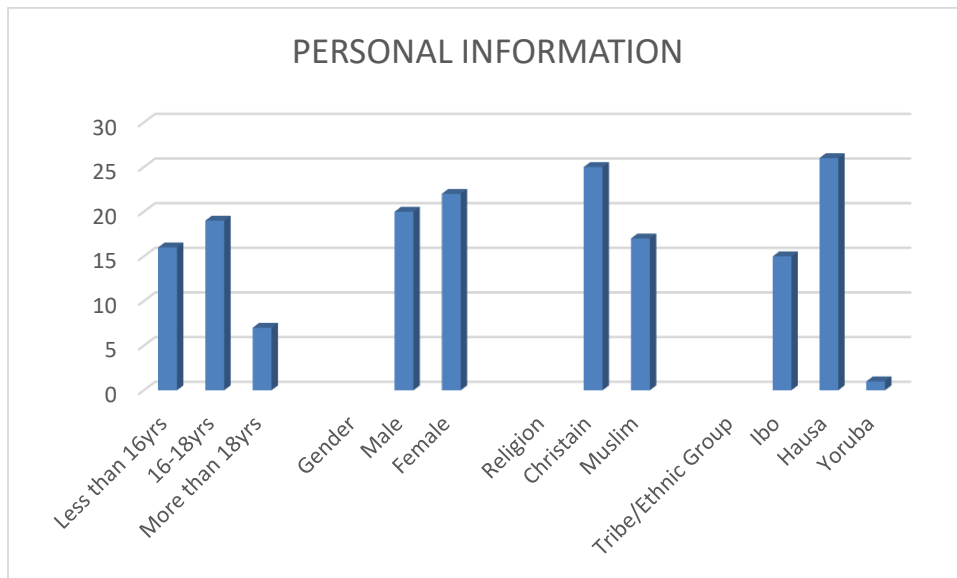
Figure 1.0 Personal Information of Respondents

Source: Survey Data, 2023

SECTION B: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Table 2.0 Interpersonal Relationships

SECTION B: INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	YES	Frequency	NO	Frequency
Do you have friends?	41	98%	1	2%
Are your friends from your tribe/ethnic group alone?	10	24%	32	76%
Are your friends from your religion alone?	9	21%	33	79%
Are your friends from your class alone?	8	19%	34	81%

The table above indicates that respondents have friends totaling 41 with 98% while just 1 responded to the contrary. Also, respondents indicated a positive response to have friends from their tribe alone with 24% as against those that have friends from other tribes at 76%.

Respondents with friends from their religion alone sum up to 79% with 33 in number while those with positive responses are 21% with 9 in number. Respondents with 81% do not have friends from their classes alone while 19% have friends from their classes alone

Question 10. If you answered yes to any of questions 6-9, state why. Below are their respondents' responses:

1. Believe in oneness no matter the tribe
2. Staying with close friends will bring doing things together
3. Need friends to solve issue
4. There is strength in unity
5. Peace means love

6. Believe in love, peace and unity
7. Good to have friends
8. Friends bring peace and harmony
9. Friends help out in all ways
10. To stay united for cooperation and share to relate as one community
11. To share ideas
12. Humans need friends
13. To lend a helping hand for cooperation
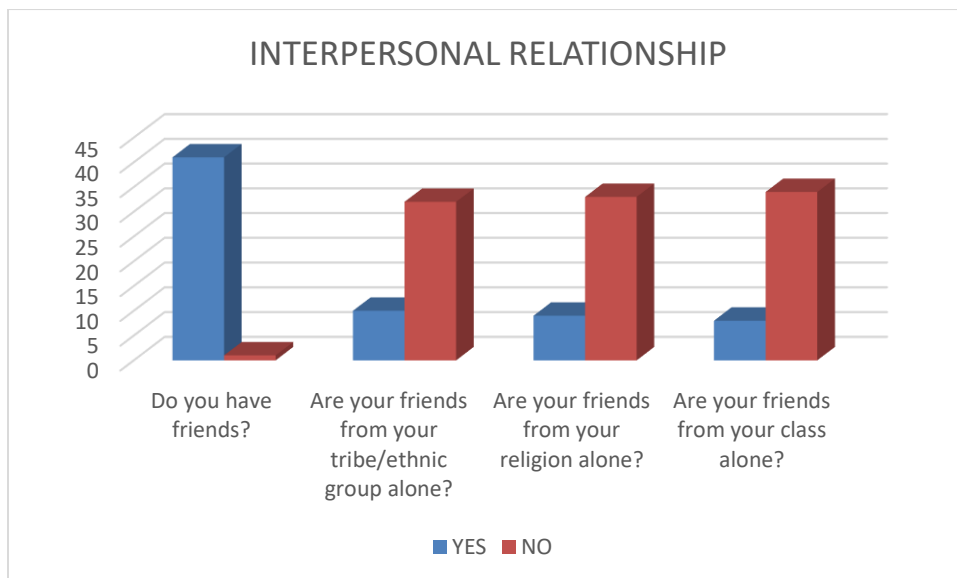
Figure 2.0 Interpersonal Relationships
Source: Survey Data, 2023

SECTION C: EXPERIENCE IN CONFLICT

From the table below respondents show that respondents have been involved in physical fights with 23 in number at 55% while those who have not been involved are 45% at 19 in number. Settling quarrels stand at 90% for 38 respondents while 10% representing 4 respondents were not involved in settling quarrels. Quarrels settled by another person was indicated at 69% representing 29 respondents while 31% of 13 respondents did not settle quarrels for another person.

Table 3.0 Experience in Conflict

SECTION C: EXPERIENCE IN CONFLICT				
QUESTION 11, 13 & 14	**YES**	**FREQUENCY**	**NO**	**FREQUENCY**
Have you been involved in physical fighting?	23	55%	19	45%
Have you settled a quarrel for two or more people?	38	90%	4	10%
Has someone settled a quarrel between you and another person?	29	69%	13	31%

Source: Survey Data, 2023

Question 12: responses to why been involved in physical fighting.

1. Religious fight
2. School fight
3. Not in peace club
4. Anger
5. Self-defense
6. Disagreement
7. Argument
8. Play turned fight
9. Not apologizing
10. Misunderstanding
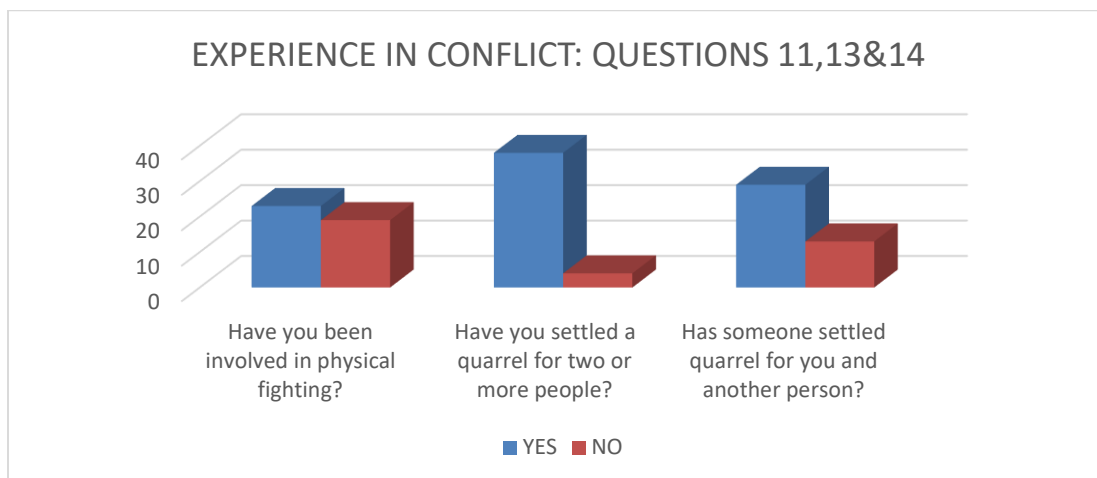
Figure 3.0 Experience in Conflict
Source: Survey Data, 2023

Question 15: If yes to the above question, what caused the fight?

1. Misunderstanding on matters of property
2. False accusation
3. Impatience
4. Non refund of money borrowed
5. Got annoyed

Question 16: how did you resolve the quarrel?

1. Sue for peace
2. Seek for forgiveness
3. Reported
4. Apologised
5. Sue for reconciliation

SECTION D: EXPERIENCE IN PEACEMAKING (QUESTION 17)

Table 4.0 Experience in Peacemaking

SECTION D: EXPERIENCE IN PEACE MAKING QUESTION 17		
	NUMBER	FREQUENCY
Report to him/her that you are offended	18	43%
Report to another close friend to make peace between us.	8	19%
Report to those older than you to make peace between us.	14	33%
Report to my parent and friend's parents to make peace between us	2	5%
I will do none of the above	NIL	NIL

Source: Survey Data, 2023

From the table above respondents' experience in peace-making shows that reporting to the person by him or herself is 43% at 18 in number, reporting to close friends showed 19% representing 8 respondents, reporting to those older than them to make peace between them recorded 33% while reporting their parent and friend's parents to make peace between them recorded 5%. It is commendable to note that all of them have great perspectives and experience in peacemaking and refused to pick the option of not willing to do any of the above.
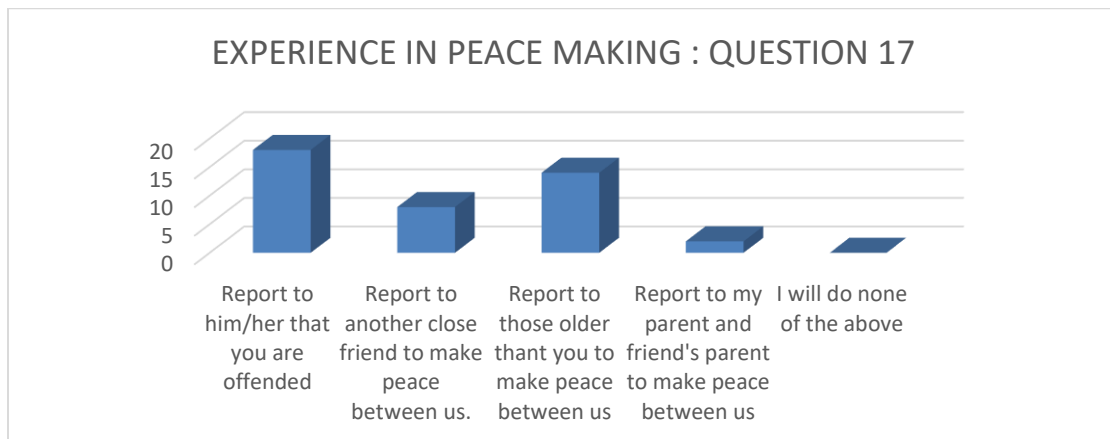
Figure 4.0 Experience in Peacemaking
Source: Survey Data, 2023

From the table below, 71% of the participants with 30 in number, will call both parties to explain and sue for peace without taking side, 17% said they would investigate the reported case; 2% said they would fight both parties and stop befriending them while none will fight the reported person.

SECTION D: EXPERIENCE IN PEACE MAKING

QUESTION 18		
	NUMBER	FREQUENCY
Fight the reporter on behalf of the reported person	4	10%
Fight the reported person	NIL	NIL
Investigate the reported case	7	17%
Call both parties to explain and sue for peace without taking sides	30	71%
Fight both parties and stop befriending them	1	2%

Source: Survey Data, 2023

This is puzzling results and the respondents that opines that they would fight both parties were educated by the responses of their colleagues during discussions of their responses and why they responded the way they had done.

EXPERIENCE IN PEACE MAKING QUESTION:18

Source: Survey Data, 2023

SECTION E: PEACE CLUB

As previously said, peace ambassadors must possess prior expertise in peacemaking and conflict resolution to advocate for nonviolent conflict resolution. As a result, most respondents are capable of cooperating as a group in a non-official or decolonized peace club. Therefore, the study aims to comprehend respondents' formal peace club history and determine whether they are prepared to serve as ambassadors in an informal peace club using decolonized methods of litigating peace. Forty-five percent (45%) of them are found to be members of the official peace club that currently exists.

SECTION E: PEACE CLUB				
	YES	FREQUENCY	NO	FREQUENCY
Are you a member of Peace Club?	23	55%	19	45%
Are you ready to participate in peace activities?	41	98%	1	2%
Can Peace Club reduce insecurity and increase safety in schools?	41	98%	1	2%
Can Peace Club increase the level of peace in schools and communities?	40	95%	2	5%
Can you help your friends to resolve conflicts?	41	98%	1	2%
Can nonviolent resolutions of conflicts be your watchword?	37	88%	5	12%

From the table above, 55% with 23 in number of participants are members of Peace Club, while 45% with 19 in number are not members. 88% agree that nonviolent resolutions of conflicts are their watchword.

SECTION E : PEACE CLUB
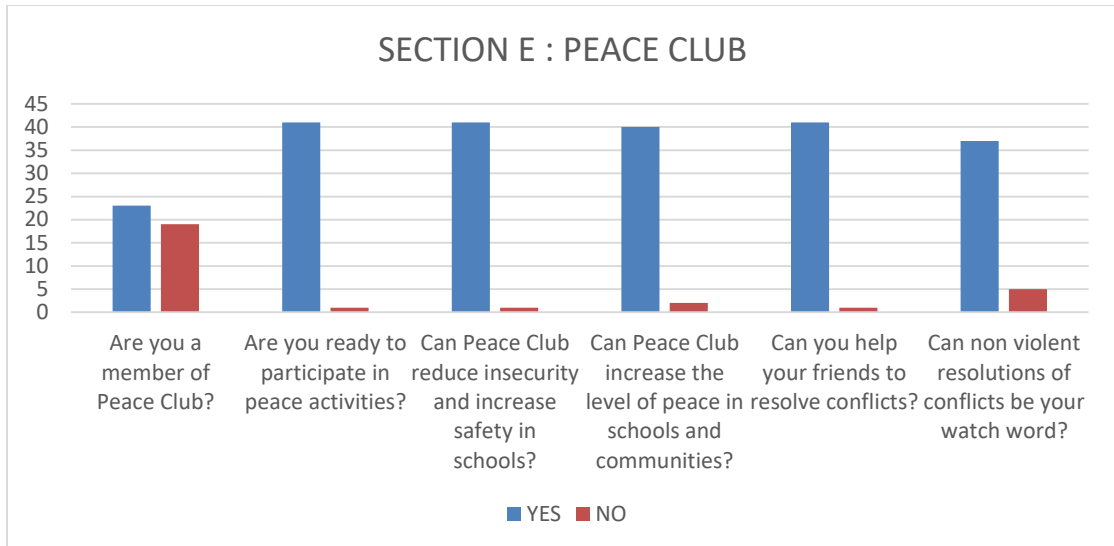
Source: Survey Data, 2023

Discussion of Findings

Peace Club informal curriculum manual for the decolonization of peace education developed for the project was implemented at Government Day School, Kafancha after administration of questions to the students from all levels junior to senior secondary classes. Guide for the formation of peace club (PC) was also implemented which resulted in three (3) peace clubs on drama, poem, and music. However, the three PCs delivered only drama and poems according to their indigenous knowledge and culture. These are presented below. The essence of decolonizing PCs was achieved and collation of innovations from ease PC is to be included and upgraded to the National PC manual in the future for national reorientations.

Government Day School Kafachan PEACE CLUB 1

DRAMA TITLE: CULTURE

There was a king who commanded his town crier to go around the village and announce to all members of the community comprising all ethnic groups and tribes that there would be a cultural day at his palace in three markets days to the day of the announcement.

After the people received the message, they all started arguing about which group had the best culture in terms of food, attire, and dance, which almost led to a big fight. They were summoned by the king to his palace who then explained to them that it was not a competition of which ethnic group had the best cultural display but to showcase the essence of unity in diversity among all the cultures to encourage a peaceful co-existence among them all.

PEACE CLUB 2

DRAMA TITLE: NEIGHBORS

A woman decided to use her neighbor's broom to sweep her veranda when her neighbors was not at home. The neighbor came back unexpectedly and saw her broom with her. This turned out to be a big issue and led to a big fight. An old man was passing by and saw fighting. The old man intervened and stopped them from fighting. He asked each of the women to lift a big stone that was in front of them which none of them was able to. He then asked the two of them to carry the big stone together and this was very easy for them to do. With this illustration, he was able to admonish them that it is good to live in peace and harmony because they can achieve a lot together if they cooperate.

PEACE CLUB 3

DRAMA TITLE: INHERITANCE

Once upon a time, there was a rich man who planned his death with the help of a family doctor. He did this to see how his children would receive the news of his demise. He was able to carry out this plan and after his children heard about the passing of their father, they started rejoicing because they would be able to have access to all the wealth he left behind. Not long after they got the news, these children became divided on how to share their father's wealth, at the same time their family doctor came in and met them arguing. The doctor expressed his disappointment at their display of disrespect for the dead because their father had not been buried but they were more concerned about their inheritance.

He then admonished by asking each one of them to take a broomstick and sweep of which none of them was able to do so. Thereafter he gave each one of them again a whole broom to sweep and they were able to sweep with it. With the illustration, he showed them that if they are united on whatever they decide to do, it will be very easy and possible for them to do and become successful in life but if they are not, it will be very difficult to achieve.

Finally, he told them that this was a lesson their father wanted them to learn about life because in the real sense of it, their father was not dead. He called their father out and all the children apologized and asked for their father's forgiveness and blessings.

PC1

POEM TITLE: LOVE

Love is a strong feeling of deep affection you have for someone either a member of your family or a friend

Love does not hate

Love does not hurt

Love is not a sin.

Love is protection

Love is caring.

Love is sacrifice.

Love kindness.

Love is forgiveness.

Love does not select.

We must show love to one another by supporting, protecting, visiting, greeting, praying, forgiving,

Love to sacrifice, love does not have a religion!

Love one another!

For God loves you too.

PC2

TITLE: TOLERANCE

Tolerance is willing to accept other people's way of life, and belief, without criticizing them.

How do we tolerate one another?

- We show tolerance when we understand each other's differences.
- Change our perspectives to agree!
- Have respect for one another!
- Have a listening ear and reason along together!

PC3

TITLE: FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is having to overlook whatever anyone might have done to get one annoyed.

Importance of forgiveness

To forgive is a very strong act. One must take the pain to overlook whatever someone might have done and release the negative thought of taking revenge and therefore move forward in life.

It helps to let go of grudges and resentments to give room for healing and growth.

How to forgive an offender

- By showing love
- By forgetting whatever happened
- Think about the good and bad
- By being remorseful
- By having a good presentation of one's character wherever we are irrespective of religion or tribe

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has shown clearly that peace is important in our society and the present carnage witnessed in Kaduna South Local Government can be mitigated, if necessary, attention is focused on the youths in our school system in the formation of peace clubs that will drive the process of instilling friendship, harmony, tolerance, fair play among our youths who are the leaders of tomorrow. The formation of informal peace clubs in our school system, and the consciousness of youths to tolerate each other while growing up will help to achieve national cohesion and desire unity that will bring about national development.

This study focused on Government Day Secondary School Kafancha, Kaduna South Local Government Area a government-owned school committed to the total education of Nigerian children. The formation of the peace club in the school cut across genders using the informal peace manual through local content in music, drama, proverbs, and idioms. The study revealed a high degree of unity and cohesion when these informal means are used to achieve peace in our society as against the laid down process and procedures that we are used to hence decolonization of peace education through the formation of peace clubs which was the focus of the study. The study looks forward to partnering with the Kaduna State Government and the Federal Government of Nigeria to carry out large-scale research in different geopolitical zones in the future to launch an application that will contain all the informal curricula from creativity and innovative students that will be selected across the six geopolitical zones. It will be translated into local languages and provided free of charge for students in our primary and secondary schools across Nigeria.

We can surmise that the establishment of Peace Clubs globally continues to mitigate the prevalence of violence, social injustice, and abortion of war. This study therefore recommends the following:

i. National Policy Education must be reviewed. One of the main courses in civic education that should be included in the curriculum renewal process for elementary and secondary schools is Peace Education. Therefore, the government of Kaduna State and its local government districts should ensure that informal peace education is used at both the state and local levels through decolonized peace clubs.

ii. youth groups, religious bodies, and civil society organizations (CSOs) ought to take charge of their peace clubs and use local content provided by the respondents to promote peace education. This will contribute to establishing a stable peace in our internal politics.

iii. There should be a synergy between the management of public schools and owners of private schools for strong networking among informal peace clubs in their school system to serve as a deviation from the common peace clubs.

Lastly, it recommends the use of informal peace clubs and curriculum as a means of instilling informal ways of peace education to youth especially students to reorientate them toward tolerance, unity, kindness, forgiveness, and peaceful co-existence. Teaching students the practical aspect of constructive controversy procedure is of utmost significance in the lesson plans.

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MANAGEMENT OF INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Nigeria has experienced various inter-religious conflicts with obvious effects on peace. In Kwara State, for example, inter-religious conflict has surfaced as a major feature of inter-group relations. This paper examines the management of inter-religious conflict in Kwara State using descriptive analysis. Conflict theory was employed to underpin the study. The Kwara State Government has applied various strategies in the management of inter-religious conflict including litigation, establishment of inter-faith dialogue committees and partnership with traditional and religious institutions such as the Ilorin Emirate Council. These have attracted considerable attention. This study advocates for some measures towards effective management of inter-religious conflicts in the state. These include: the establishment of committee comprising all representatives of social groups within the state. Besides, experts in conflicts resolution should be used to curtail possible outbreak of conflicts, while the peaceful resolution of existing conflicts should be intensified through constant dialogue.

Keywords: Conflicts, Challenges, Inter-Religious Conflicts, Kwara State, Management, Prospects.

1. Introduction

Religion has been a dominant factor in inter-group relations for many centuries (Nwaokocha, 2002). Its impact on inter-group relations both locally and internationally remains a contradiction. On the one hand, religion has been a source of peace. By virtue of its capacity to cater to the spiritual, emotional and even economic needs of its adherents, religion provides comfort, succour and contributes to social harmony, stability and peace. The peace building power of religion is also evident in the activities of religious peacemakers who, through humanitarian assistance, faith-based mediation and inter-faith dialogue, contribute to conflict mitigation, resolution, community dialogue,

reconciliation and social cohesion (Andekin, 2019). On the other hand, religion has been a source of some of the most virulent local and international conflicts such as the religious wars of 17th Century Europe, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the India-Pakistan contest over Kashmir and indeed, the emergent post-Cold War political Islam typified by the activities of Jihadist groups such as Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda. As Nwaokocha (2002) argues, one would be mistaken to wish away the impact of religion in local and international affairs.

The relationship between religion and conflict is a complex one, given its capacity for both good and evil. According to Campbell (2019), religion is not in itself the primary cause of conflict. Rather, it is its instrumentalisation in inter-group competition for resources that makes the phenomenon a dangerous cause of conflict. For Brahm (2005), the emotive and fanatical adherence to religious dogma and articles of belief, which makes the adherents inflexible and intolerant to contrary beliefs, implicates religion as a primary cause of violence.

As in many other parts of the world, religion plays an important role in Nigeria and has had significant influence on the Nigerian society since the precolonial period. As Kukah (1994) observes, it is nigh impossible to discuss inter-group relations in Nigeria without substantial mention of religion. According to Smock (2008), most Nigerians view religion as more central to their identity than nationality and are more likely to identify themselves first and foremost as Muslims or Christians rather than as Nigerians. The narrative of religion in Nigeria has often tended towards its negative contributions to the Nigerian state, suggesting that religion has not contributed significantly to the peace and development of the country (Danjibo, 2009).

Christianity and Islam are by far the two most dominant religions in Nigeria. Both religions are also viewed as the most intolerant, perhaps because of their universal appeal and inherent competitiveness (Mazrui, 1990). While inter-religious conflict dates back to colonial Nigeria

(Andekin, 2019), it has almost become a permanent feature of the post-independent Nigerian society as inter-group competition for political and economic resources are often underscored by ethnic and religious considerations (Aliyu, Moorthy & Idris, 2016; Abubakar, 2019; Fox, 2021). Some past religious conflicts in Nigeria include the *Maitatsine* crises of the 1980s, the *Cross Crisis* in University of Ibadan in 1986, the Kafanchan-Kaduna crisis of the 1990s, the Zagon-Kataf conflict of 1992, the Shari'a crisis in Kaduna (2000) and Bauchi (2001), the Kaduna Shite conflict of 2015 and the numerous ethno-religious crises in Jos, Plateau State. Religious conflicts have resulted to loss of lives, property and dislocation of communities (Danjibo, 2009; Abubakar, 2019).

Virtually all the states in Nigeria have experienced religion-related conflicts (Kukah, 1994; Çancı & Odukoya, 2016). In Kwara State, for example, inter-religious conflict has surfaced as a major feature of inter-group relations. The state had experienced an appreciable degree of peaceful coexistence between various religious groups until the early 1980s when Muslims began reacting to perceived provocative Christian proselytisation in Muslim-dominated areas (Olumoh, 2007). Ever since, inter-religious conflicts, especially between Muslims and Christians, have become a recurring phenomenon. In 1986, for instance, some Muslim youths attacked a Christian group for taking a Palm Sunday procession to traditionally Muslim parts of Ilorin resulting in many injuries. In 2004, a planned Reinhard Bonnke crusade in Ilorin was aborted due to intense Muslim opposition (Akande & Hadi, n.d.). Furthermore, Muslim critique of secular law in the state has led to the introduction of hijab wearing for Muslim students in public schools resulting in aggressive demands by Christians for a re-privatisation of former missionary schools under the control of the state government.

The complications in the relationship between religious communities in Kwara State, as in many other parts of Nigeria, arise partly because of the often-blurred lines between

secularism and the state. By constitutional design, Nigeria is a secular state. However, there is a widespread perception that Nigeria is not a secular state given that, across many states in Nigeria, several formal and informal interactions exist between state governments and religious and traditional institutions in politics and governance. The degree of influence and participation in politics and governance by religious entities is strongly related to the patterns of exclusion and inclusion (Nolte, Danjibo & Oladeji, 2009).

Meanwhile, despite the view that religious politics is affecting the state, its institutions and governance, political engagement of religious and traditional institutions and actors is also supporting and supplementing state efforts in critical areas, including the management of inter-group relations in general and inter-religious conflicts in particular. It is perhaps for this reason that Kwara State has been described as one of the most peaceful states in Nigeria (Abdussalam, 2012; Olademo, Omotoye, Ikibe, Ibraheem, Tijani, Abubakre, Adebisi, Aboyeji, Fahm & Adimula, 2021). Indeed, while inter-religious tension exists in Kwara State, there is the argument that the conflict and violence manifestations are largely low in intensity compared to some other parts of Nigeria (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, 2017). This, therefore, raises the need to interrogate the nature of inter-religious conflicts and their management in Kwara State, especially the role of Ilorin Emirate in managing the conflicts and promoting inter-religious harmony in the area. Being a foremost traditional institution with longstanding tradition of political participation and governance in Kwara State, the Ilorin Emirate Council has been involved in the management of identity conflicts and the promotion of peaceful coexistence in Kwara State. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the prospects and challenges in the management of inter-religious conflict in Kwara State. Nigeria.

2. Statement of Research Problem

Plural societies such as Nigeria have often been associated with conflict (Kukah, 1994; Andekin, 2019). However, Kwara State, despite being a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society has, arguably, had a long tradition of religious tolerance and harmony. According to Abdussalam (2012), it is common to have both Christians and Muslims in one family while interfaith marriages are also quite popular. Scholars have attributed the considerably peaceful interreligious coexistence in the state to interventions by state and non-state entities, including traditional and religious institutions, who have applied a mix of strategies (e.g., coercion, enticement, interfaith dialogue) to promote religious harmony (Jawondo, 2019; Olademo, *et al.*, 2021; Oyekoya, 2022). However, there is scarcity of research on the role of non-state institutions such as Ilorin Emirate in the management of inter-religious conflicts and promotion of religious peace in Kwara State.

Furthermore, while Kwara has historically been viewed as a religiously peaceful state, at least, since return to civilian rule in 1999, the state has experienced low intensity, and sometimes, violently manifest contestations associated with religion, politics, and governance (Olumoh, 2007 & Abar, 2019). The controversy surrounding the state government's policy on the use of hijab in public schools has further exacerbated pre-existing religious tensions and undermined religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence among religious communities and organizations in Kwara State.

3. Conceptual Issues

Conflict: Conflict is an age-long social phenomenon that dates to the beginning of human history. It has always been part of humanity and may never cease to be more prevalent. Conflict may occur within as well as in society, even in the family. It applies to all aspects of a person's life: an individual must contend with divergent thoughts, views, values and emotions while formulating decisions about oneself, others or events in society. Similarly,

social engagements between individuals brings up interests, orientations, social beliefs and positions that align and those that are skewed. Conflict in that sense is in the mind and also manifests in human interaction, which makes conflict ineluctable by that very nature. Despite man's innate antipathy to it, it is imminent and ubiquitous and has evolved into a motif throughout history. To that extent and so long as competing interests and positions exist, it is inevitable. Therefore, it is unrealistic and idealistic to think it can be eliminated (Bercovitch, Kremenyuk & Zartman, 2008). The concept of conflict has, deservedly and realistically, attracted immense attention and has "occupied the thinking of man more than any other (theme) save only God and love" (Rapoport, 1960, p. 12).

Conflict is a dynamic process that develops by intensity. Pfestch (1994) identifies five intensity stages of conflict: latent conflict, manifested conflict, crisis, severe crisis and war. These have been broadly grouped into non-violent and violent conflicts. Latent and manifest conflicts are categorised as non-violent, while crisis, severe crisis and war are placed under violent conflicts. Non-violent conflicts represent the existence of conflict without violence. At the latent phase, there are positional differences or opposition of interests, which are articulated via demands by a group to the awareness of another party. The existence of incompatible interests is not sufficient for there to be a latent conflict. Conflict becomes manifest when non-violent measures, including the threat of violence and undermining of the other party's interests, are engaged to pursue the attainment of their goals. In particular, a conflict between two nations graduates to a manifest level when economic sanctions are imposed, like Western countries' response to the Russian war against Ukraine. Conflict becomes violent when groups pursue their interest "by physically damaging or destroying the property and high-value symbols of one another (e.g. religious shrines, national monuments); and/or psychologically or physically injuring, destroying, or otherwise

forcibly eliminating one another" (Sandole, 1998).

Conflict Management: The analysis of conflict is all-encompassing. The exercise considers the entire process that relates to the social reality, starting with the pre-conflict period, to the conflict management phase. It is thus incomplete to study conflict without proffering ways to manage it. Conflict has been established as a reality that humans must contend with; however, how they deal with it depends on how well it is managed to limit its negative effects and how these influence people as individuals, groups, and communities. Conflict, as a developing situation, gravitates by intensity depending on social, environmental, institutional and human precipitants. These factors can be pre-emptively addressed to nip the conflict in the bud at its latency or thwart the (conflict) escalation at the gradients of manifestation. What is then regarded as conflict management is the process of curbing the antecedent conditions and deleterious effects of disputes.

Conflict management is further viewed as a way of reducing the negative outcomes of a conflict while consolidating the positive effects so that group outcomes, as well as learning and performance in an organisation, might be improved (Alpert, Tjosvaldo, & Law, 2000; DeChurch & Marks, 2001; Rahim, 2002). This is a partly pragmatic and functional perceptionof conflict,which acknowledges its *ineliminability* and sees the positive values in the situation.This less idealistic perspective does not seek the avoidance or termination of conflict, but the minimisation of its dysfunctional parts.This indeed constructively engages tension or conflict as necessary for positive group outcomes and organisational learning (Pascale, 1990; Senge *et al,* 1994). Organisational learning strengthens an organisation through internal experiences gained, whichcreate internally transferable knowledge, information interpretation and organisational memorisation that increase efficiency, productivity, adaptability, satisfaction and leadership figures across all levels (Rahim, 2002 & Valamis, 2022).

In that sense, conflict is an essential element of organisational culture.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that there isno clear-cut distinction between conflict management and resolution. In many instances where they have been treated as different, they are also interchangeably used in the same body of literature. Similar other terms, such as conflict prevention, regulation, settlement, transformation, prevention and containment, have arisen from the literature. Svanstrom & Weissmann (2005) attempt to weave most of these terms to form a conflict cycle with four major stages: prevention, peace enforcement and conflict management, peacemaking/conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Conflict transformation is embedded as part of conflict resolution in the cycle; however, in a different classification by Ghozali (2019), it is grouped together with conflict management as subdivisions of conflict prevention. Such grouping elevates dispute prevention above primary preclusion – which occurs before the onset of a crisis – but broadens it to secondary prevention (similar to violence containment) and even further to tertiary prevention (that stops violence reoccurrence in the future).Settlement is identified as providing a definite end to violence, without necessarily satisfying the needs of the parties as conflict resolution would do (Burton, 1993).

Religion: Religion has been part of human social development and remains an indistinguishable part of history. It is wound around the early development of human society as an active and irremovable agent in all cultural and social lives and engagements. It is, in that light, perceived by Gargi Medda as having resumed the whole history of mankind's development. This is evident in the institution of ritualism and sacerdotalism, and the erection of large edifices, with notable architectural designs, that serve as temples for worship. The priests as custodians of religions sacrificed to deities in built-up sanctuaries that adorn the best of art and architecture at each age to represent reverence for supernatural beings regarded as higher than humans. In particular, art and architecture became vehicles for conducting affairs with the deities; and large resources were invested as claims of supernatural power acquisition (Trigger, 2003). Religion was thena rallying point and the springboard for early civilisation, and has evolved through the ages to shape human history and order the paths of destinies.

The term "religion" derives from the Latin word *religio* which was taken to mean a person's worship virtue in a secular and nondoctrinal context (Campbell, 1991&Harris, 2015). It was generally regarded to be a social obligation to anyone – family members, friends or God – and used to describe emotions in general with no particular connection to a supernatural being (Harris, 2015; Barton & Boyarin, 2016).*Religio* ultimately derives from another Latin word *religare,*split into *re* which means "again" and *ligare* which stands for "join","bind", "link" or "connect".According to Morreall & Sonn (2013), the entry of*religio*into English took the meaning of a monastic life bound by vows. This generates the meaning "re-connecting" or "re-binding". The concept of religion then evolved in medieval times as church affairs were distinguished from civil matters. The Latin root *religare* has thus been understood to mean connecting humans and the divine (Allen, 2004), or re-connecting with God from whom mankind is believed to originate. Religion as fathomed from its Latin roots could be said to be reconnecting oneself to supernatural power and establishing an obligated relationship with the being. According to Yandell (1999), a broad definition of religion can be attempted in two ways: doctrinal and functional. Doctrinally or substantially, religion is defined based on its adherents' beliefs; and religions, in general, are identified by their shared beliefs. Functionally, religion is defined as "a conceptual system that provides an interpretation of the world and the place of human beings in it, based on an account of how life should be lived given that interpretation, and expresses this interpretation and lifestyle in a set of rituals, institutions, and practices" (Yandell, 1999, p. 16). The vivid picture of religion in this definition represents its

social functions: as the worldconstruing system giving prescriptions about life and their manifestations in the institutionalised sacred acts of the devotees.

4. Theoretical Framework

Conflict thory has been employed as the basis of inter-rligious conflict in Kwara State. The theory was first developed by Karl Marx. It provides relevant perspectives for the understanding of how and why there are disputes between parties, such as individuals or social groups. It highlights the premise that individuals are fundamentally contentious when competing for wealth and power (Frederick, 2014). The theory assumes that society is in a state of constant conflict because of struggle for scarce resources. It states that social interactions uncover shared and competing interests, orientations, beliefs, and positions; and, thus, describes conflict as an inevitable part of interpersonal or intergroup relations.

Karl Marx believes that conflicts of interest are inherently created by the degree of inequality in the allocation of scarce resourcesbetween a society's dominant and subordinate groups. As the subordinate groups become more conscious of their joint interests, they may be more inclined to contest the legitimacy of the current pattern of resource distribution; and this increases the tendency for conflict occurrence. The rise in their awareness level may be sparked by a possibly disruptive change caused by the dominant groups' policies or actions. Therefore, the actions of the dominant groups may create "alleniative dispositions" among the subjugated groups (Durojaiye, Oluwadare & Jarikre, 2013).

Marx Weber broadens the perspectives of the theory by explaining what can drive followers' pursuit of conflict. One element is the ability of charismatic leaders to inspire followers to action by channelling their resentments against the superior class. Another way is by questioning the legitimacy of the superordinates, who are in power. The subordinate groups are more likely to make this course of action if there are pronounced structural imbalances, like a high degree of inequality in resources allocation, and

marginal mobility along social hierarchies defined by access to wealth, prestige and power (Durojaiye, Oluwadare & Jarikre, 2013).

Ralf Dahrendorf introduced the social conflict model to the understanding of conflict theory. He is ranked as one of the most influential of the early conflict theorists (Abrahamson, 2001; Tittenbrun, 2011). Dahrendorf views lopsidedness in authority distribution to be the major cause of social conflict (Rocher, 1972). He stresses that class is formed when there is an exclusion from authority, given that it creates a division between the superordinates and the subordinates while enabling the former to dominate the latter. The superordinates are given the privilege to exercise the right of coercion over the subordinates. This unequal access to authority made Dahrendorf designate society as being composed of "imperatively coordinated groups", which are different social units – the superordinate and the subordinate (Rizer, 2011; Appleby, 2012). He adds that authority creates a dichotomy since it does not give room for a gradual transition from the bottom to the top; so he believes this creates systematic social conflicts (Appleby, 2012). Change is an outcome of social conflicts, and Dahrendorf postulates that there is a continuing conflict between stasis and change in society, which is reflected in the tension between consensus and coercion or function and conflict.

The social conflict model consists of certain steps. In the first step, there are social categories (like several consumers, some adherents of a particular religion, and students) with latent interests, positions and expectations, but are yet to organise into quasi-groups. At the next stage, these categories form quasi-groups with a structure, some level of organisation, and group goals. The latent interests also become manifest as ideologies and group programme. According to Dahrendorf (1959, p. 180), "they are the real agents of group conflict"; and in Marx's classification, they are regarded as "class for itself". In the step that follows, conflict arises between interest groups about maintaining or changing the status quo. Dahrendorf (1958) assumes that the nature and intensity of the

conflict would be determined by the presence or absence of conflict conditions, like the people's social mobility, and social conflicts' regulatory frameworks. These conflicts trigger a social structural change in the next and final step. How quickly and deeply the change develops is dependent on the structural transformation conditions, leadership capacity to remain in power and how the dominant interest group applies pressure.

Conflict theory is an important framework for re-examining interreligious conflict and its management in Kwara State. It is useful in understanding the motivations and inclination of the differentiated groups for taking to violence amidst competing interests, positions, orientations and beliefs; discussing the intergroup dynamics of the parties in conflict by espousing unequal access to authority; and revealing the systematic social conflicts in intergroup relations, in general, and interreligious encounters, in particular, in Kwara State. This theory provides insights into the management of inter-religious conflict in Kwara State.

5. Management of Inter-Religious Conflicts in Kwara State

The Kwara State government has employed various strategies in the management of inter-religious conflict in the state. These include attempts to provide good governance and equitable development, litigation, use of police actions to prevent or quell emergent violence, establishment of inter-faith dialogue committees, and partnership with traditional and religious institutions such as the Ilorin Emirate Council. Government response strategies to conflicts in the state such as the court process and the deployment of security forces have attracted considerable attention.

There have been several attempts in the past on the part of government, traditional council and non-governmental groups to resolve inter-religious conflicts in Kwara. Some of the past attempted strategies include town hall meetings, dialogue, establishment of Religious committee on peace, establishment of Mediation centres among others. It is important to note that Kwara State government has shown courage and political will in the resolution of inter-religious conflicts. As part of the resolution, Kwara State government actively encourages religious dialogue and took steps to prevent further violence and tension among faith communities. The Government encourages the activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Muslim/ Christian Dialogue Forum, consisting of prominent Muslim and Christian leaders in all the communities in Kwara State. Such forum has gone a long way in preventing and resolving inter-communal conflicts.

The state government had equally resolved inter-religious conflicts through effective policing, prompt response and imposition of curfew. At the instance of the state government, normalcy usually returned to the scene of inter-religious conflict through the joint efforts of Mobile Police and military personnel. The state security agents such as Nigeria police were immediately drafted to the scene of the incidence in order to prevent escalation.

Furthermore, Kwara State government has equally established administrative panel of enquiries at various occasions as measures to manage inter-religious conflicts. Examples abound. After the eruption of Hijab crisis in Ilorin and Ijagbo, the state government constituted a judicial commission of inquiry into the cause of the conflict. The State Governor also addressed the followers of Christianity and Islam in the state and advised them on the need to maintain peace and work with the state government to find amicable and enduring solution to the issues in contention.

6. Prospects and Challenges

The challenges confronting Kwara State governments in the permanent resolution of inter-religious conflicts in the state are enormous. In spite of the past attempts to prevent eruption of such conflicts, the problem seems to be over stressing the government, especially the Hijab crisis. The resort to violent conflict among some religious adherents in

Ijagbo in 2023 was a test of the will of the Kwara State Government to protect the people and integrity of Kwara as the State of Harmony. It would be wrong to assume that Kwara State government is able to engage substantively on its own with inter-religious conflicts such as Hijah issue. As earlier stated, Kwara State has constituted several judicial commissions of inquiries into inter-religious conflicts. Commissions and panels of enquiry are routine and well-intentioned processes of governance, but in most cases their recommendations are not implemented. Non-implementation means that the conflicts remain unresolved and could be a source of grievance, which could lead to future eruption of violent conflicts. A further problem is that the composition and method of such enquiries do not usually allow for adequate local representation and participation.

There is no doubt that the techniques of conflict management being adopted by the Kwara State government in the past have succeeded in preventing and controlling the eruption of inter religious clashes. By actively encouraging interfaith and inter-ethnic discussions, the chances of violence and tension have been seriously minimized. The adoption of early warning signal by the state government has equally succeeded in averting outbreak of violent conflicts. For example, in August 2004, Kwara State authorities cut short a planned 5-day rally by German evangelist Reinhard Bonnke after only 2 days, citing security concerns (U.S. Department of State, 2005). Christians interpreted this move as a measure of security concern.

Frequent eruption of inter-religious conflicts in Kwara State has been aided by porous border and infiltration of non-indigenes. Porous border, free movement of persons, the more frequent and faster movement of people has contributed to conflict. There is also no doubt that, inter-religious conflict in Kwara State has been further compounded by the problems of mass poverty and unemployment, especially among the youth segment of the population. Poverty and unemployment are veritable and

fertile grounds for youth involvement in violent religious conflicts.

It is a truism that, proliferation of light weapons is a serious dilemma confronting Kwara State government in her resolve to prevent conflicts. It is not only Kwara State dilemma it is also a national dilemma. The direct implications of massive influx of arms into the state have been palpable insecurity. Proliferation of light arms has fueled the rising wave of communal conflicts. These illegal arms have helped to prolong conflicts, undermined stability, social peace and security and have wrought devastation on the economies of affected communities. Inability of Kwara State Government to control the proliferation of light weapons is great danger to internal security.

Permanent resolution of inter-religious conflicts in Kwara still faces practical difficulties due to scarce resources and the ability of trouble makers to move freely from one community to another in the state. Related to the above, is the lack of sharing of information and personal networking between law enforcement agencies. Factors which lead to this situation include the lack of attention and resource allocation being given to inter-agency communication and co-operation. *There is also the inability of warring communities to cooperate with government in resolving conflicts.*

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper examined the management of inter-religious conflicts in Kwara State. Specifically, some issues surrounding outbreak and consequences of such conflicts were discussed. The various efforts aimed at resolving inter-religious conflicts and challenges were also examined. It is, therefore, necessary at this point to make recommendations towards effective management of inter-religious conflicts in Kwara State.

Any meaningful resolution of inter-religious conflicts in Kwara State must begin with building trust and confidence among the warring communities. Government and traditional rulers have important roles to play in this respect.

Efforts to effectively manage conflicts in the area should give priority to the roles of traditional rulers, community/village heads and the religious leaders who are likely to be more informed on the root causes of the clashes. Some of these leaders have led peace campaigns and participated in cross-communal/religious peace initiatives. This response is highly dependent on individual motivation and ability to convince their communities.

It is imperative that the economy should be empowered to take care of the unemployed and a poverty-ridden populace, especially the youth. Kwara State and local governments should engage the jobless youths in the communities with basic knowledge, skill acquisitions, and local technical support to promote self-help skills as essential principles toward peace building.

There is need for the establishment of committee which will comprise all representatives of social groups within the state. Such a committee will provide a forum where many communal issues can be discussed instead of resulting to violence.

In addition, there is the need for research to be carried out for an in-depth understanding of the causes and solution to inter-religious conflicts in the state. Experts in conflicts resolution should equally be put into proper use to curtail possible outbreak of clash in the state. An increased attention should also be devoted to the prevention of social conflict, the peaceful resolution of existing conflicts through constant dialogue.

The mass media, especially Kwara State Broadcasting Corporation, should lead in the campaign against communal conflicts through jingles and fruitful discussion. For example, Kwara State radio station had been promoting peace through jingles. Furthermore, religious clashes can be addressed through the rule of law and equity of opportunities. The perpetrators and sponsors of violence must be brought to justice regardless of their status in the society.

Finally, Kwara State Government should establish a sort of Truth and Reconciliation Committee where conflicting communities would freely confess their wrong doings and ask for forgiveness. Such reconciliatory measure might re-awaken old wound, but would as well calm down frayed nerves and restore inner peace and ultimately lead to sustainable resolution.

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METHODOLOGY IN THE RESEARCH JOURNEY: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This research investigates the conceptual and pragmatic relationships between the literature review effort and the formation and sustenance, even logic, of a study's theoretical framework construction. Drawing on the work of Martin (1985) and Gilbert (2008), the study advances the thesis that literature review is an essential aspect of the research process, contributing to practically every operational stage of the research journey. The paper also highlights the conceptual requirements that tacitly shape the tasks and methods of literature review, as well as how a theoretical framework is required because research infers the presence of a theory (a paradigm, a hierarchy of concepts) that "under-determines" (grounds) the use of knowledge-generation mechanisms (via conceptual analysis).

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

In drafting a literature review section of the study, the researcher is expected to present a detailed discussion of previous literature in the subject area and the various critical standpoints, arguments, perspectives and conclusions in the earlier studies. Academic writing requires that the researcher demonstrates sufficient knowledge in the research area to be undertaken. This would show whether they have studied previous or existing literature in the field with insight and actually know the state of knowledge and the major questions and debates in the research area. An adequate knowledge of the previous works will reveal the gaps in the research area which may attract further interest and research. One may find previous studies inadequate and therefore require further research to fill the gap(s).

The cardinal responsibility of the researcher is to list all the primary and secondary sources of research materials using a standard style sheet. The listing, annotation or documentation must be comprehensive enough to include all sources, whether published or unpublished, book and journal sources and electronic sources, such as the internet, television or radio.

Essential Tasks in a Literature Review

One of the essential preliminary tasks in research is to have a thorough knowledge of the existing literature in the research area. That will allow the researcher to see the gaps that can be filled. Reviewing the literature can be time-consuming, daunting and frustrating, but is essential and rewarding. The literature review is an integral part of the research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. It has value even before the first step; that is, even prior to the formulation of a research question. In the initial stages of research, literature review helps in establishing the theoretical roots of the study. It also clarifies the research focus and methodology. Ultimately, the literature review serves to enhance and consolidate the researcher's knowledge base as well as integrate earlier research findings.

Since an important responsibility in research is to compare one's findings with those of others, it is here that the literature review plays an

extremely important role. In writing the research outcome, literature review helps to integrate the findings with the current earlier research literature in the field. The findings may either support or contradict earlier studies. The higher the academic level of the research, the more important a thorough integration of the findings with the existing literature. A literature review has to provide a theoretical background to the study as well as establish the links between the proposed research topic and earlier researches. In general, then, such a step in the research process is essential in contextualising and integrating research findings vis-à-vis the existing body of knowledge in the field or profession. Broadly, the literature review helps to establish, among others, a clear research, a suitable focus, research methodology, a broad knowledge base in the research area and provide context to the research findings.

However, the literature review may appear paradoxical in that one may not effectively undertake it without identifying the problem of the research. In seeming contradictory, literature review also plays an extremely important role in shaping the research problem in that the process of reviewing the literature helps the researcher to understand the subject area better and thereby aids the researcher to conceptualise the research problem clearly and precisely. In reviewing the literature, one learns what aspects of the subject area that have been treated by others, what they have found out about these aspects, what gaps they have identified and what suggestions they have made for further research. All these will provide a greater insight in the formulation of research questions as well as establish a clear research focus. These are essentially elements that attest to the validity of any research. Additionally, a literature review will help in identifying the gaps that the researcher may focus on in order to complement existing studies. Going through the literature acquaints one with the methodologies that have been used by other researchers in similar fields. One may thus evaluate the success or otherwise of the methods they employed. This will thus help the researcher to

select an appropriate methodology to use so as to avoid past challenges.

The most important function of the literature review is to ensure one studies the research area sufficiently before delving into the research proper. It is crucial to acquaint oneself with current theories and explore areas in the research field. Research projects for a higher degree (MA or PhD) demand considerable knowledge and expertise on the part of the researcher. According to Martin (1985: 30), a detailed and thorough literature review is essential in relating research findings to the current scholarship in the field. A good and systematic literature review helps to contextualize research findings most appropriately.

There are three fundamental questions for a researcher to answer while gauging a literature review. How do the answers to one's research questions compare with those conducted in earlier researches? What contributions does the research make to the existing body of knowledge? How do the findings differ, complement or conform to previous research findings? A meticulous literature review will help the researcher to answer these questions as well as establish a relationship with previous scholarship. It is important to place findings in the context of what is already known in existing studies. Obtaining answers to research questions is comparatively easy; the difficult part is examining how findings fit into the existing body of knowledge. If a specific research problem is not identified, a literature review in one's broad area of interest shall be conducted with the aims of narrowing it to a specific problem statement. There is a danger in reviewing the literature without having a reasonably specific idea of the research undertaking. This may negatively affect the methodology and choice of the research problem. Hence, the need to broadly conceptualise the research problem before undertaking any major literature review.

There are four steps involved in conducting a literature review: searching for the existing

literature in the area of study; reviewing the selected literature; developing a theoretical framework; and developing a conceptual framework. The skills required for these tasks are different. Developing theoretical and conceptual frameworks is more difficult than the other tasks. To search effectively for literature in the field of inquiry, it is imperative to have at least some idea of the broad subject area and of the problem to be investigated in order to set parameters for the research. Next, compile a bibliography for this broad area. There are three sources that can be used to prepare a bibliography: books, journals and the Internet.

Though books are a central part of any bibliography, they have their disadvantages as well as advantages. The main advantage is that the material published in books is usually important and of good quality and findings are "integrated with other research to form a coherent body of knowledge" (Martin 1985: 33). The main disadvantage is that the material is not completely up-to-date, as it can take a few years between the completion of a work and its publication in the form of a book. The best way to search for a book is to look at library catalogs. When librarians catalog a book, they also assign to it subject headings that are usually based on Library Subject Headings. If one is not sure of the subject headings, the librarian can provide useful guide and assistance. This saves a lot of time for a researcher.

Internet book lists, such as Book Review Index, can help the researcher to locate books of interest. Use the subject catalog or keywords option to search for books in the area of research. Narrow the subject area searched by selecting the appropriate keywords. Also, look through these titles carefully and identify the books that are likely to be of interest or importance to the project. If the titles seem appropriate to the topic, print them out or note them down on a piece of paper, as this will save time. Be aware that sometimes a title may not provide enough information to help in deciding whether a book may be of use. It is thus imperative to examine book contents as well.

When the researcher selects books that appear appropriate to the topic, there is the need to examine the bibliography of each of them. It will save time to photocopy their bibliographies. Go through these bibliographies carefully to identify the books that are in common. If a book has been referenced by a number of authors, it should be included in one's reading list. Prepare a final list of books that can be considered essential readings. Having prepared a reading list, locate these books in the library or borrow them from other sources. Examine their contents to double-check that they really are relevant to the research topic. If one finds that a book is not relevant to the research, delete it from the reading list. If one finds anything in a book's contents relevant to the topic, one should annotate it. An annotated bibliography contains a brief abstract of the aspects covered in a book and the researcher's notes on its relevance. Be careful to keep track of your references. To do this, prepare a card index or use a computer program.

One also needs to go through the journals relating to the research in a similar manner. Journals provide the most up-to-date information, even though there may often be a gap of two to three years between the completion of a research project and its publication in a journal. One should select as many journals as possible, depending on their availability in the field of study; certain fields have more journals than others. As with books, one needs to prepare a list of the journals to be examined for identifying the literature relevant to one's study. This can be done in a number of ways. One can locate the hard copies of the journals that are appropriate to the study; look at citation or abstract indices to identify and/or read the abstracts of such articles and search electronic databases.

After identifying any useful journals and articles, prepare a list of those to be examined. Select one of these journals and, starting with the latest issue, examine its contents page to see if there is any article of relevance to the research topic. If there is any particular article of interest to the research, read its abstract. If it is likely to

be used in the research, depending upon one's financial resources, either photocopy it or prepare a summary of it and record its reference for later use. There are several sources designed to make search for journals easy and these can save the researcher enormous time. They are indices of journals (e.g., the Humanities Index) abstracts of articles and citation indices (the Social Sciences Citation Index). Each of these indexing, abstracting and citation services is available in print or accessible through the Internet.

In most libraries, information on books, journals and abstracts is stored on computers. In each case, the information is classified by subject, author and title. One may also use the keywords option (author/keyword; title/keyword; subject/keyword; expert/keyword or just keywords). What system one uses depends upon what is available in one's library and what one is familiar with. There are specially prepared electronic databases in a number of disciplines. These can also be helpful in preparing a bibliography. For example, most libraries carry electronic databases. Select the database most appropriate to the area of study to see if there are any useful references. Of course, any computer database search is restricted to only those journals and articles.

Gilbert (2008: 73) suggests that the researcher should also talk to their research supervisor and other available experts to find out any additional relevant literature to include in their reading list. The Internet in almost every academic discipline and professional field has become an important tool for finding published literature. Through an Internet search, one can identify published material in books, journals and other sources with immense ease and speed. An Internet search is carried out through search engines of which there are many, though the most commonly used are Google and Yahoo. Searching through the Internet is very similar to searching for books and articles in a library using an electronic catalog, as it is based on the use of keywords. An Internet search basically identifies all the material in the database of a search engine that contains the keywords

specified, either individually or in combination. It is important to choose words or combinations of words that other people are likely to use.

Now that one has identified several books and articles as useful, the next step is to start reading them critically to pull together themes and issues that are of relevance to the study. Unless there is a theoretical framework of themes in mind to start with, separate sheets of paper for each theme or issue identified may be used when going through the selected books and articles. The following example details the process: An author recently examined, as part of an evaluation study, the extent of practice of the concept of 'community responsiveness' in the delivery of health services in Western Australia by health service providers. Before evaluating the extent of its use, pertinent literature relating to 'community responsiveness in health' was identified and reviewed. Through this review, many themes emerged, which became the basis for developing the theoretical framework for the study.

Literature Review and Developing a Theoretical Framework

Examining the relevant literature can be a never-ending task, but as you have limited time, it is important to set parameters by reviewing the literature in relation to some main themes pertinent to the research topic. As one starts reading the literature, one soon discovers that the problem to be investigated has roots in a number of theories that have been developed from different perspectives. The information obtained from different books and journals now needs to be sorted under the main themes and theories, highlighting agreements and disagreements among the authors and identifying unanswered questions or gaps. One will also realize that the literature deals with a number of aspects that have a direct or indirect bearing on the research topic. Use these aspects as a basis for developing a theoretical framework of the project.

It is in the process of developing the literature review that one should develop the theoretical framework for the study. In doing a literature

review, note that in any kind of research, it is observation concepts that drive, so to speak, interpretation or even the identification of the object of study. A theoretical framework is required because research implies the presence of a theory (a paradigm, a hierarchy of concepts) that "under-determines" (grounds) the use of knowledge-generation mechanisms (by way of conceptual analysis). This allows for a specific (approach to) knowledge-production. This is why a theoretical or an analytical frame is *indispensable* in any form of academic research, because even social research operates by the use of pure reason and by means of reflection on first principles and other *a priori* methods. Even in humanities research in which an *open system* is the object of study, it is the researcher's *framing* (the creation of a *coherent* conceptual scheme) that ultimately makes possible the use of observation concepts in order to study social systems (institutions, products, processes, actions and events) as *conceptualized in experience* (themselves based on a prior recognition of human behavior or social processes).

Thus, one needs to show that one is familiar with the *theoretical* literature and that one can contribute to the continuing conversation in this area in addition to the ability to identify the conceptual *frame* that guides one's research and how one hopes to use it to *illuminate* (appraise, re-describe or critique) the research area or topic. Thus, one should not be deluded into thinking that one could avoid a recognizable theoretical framework or could proceed from instinct and intuition alone in writing a research project.

The preceding discussion seeks to highlight the intricate links between literature review and the theoretical framework of any research work. Literature review should sort out the information within the theoretical framework. Unless the literature review relates to the theoretical framework, a proper research focus cannot be developed. This brings us to the paradox mentioned previously: without a thorough literature review a proper theoretical framework cannot be developed and without a theoretical

framework an effective literature review cannot be made. The solution to this is to read some of the literature and then attempt to develop a theoretical framework, even a loose one, within which one can organize the rest of the literature read. As one reads more about the area, there may be the likelihood to change the theoretical framework. However, without this one may get bogged down with a great deal of unnecessary reading and note-taking that may not be relevant to the study.

The literature pertinent to the study may deal with two types of information, namely the universal and the specific (i.e., a local trend or a specific program). In writing about such information, one should start with the general information and gradually narrow it down to the specific.

Developing a Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework forms the basis of a research problem. Whereas the theoretical framework consists of the theories or issues in which a study is embedded, the conceptual framework describes the aspects selected from the theoretical framework to form the basis of the research. Theoretical framework includes all the theories that have been put forward to explain the relationship between variables. However, out of the variables, one may plan to test only one.

Note that the review of literature should be written around the adopted theoretical framework, which, of course, emerges from the literature review itself. Indeed, one should identify and describe various theories relevant to the field and specify gaps in the existing knowledge in the area as well as recent advances or current trends in the area of study. The results from the study should then be integrated with specific and relevant findings from the existing literature by comparing the two to reveal the contradictions or otherwise embodied therein. Note that at this stage, one may only accomplish the first function of the literature review, which is to provide a theoretical background to the study. For the second function, the contextualization of the

findings, one has to defer it to the report writing stage. While reading the literature for the theoretical background of the study, certain themes may emerge of which the main ones should be converted into subheadings.

Some researchers usually write up the entire literature review in one section, entitled "Review of the Literature" or "The Literature Review," for example, without sub-headings. It is advisable that one writes the literature review under subheadings based upon the main themes discovered and which form the basis of the theoretical framework. These subheadings should be precise, descriptive of the theme in question and follow a logical progression. Now, under each subheading, record the main findings with respect to the theme in question (thematic writing), highlighting the reasons for and against an argument if they exist and identify the gaps and issues raised.

The second broad function of the literature review is contextualizing the findings of the study. That requires a very systematical comparison of findings with those made earlier by others. Quote from these studies to show how the findings contradict, confirm or add to them. Thus, it places one's findings in the context of previous findings by other researchers. As earlier mentioned, this function is undertaken when writing one's findings, that is, after the data analysis of your data.

At this stage of the research process, only the first function can be fulfilled, while the second function follows after a successful data analysis as one writes the research findings. The writing of the literature reviewed should be thematic in nature, that is based on the main themes of the study. The sequence of these themes in the write-up should follow a logical progression. Various arguments should be substantiated with specific quotations and citations from the literature. One should adhere to an acceptable academic referencing style, whether APA, Chicago, or other more or less similar citation formats.

Conclusion

Reviewing the literature and developing a theoretical framework go hand in hand. This is itself a continuous process. It begins before a research problem is finalized and continues until the report is finished. However, there is usually a paradox in the literature review: an effective one cannot be undertaken without a developed theoretical frame for the research. That is why a literature 'search' plays an extremely important role in formulating the theoretical framework. The literature review brings clarity and focus to the theoretical framework, improves the research methodology and broadens the knowledge base of the researcher.

Reviewing the literature involves a number of steps: searching for the existing literature in the area of study; reviewing the selected literature; using it to develop a theoretical framework from which the study emerges; and also using it to develop a theoretical framework, which will become the basis of the investigation. The main sources for sourcing literature in the field are books, journals and the Internet. There are several sources which can provide information about locating relevant journals. The literature review serves two important functions: it provides theoretical background to the study and also helps to contextualise findings by comparing them with earlier findings by others in the area of study.

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IMPACT OF PRIVATE SECURITY FIRMS ON NATIONAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The increasing reliance on private security firms (PSCs) in Nigeria signifies a substantial shift in the country's national security space. This study evaluates the effectiveness of PSCs in filling the security gaps left by overstretched public security agencies amidst rising crime rates and insecurity. The central objective is to assess PSCs' impact on national security by examining their contributions, challenges, and interactions with public law enforcement. Using a qualitative methodology, this research draws on secondary data from existing literature and empirical studies. The analysis is guided by public-private partnership (PPP) theory, which affirms the collaborative potential between government and private entities in delivering public services. Key findings indicate that PSCs significantly enhance surveillance, crime prevention, and protection of critical infrastructure. However, they face regulatory and legal challenges, issues of accountability, and operational limitations, such as inadequate firearms and limited police cooperation. The relationship between PSCs and public law enforcement is characterized by both collaboration and conflict, necessitating improved synergy and formalised cooperation. Strengthening regulatory frameworks is recommended to ensure PSCs operate effectively and ethically. The study concludes that while PSCs contribute significantly to national security, their effectiveness is affected by existing challenges that require comprehensive policy interventions.

Keywords: Private, Public, Security, National, Impact, Insecurity, Partnership, Law, Enforcement, Government.

1. Introduction

Nigeria faces a difficult security situation marked by a range of challenges, including terrorism, insurgency, armed robbery, kidnapping, and communal conflicts (Madobi, 2022). The Nigerian state has struggled to maintain adequate security measures due to factors such as corruption, inadequate funding, insufficient manpower, and logistical constraints within its public security forces (Madobi, 2022; Olawunmi, 2023). In response to these security challenges and the inability of public law enforcement agencies to provide adequate protection, private security firms have emerged and proliferated across the country, says the Idowu

(2018; AfriLaw Report 2019). The private security sector has grown significantly over the past two decades, filling gaps left by public security forces (Idowu, 2018).

Despite the presence of both public law enforcement agencies and private security firms, Nigeria continues to experience severe security issues. The increasing reliance on private security firms raises questions about their effectiveness, regulation, and the broader implications for national security (Chinwonkwu & Igbo, 2018; 2022). This study seeks to address how private security firms are influencing the national security framework and whether they are adequately equipped to tackle

the nation's security problems. This study aims to critically assess the role that private security firms play in enhancing or undermining national security in Nigeria. It will look into their contributions, challenges, and the dynamics between private security and public law enforcement.

To do this, the research questions to guide us include: i. How do private security firms contribute to national security in Nigeria? ii. What are the challenges and limitations faced by private security firms? iii. What is the relationship between private security firms and public law enforcement agencies? Meanwhile, the objectives of this study include: 1. To assess the contributions of private security firms to national security. 2. To identify challenges and limitations faced by private security firms. 3. To evaluate the interaction between private security firms and public law enforcement agencies

The paper's argument simply is that Private security firms play a significant role in enhancing national security in Nigeria, but their effectiveness is limited by various challenges and their relationship with public law enforcement. The paper is in four sections: the first introduces the study with background, statement of problem, objectives and research questions guiding the study; the second concerns with literature review which sees conceptual and theoretical frameworks developed and solidified with empirical review. The third section is the presentation of findings and the discussion of the same, both preceded by methodology. The fourth section is conclusion, with summary of findings and implication to theory clearly stated and followed by practical recommendations.

2. Literature Review

This section involves synthesizing existing literature on private security, examining theoretical frameworks relevant to their effectiveness, operational challenges, and their relationship with public security sectors. By clarifying key concepts and theoretical constructs, this review establishes a solid theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics between private and public security efforts.

A. Conceptual Framework

National Security

Holmes (2015) observed that National security involves safeguarding the entire nation. Its primary objective is to protect the country and its citizens from attacks and external threats by maintaining armed forces and securing state secrets. This concept, Khan (2022) shows, includes a broad spectrum of activities designed to protect against various forms of aggression, whether they come from foreign adversaries, terrorist groups, cyber-attacks, or internal disruptions such as crime and civil unrest.

Ensuring national security, says the Guatemalan National Security Agency (2024), involves maintaining territorial integrity with a robust military, preserving political sovereignty by safeguarding political processes, and achieving economic stability by protecting critical infrastructure from disruptions. It also includes maintaining social cohesion through policies promoting harmony and justice, ensuring public safety with effective law enforcement and emergency response, and protecting against cyber threats with strong cybersecurity measures (BrainWave Science, 2023). Additionally, it addresses environmental threats through sustainable management and health security by preventing and responding to health crises with robust healthcare systems (Holmes, 2015; Khan, 2022).

Private Security Firms

Private security firms are privately-owned businesses that provide a broad array of security services to individuals, organizations, and even governments (Dupont, 2014). These services encompass a wide range of functions such as physical guarding, surveillance, risk assessment, crisis management, cyber security, and investigative services. The operations of private security firms vary significantly, with

some being small, locally-operated companies while others are large multinational corporations with a global presence (Idowu, 2018; Chinwonkwu & Igbo (2022). The National Bureau of Statistics (2019) presented a report of the Private Security situation of Nigeria as of 2018 seen in figure 1:

Information on Private Guards/Security Industry

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total number of Registered Private Guard Comapines	802	859	902	964	1,058	1,110
Total number of Employees by these Companies	578,056	601,528	722,401	771,478	791,210	828,502
Male	432,614	457,111	542,000	584,021	590,204	616,000
Female	145,442	144,417	180,401	187,457	201,006	212,502
Categories of Employees : -						
Post Graduates (PGD, Masters)	269	589	1,009	1,509	1,825	2,004
Graduates (BSc., BA, HND)	129,115	138,236	159,321	195,207	200,902	234,996
Others (ND, SSCE and others)	448,672	462,703	562,071	574,762	588,483	591,451
Total	578,056	601,528	722,401	771,478	791,210	828,451
Remuneration with respect to the qualification : -						
Post Graduates (PGD, Masters) (Naira)	60,000.00	60,000.00	65,000.00	65,000.00	65,000.00	65,000.00
Graduates (BSc., BA., HND) (Naira)	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	50,000.00	55,000.00	55,000.00
Others (ND, SSCE and others) (Naira)	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	25,000.00	25,000.00

Figure 1: Table showing information of Private Security guards between 2013-2018
Source: (National Bureau of Statistics, 2019

According to Adegoke (2011) and Abubakar (2019), some notable private security firms in Nigeria include:

1. Halogen Security Company Limited: Known for offering a wide range of security services, including manned guarding, electronic security, and risk management.

2. Kings Guards Nigeria Limited: Provides security solutions such as static guarding, mobile patrols, and event security.

3. Bemil Nigeria Limited: Offers comprehensive security services, including armed and unarmed guards, security training, and electronic security systems.

4. ASA Security: Specializes in manned guarding, electronic security, and consulting services, with a strong focus on corporate security solutions.

5. McDon Security Limited: Offers security services including manned guarding, escort services, and security consulting, catering to both private and public sector clients.

Private security firms operate for profit, offering customized security solutions such as physical security, surveillance, cybersecurity, private investigations, and consultancy to various clients including businesses, residential communities, government agencies, and high-net-worth individuals. They adhere to regional regulations to ensure legal compliance (Holmes, 2015; Abubakar, 2019; Chinwokwu, 2022).

These firms fill gaps in public law enforcement by providing specialized services, such as advanced cybersecurity and corporate investigations, for high-risk areas and large events. They use advanced technologies and innovative practices to enhance security (Zerabruk, 2022; Abubakar, 2019; Ukoh, 2022).

National security includes military defense, law enforcement, intelligence, cybersecurity, economic security, environmental security, and social stability. Private security firms support

these areas by augmenting law enforcement, preventing crime, protecting critical infrastructure, managing crises, providing cybersecurity, and gathering intelligence. They also foster public-private partnerships and participate in community policing (Khan, 2022; Ukoh, 2022; Iyiama & Kawure, 2023). Figure 2 below sheds light on the functions of Private Security firms:

Scale	Task	Ratio (%)	Aggregated (%)
1	Combat and military operations	2.7	36.7
2	Military assistance	17.4	
3	Operational support	16.6	
4	Logistics support	18.2	40.3
5	Intelligence	5.6	
6	Quasi-police tasks (prevention) and border patrol	1.0	
7	Security/protection (individuals and property)	15.5	
8	Police advice and training	4.8	
9	Demining	8.9	23.0
10	Humanitarian aid	0.2	
11	Weapons disposal/destruction	1.9	
12	Facility and infrastructure building	7.2	
	Total	100.0	100.0

Figure 2: Table showing tasks/functions of Private Security Firms
Source (Branoviç, 2011)

B. Theoretical Framework

Public-Private Partnership Theory (PPP)

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) theory, which gained prominence in the late 20th century, proposes a collaborative approach between government entities and private sector organizations to deliver public services or infrastructure projects. This model aims to harness the efficiency and innovation of the private sector while maintaining public sector oversight and accountability (McQuaid & Scherer, 2010). Scholars such as E.S. Savas have contributed to its development, emphasizing the potential for PPPs to address infrastructure deficits and improve service delivery through shared risk and resource allocation between public and private entities (Chimaozum, et al, 2024).

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) theory involves integrating public sector oversight with private sector efficiency to ensure public interest, leveraging private sector innovation and resources to enhance service quality, and establishing frameworks for managing project risks (Liu, et al, 2023). It emphasizes accountability and transparency in decision-making and performance, and promotes sustainable development by incorporating environmental, social, and economic considerations into projects (Chimaozum, et al, 2024).

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) harness the efficiencies, innovation, and resources of the private sector, empowering governments to oversee and ensure accountability in delivering public services or infrastructure projects (Liu, et al, 2014). This collaboration enables cost-effective solutions and access to advanced technologies that governments may lack. However, challenges arise in aligning private profit motives with public service objectives, maintaining transparency in contractual agreements, and managing the risks associated

with private sector engagement, such as contract disputes or project delays impacting public interests (Cui, et al, 2018).

In the context of national security, PPP theory advocates for joint initiatives where private security firms complement public law enforcement efforts through shared resources, expertise, and intelligence sharing. Understanding PPP theory can inform Nigerian policymakers on structuring effective partnerships to optimize security outcomes while addressing inherent challenges.

C. Empirical Review

Branoviç (2011) examines the growing role of private military and security companies (PMSCs) in failing states. Using data from the Private Security Database (1990-2007), the study highlights how PMSCs provide crucial services like combat support, training, logistics, and protection to governments with weak territorial control and law enforcement. The research questions include the prevalence of PMSCs in failing states, the conditions for their operation, and their impact on political instability. The findings show that PMSCs increasingly enter failing states during and after state failure episodes, often alongside foreign intervention forces. They do not significantly shorten political instability nor harm local security institutions. This study offers valuable insights into the strategic role of PMSCs in contexts where public sector capabilities are limited.

Krahmann and Friesendorf (2011) examine the increasing use of Private Security Companies (PSCs) by the European Union (EU) in multilateral operations. The study highlights the employment of PSCs to protect missions like EUPOL in Afghanistan, EULEX in Kosovo, and EUPOL in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The reliance on PSCs raises concerns about decreased democratic accountability, reduced governmental control, and perceptions of contractor impunity and insecurity among civilians. Despite these issues, advantages such as filling urgent capability gaps, cost-efficiency, and specialist expertise often outweigh the disadvantages. Given Europe's financial and

personnel constraints, the use of PSCs is likely to grow. To curtail associated risks, the study recommends five specific actions for the EU to ensure accountability, control, and positive public perception, safeguarding mission effectiveness and security.

Akoch (2021) assessed the effectiveness of private security companies in Juba City, South Sudan, focusing on employee capability, technology adoption, regulatory frameworks, and customer satisfaction. Using a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from 384 respondents through questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that employee capability (M=4.29), customer satisfaction (M=4.24), and regulatory framework (M=4.47) significantly influence security provision, while technology adoption (M=4.25) does not statistically impact effectiveness. The study concluded that continuous training of employees, investment in technological systems, and comprehensive national policies are essential for improving private security services. The recommendations aim to enhance collaboration between private security firms and government agencies, ensuring high standards of regulation and customer satisfaction. The study is full of insights for policymakers and private security stakeholders in South Sudan.

Chinwokwu and Igbo (2022)'s study examines the role of private security companies in crime control in Nigeria, highlighting challenges that hinder their effectiveness. The study argues that due to the police's perceived failure in providing adequate security against crimes like kidnapping and armed robbery, private security companies have emerged as alternative providers. While these firms complement police efforts, challenges such as inadequate firearms, lack of supervision, and limited police cooperation impede their performance. Recommendations include establishing a security institute, enhancing collaboration with the police, and formalising government recognition of the private security sector.

In a similar but different study, Chinwokwu (2022) investigates barriers to effective private

security company (PSC) participation in crime control in Nigeria. The study identifies their roles and effectiveness, explores factors hindering their performance, and assesses their impact. Findings reveal 72% perceive PSCs as effective in crime control, with 69% satisfied despite operational flaws. Recommendations include establishing a comprehensive legal framework to support PSC operations, enhancing collaboration with law enforcement, and improving service delivery efficiency.

AfriLaw Foundation in partnership with The Private Security Governance Observatory did a baseline study on private security governance in Nigeria in 2019. The report highlights the proliferation of private security companies (PSCs) in Nigeria amidst increasing security challenges and strained public security agencies. It raised issues such as inadequate regulation, poor standards, and ethical lapses within the industry, worsened by the presence of unregistered PSCs and cases of human rights abuses, especially in the Niger Delta region due to extractive industries. The study reviews and recommends improvements to the legal and regulatory frameworks governing PSCs, assess their operational standards and challenges, and engage stakeholders for effective reform. The methodology involved mixed methods including qualitative Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and quantitative Mobile Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (MCAPI) in selected areas of Abuja and Rivers State.

Comparative analysis reveals the strengths and weaknesses of private security firms compared to public law enforcement agencies. In the light of this, van Steden *et al* (2014) looked into the question of overlapping values and mutual prejudices by way of an Empirical Research into the Ethos of Police Officers and Private Security Guards to see what determines professional motivations and values of security operatives: sector or profession? Their paper answers this question through a survey study among police officers (n=405) and private security guards (n=329) in the Netherlands. The results show that both groups closely resemble each other in how they prioritize motivations and values,

although police officers have a slightly more 'missionary' and 'crimefighting' work ethic than private security guards. Mutual perceptions, however, reveal contrasts: police officers look down on private security guards while private security guards look up to police officers. It recommends reorientation for both parties.

Public Safety Canada (2016) produced a report which showed the rapid expansion of new private security services, emphasising their significant activities in the absence of established protocols for communication and information sharing with public police. These services, frequently manned by ex-police and security personnel, operate independently alongside traditional private security firms. Currently, there is limited insight into their size, budgets, and specific operational activities, leading to a situation where these entities function somewhat autonomously from both public law enforcement and established private security sectors.

Czop (2017) emphasises the vital role of the private security sector in public safety, drawing on his experience as Chief Officer of the City Police and later as President of the Polish Association of Employers Protection Branch "Małopolska". He advocates for optimising the use of private security companies to enhance public security and order. The article explores the evolution of security companies globally, with a focus on their de-monopolisation in Poland. It highlights their crucial role in protecting critical infrastructure and addressing contemporary terrorist threats. The author concludes that security companies are integral to Poland's public security system and advocates for their continued strengthening in this role.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the impact of private security firms on national security in Nigeria. The research methodology involves analysing secondary data sources such as case studies from previous research, academic literature, and reports. The study design is structured into

key sections including introduction, literature review integrating conceptual and theoretical frameworks, empirical analysis, methods of data collection, data analysis techniques using thematic and content analysis, presentation of findings through narrative descriptions, and a comprehensive discussion on implications. The study concludes with actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to enhance national security in Nigeria amidst the contributions and challenges posed by private security firms.

4. Presentation of Findings

i. How do private security firms contribute to national security in Nigeria?

Private security firms bolster surveillance and crime prevention through advanced technologies and security protocols, complementing public law enforcement efforts (Akoch, 2021).

They fill gaps left by overstretched public agencies, providing additional manpower and specialized services (Krahmann & Friesendorf, 2011; Chinwokwu & Igbo, 2022).

They safeguard vital installations and private enterprises crucial to national economic stability, especially in high-risk areas like the Niger Delta (Czop, 2017; AfriLaw Foundation, 2019).

ii. What are the challenges and limitations faced by private security firms?

Significant regulatory and legal challenges include inadequate regulation, poor operational standards, and lack of clear legal guidelines (AfriLaw Foundation, 2019).

Concerns about decreased democratic accountability, reduced governmental control, and lack of communication protocols with public police (Krahmann & Friesendorf, 2011; Public Safety Canada, 2016).

Inadequate firearms, lack of supervision, and limited police cooperation hinder effectiveness (Chinwokwu & Igbo, 2022; Van Steden, 2014).

iii. What is the relationship between private security firms and public law enforcement agencies?

Efforts to enhance synergy between private firms and public law enforcement, including recommendations for improved cooperation and comprehensive security coverage (Akoch, 2021).

Mutual prejudices and operational conflicts exist, necessitating formalised cooperation to enhance effectiveness (Van Steden, 2014).

Private security firms are crucial to national security, particularly in areas with high-security needs and limited public resources (Czop, 2017).

5. Discussion of Findings

Private security firms in Nigeria have made significant contributions to national security, particularly in areas where public law enforcement resources are limited.

Private security firms significantly enhance surveillance and crime prevention efforts in Nigeria. They provide additional manpower and deploy advanced technology to bolster security measures. Branoviç (2011) reiterates the importance of private military and security companies (PMSCs) in failing states, noting that they offer essential services like combat support and protection. This is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where private security firms help maintain order in areas where public law enforcement resources are stretched thin.

Akoch (2021) conducted a study in Juba City, South Sudan, which can be paralleled to the Nigerian context. The findings reveal that private security firms improve surveillance and security measures through well-trained personnel and a high level of customer satisfaction. These firms deploy advanced technologies such as surveillance cameras, alarm systems, and other electronic security measures, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness of crime prevention strategies.

Private security firms significantly enhance national security by supporting public law

enforcement, protecting critical infrastructure, and addressing specific security challenges. These firms fill gaps left by public law enforcement, especially in high-risk areas, providing crucial support in combating rising crimes such as kidnapping and terrorism. By offering additional manpower, expertise, and resources, they bolster the efforts of overwhelmed public agencies (Chinwokwu & Igbo, 2022). Their capability to secure high-priority targets, demonstrated through their assistance to EU missions, can be applied effectively in contexts like Nigeria (Krahmann & Friesendorf, 2011).

Moreover, private security firms safeguard vital installations such as power plants and transportation hubs, which are essential for economic stability. In regions like Nigeria's Niger Delta, their role in ensuring the security of extractive industries is critical for maintaining economic stability and preventing disruptions (Czop, 2017; AfriLaw Foundation, 2019). However, these firms face several challenges, including inadequate regulation and oversight, which can lead to unprofessional conduct and potential human rights abuses. Effective national policies and comprehensive legal frameworks are necessary to ensure high operational and ethical standards (AfriLaw Foundation, 2019; Akoch, 2021).

The combined efforts of private security firms and public law enforcement significantly enhance national security. Czop (2017) emphasises the critical role that private security companies play in Poland's public security system, advocating for their continued strengthening. In Nigeria, PSCs are equally integral, particularly in regions with heightened security needs, such as the Niger Delta and the Southwest. These firms provide essential services, including guarding critical infrastructure, conducting surveillance, and offering specialised security solutions that complement the efforts of public law enforcement.

In many instances, private security firms fill gaps left by overstretched public security agencies. This is particularly important in high-risk areas where the presence of state security may be limited. The collaborative efforts between private and public security sectors ensure a broader and more robust security network, thereby enhancing overall national stability.

6. Conclusion

Private security firms play a significant role in enhancing national security in Nigeria by providing additional manpower, advanced technology, and specialised services. They augment public law enforcement efforts, enhance surveillance and crime prevention, and protect critical infrastructure and private properties. Private security firms enhance national security in Nigeria by providing trained personnel, advanced technology, and specialised services, filling gaps left by public security agencies. They improve surveillance, crime prevention, and the protection of critical infrastructure and private properties.

However, challenges include inadequate regulation, poor operational standards, accountability issues, and operational difficulties such as insufficient firearms and limited police cooperation. The relationship between private security firms and public law enforcement involves both collaboration and conflict. Enhancing synergy and coordination is crucial for comprehensive security. Recommendations include improving cooperation with government agencies and addressing mutual biases between police officers and private security personnel.

The findings highlight the need for robust regulatory frameworks and oversight mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of private security firms. Improved collaboration between private security firms and public law enforcement agencies is crucial for comprehensive national security management. Policymakers should prioritize developing policies that facilitate coordination and address operational challenges, ensuring a balanced integration of private security into national security strategies.

In conclusion, private security firms are integral to Nigeria's security space, providing essential services that complement public law enforcement efforts. Addressing the challenges they face through comprehensive regulatory reforms and enhanced collaboration with public agencies can further improve their effectiveness and contribute to the general security and stability of the nation.

Recommendations

1. The Federal Government, through Ministry of Interior, need develop comprehensive and all-round regulatory frameworks that set clear standards for operational practices, training, and ethical conduct within the private security sector.

2. National Security Agency ought to implement continuous training programs for private security personnel to enhance their capabilities in surveillance, crime prevention, and conflict resolution. Additionally, invest in advanced technologies to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

3. Federal Government need establish and enforce ethical guidelines to mitigate human rights abuses and ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards in all operations.

4. Ministries of Interior and Police Commision should create formal systems and platforms for collaboration between private security firms and public law enforcement agencies, including joint training exercises and information sharing protocols.

5. The Legislature should amend existing laws or develop new legislation that clarifies the roles, responsibilities, and jurisdictional boundaries between private security firms and public law enforcement to foster better cooperation.

6. Stakeholders should encourage public-private partnerships through initiatives that leverage the strengths of both sectors, such as joint task forces for critical infrastructure protection and emergency response planning.

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TRAJECTORIES OF PARTY MEMBERS' PARTICIPATION IN THE SELECTION PROCESS OF PARTY CANDIDATES IN NIGERIA'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM

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Abstract

This study assessed the extent of participation by party members in candidate selection for national elections from 2011 when primaries became obligatory. Political parties are essential tools for citizen participation in democracy and the only channels through which eligible citizens can be nominated and sponsored for public elective office in Nigeria, as guaranteed by the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended). The paper assessed participation of party members using any of the three obligatory primaries procedures as part of the selection process for internal candidates. The study used Pateman's Theory of Political Participation as its framework and relied on primary and secondary data. The study discovered that since 2011, there has been a significant increase in the number of political parties nominating their presidential candidates through direct primaries. The direct primaries procedure upheld equality for all aspirants in the selection process, which in turn encouraged democratic participation, as evidenced by participants and literature. The study further found that member participation through direct primaries provides a viable tool for improving electoral accountability in Nigeria. It is recommended that this procedure for conduct of the internal primary process should be made obligatory in the selection of candidates for positions in all the country's legislative assemblies positions.

KEYWORDS: Candidates, Democracy, Participation, Parties, Primaries.

1. Introduction

Participation of Nigerian citizens in the political process and government of their country is recognised by international treaty law instruments and the national legal framework enshrined in both the constitution and subsidiary legislations.

According to Section 14 (1) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended), the Federal Republic of Nigeria is a state founded on the principles of social justice and democracy. The Constitution also states in Section 14(2)(a) that "the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution" and "sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority."

One of the methods of actualising this participation right in a representative democracy is through formal membership of a political party and seeking public elective position on such platforms as candidates. Given their special role in selecting the members of the two elected arms of government, political parties are essential to any democracy. The issue of how political parties choose their nominees for office revolves around the dynamics of power and politics within the party among its leaders, members, and candidates.

Participation is now used as an indicator of a nation's representative democracy on a worldwide scale (International IDEA, 2023). It stipulates that members must have the freedom to actively and completely engage in internal party decision-making procedures, which must be democratic in character. Parties nominate candidates for election to different posts in addition to combining the broad objectives and interests of society at large. They accomplish this by using their internal selection processes.

In this study, we argue that the decline in active participation in the party process is a major cause of the decline in party democracy. Similar conclusions have been drawn by other authorities on the matter (Vittori, 2020; Seeberg et al., 2020; International IDEA, 2023; Igini & Aihie, 2024).

The sole question for our determination was whether primaries procedures contributed to member participation in the decision-making process of candidate selection and which one. Examining how voting, deliberations, debates, and meeting participation facilitated the selection of party leaders was outside the scope of this work. This study focuses on the process of selecting candidates through primaries as outlined in Nigeria's electoral legislation, rather than party leadership selection.

Previous studies have demonstrated that civil democratic governments, which also unquestionably improve representation, are the ideal environments for public involvement (International IDEA, 202; Igini & Aihie, 2024). However, because of the elite's influence and

power, there hasn't been a direct correlation between increased electoral participation and increased political party engagement (Ndeche et al., 2023). The Nigerian constitution prescribed the qualifications, tenure, powers, and recall or removal of office holders, as well as the created direct franchise elective offices for federal, state, local government, and area councils. All candidates running for these positions were also required to be members of political parties.

Political participation is predicated upon the framework of political parties. Through their electoral competition, parties give people a choice in governance and, in their capacity as the opposition, they can hold administrations accountable. Voting for representatives, making financial contributions, giving their time, and joining political parties are other examples of people exercising their fundamental democratic participation rights. The multiparty system underpinning Nigeria's federal presidentialism provides its citizens with numerous avenues for participating in party politics. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution's Section 222(b) guarantees all citizens equal access to and rights as members of political parties.

International IDEA (2023) defines participation as the total measure of a citizen's involvement in democratic expression both during and outside of election cycles. Political parties are the primary means of accomplishing this objective in Nigerian jurisdiction, and political participation is an indicator of their active engagement in the political process.

Depending on how much they believe they will accomplish their original goals for participating individual citizens choose which specific political activities to get involved in. Party primaries, a particular type of political engagement activity, are the process by which candidates are selected for elections.

The crucial significance of primaries participation as a means for promoting party democracy has not received enough attention from scholars studying Nigerian electoral politics and governance. One of the most important

tools for achieving public engagement in politics, according to International IDEA (2023), is participation. This study argues that a crucial and essential component of democratic engagement is the active involvement of political party members in the process of choosing their nominees for office through primaries.

The study, therefore, assessed the participation trend in the selection process of candidates using the prescribed modes of direct, indirect, and consensus candidate options as provided by section 84 of Electoral Act 2022 (as amended).

The Electoral Act 2010 (as repealed) was Nigeria's first legislation regulating political parties' authority to conduct primaries for selecting candidates for public elective seats. Political parties have demonstrated from scholarly works their preference for indirect delegate system when choosing candidates; this has caused disharmony and discord within the parties (Ndeche et al., 2023; Obianyo and Alumona, 2022). According to Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) General Election reports for the period 2011-2023, only 12 political parties have so far used direct primaries to nominate their presidential candidates during the period. This reflects low participation of party members in the decision-making process of selection of candidates.

This paper is organised into five sections. Section 2 highlights conceptual explication and theoretical frame. Section 3 is the methodology adopted while section 4 makes analysis and discussion. Section 5 is the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Conceptual Explications and Theoretical Frame

Three key conceptual framings are critical to our assessment of the trajectory of participation in the candidate selection process in Nigeria and are underscored.

Participation

In the context of this study, participation is limited to active citizen engagement and involvement the candidate selection process as party members. It includes participation in the primaries as voters, selectors, or aspirants. Section 14(1)(c) on the 1999 Nigerian Constitution grants participation by the people in their government. According to International IDEA (2023), democratic institutions and their operations make meaning only when politically involved citizens are an important part of them. Pateman (2012; 1970) submitted that participation is central to democracy promotion in both theory and practice.

Candidate Selection

An intra-party process for nominating candidates for elective positions from eligible aspirants who will represent the party at inter-party election. The Nigerian legal framework requires that only members of a party may stand as aspirants or participate in the process as voters at primaries. The process and procedure of candidate selection according to the provisions of section 84 of Electoral Act 2022 (as amended) must be through party primaries which can be judicialised and penalties imposed when breached.

According to Unachukwu (2022), Nigerian courts have frequently ruled that a political party's choice of candidate in any given election is certainly political and is subject to the party's constitution and regulations. Notwithstanding the judicial respect accorded the parties, the selection outcome must conform to democratic, open and verifiable processes with necessary audit trails. A candidate selected without due process be disqualified and not included in the election for the particular position in accordance with section 84 (13) of the Electoral Act 2022.

Party Primaries

Also known as primary elections or primaries, these are obligatory internal party elections for selecting candidates from among the aspirants through direct, indirect or consensus candidate modes.

The primaries of a party, according to Sandri and Seddone are "the internal elections for selecting political leaders or candidates for office

(either for parliamentary elections or for chief executive mandates, at all levels) that entail votes by members, sympathisers, and registered voters (open primaries)," or "the full membership votes (closed primaries)." They procedure must conform to the provisions of the law for validity of the selected candidate. Section 84(1) of Electoral Act 2022 (as amended) provides that all party primaries for the nomination of candidates must be monitored by INEC.

Theoretical Framework

Political Participation Theory (Participation Theory).

The theory of political participation comprises diverse viewpoints that serve as the foundation for actions aimed at influencing and engaging with the political process. The idea of a universal theory of democracy is rejected by Pateman's (1970) thesis. According to Pateman (1970), participatory theorists contend that the essence of democracy lies in the psychological effects of involvement and the increased political power it grants citizens. The theory which also known as participatory democracy theory is a derivative of the democratic theory expounded by Pateman (1970) to incorporate the theory of participation and developed essentially from the classical political theory of Rousseau.

Dacombe and Parvin (2021) stated that proponents of participation theory place public engagement squarely at the core of democratic theory and argued that democratic systems built this way can produce more legitimate and effective governments. As per Dacombe and Parvin (2021), participatory democracy is fundamentally a transformatory theory. Its fundamental normative advantages stem from the belief that individuals' behaviour can be influenced by democratic processes, and that democratic institutions such as political parties are valued due to their influence on citizens' "psychological orientations" (Pateman, 1970). From this perspective, participation in activities can be seen as a form of "socialisation" or "social training," which develops a positive attitude towards democracy and helps people acquire the skills, knowledge, and capacity necessary for effective engagement in politics (Pateman, 1970). Although the reality of participation inequality calls into question the theory, it nevertheless offers a logical defence of political inclusivity and education.

For the primaries to be successful, party members must participate actively in the candidate selection process. Therefore, participation theory provides the lens to capture and grasp the views that the Nigerian electoral framework supports citizen engagement in the candidate selection process.

3. Methodology

In addition to secondary sources, this study used primary data from a sample of purposefully chosen participants who were knowledgeable about and experienced with the phenomenon under study to evaluate the trajectory of participation in Nigeria between 2011 and 2023—the year that obligatory primaries were enacted and used to conduct national elections. The participants who were drawn from membership of leading political parties, officers and staff of INEC, and constitutional law practitioners were asked their perceptions through Google Form about which primaries procedure promoted democratic inclusion, offered greater opportunity for political equality of members, and facilitated fair and competitive candidate selection process. The data was analysed in MS Excel and presented descriptively in appropriate tables and charts. The paper also utilised existing textual data from Internet, newspaper publications, academic journal articles, and institutional reports properly triangulated with primary data in its methodology.

While electoral participation traditionally uses the turnout of the voting age population in national elections as its single indicator, this paper adopted the factors of number of political parties in the country and the mode of party primaries procedure they used in the selection of their presidential candidates as sufficient indicators of political participation.

4. Analysis and Discussion

The legal basis for political parties' existence, membership, organisation, and operation in Nigeria is found in Sections 221 through 228 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended). The legal framework for the operation of political parties, which are mandated by law to hold two types of internal democratic elections—first to select the party leaders and then to nominate candidates—consists of the Constitution, Electoral Act 2022 (as amended) and the regulations and guidelines made by INEC. "The constitution and rules of a political party shall provide for the periodical election on a democratic basis of the principal officers and members of the executive committee or other governing body made at regular intervals not exceeding four years," according to Section 223 (1) and (2) of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended).

Party primaries constitute the second type of internal elections for political parties specifically for nominating electoral candidates from among aspirants in which only registered members participate and regulated by the Electoral Act.

Up until 2010, there was no legal regulation of party primaries in Nigeria. President Umaru Yar'Adua appointed the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) (2008) after the 2007 General Election, and one of the main findings of the committee was the absence of internal party democracy in the candidate selection process. The direct and indirect primaries were recommended by the ERC (2008) and enacted in the Electoral Act 2010 (now repealed) with the current Act of 2022 adding the consensus candidate as a third option in the candidate selection process.

According to section 84 (4) of the Electoral Act 2022 (as amended), a party must guarantee that every aspirant has an equal opportunity of receiving party members' votes before it can adopt the direct primaries system. The direct primaries option expresses the fundamental idea of political equality among citizens, which is enshrined in the constitutional assertion that Nigerian sovereignty belongs to its people.

According to White and Kerbel (2022), primary voters' sovereignty should be considered when deciding on participation in primaries.

According to section 84 (5) of Electoral Act 2022 (as amended), indirect primaries procedure requires that party members first select the delegates who in turn finally select the candidates from among the eligible aspirants for the elective post at a special convention or congress convened for that purpose. Section 84 (8) of the Act requires a party that adopts indirect primaries shall outline in its constitution and rules the procedure for democratic election of delegates to vote at the convention or congress. This is somewhat problematic for participation as more often than not, the procedure is opaque and a source of party conflict (Obianyo & Alumona, 2022; Ikedinma, 2019).

Consensus candidate option provided by Section 84 (9) of the Act prescribes that all cleared aspirants for an elective position must give a written consent of their voluntary withdrawal and endorsement of the consensus candidate. The consensus candidate shall, thereafter, be ratified at the appropriate level special convention or congress. The Act further provides that where consensus fails, the party shall revert to either direct or indirect procedure.

Studies have recognised the trend in political participation by various individuals and groups for effective representation which must subject to the exercise of their free will (Lugard & Abdulsalami, 2024). According to Igini and Aihie (2024), there is a relationship between leadership recruitment process which is performed by political parties and national development requiring active participation of competent elites in the political process.

Strong internal party democracy can enhance a party's reputation, effectiveness, and rapport with the public as well as its members. Low membership involvement and engagement through participation, according to Vittori (2020), might be partly blamed for a drop in participation.

Beyond the process of choosing candidates, political parties are crucial in extending political culture throughout the public sphere in democracies. Through organising voter support and assistance, disseminating information, and participating in political debate with the public, parties participate in political socialisation and education (White & Webb, 2007). Campion and Jega (2023) maintained that participation in candidate selection is not only critical in the realisation of electoral integrity but also in stemming democratic recession in Nigeria and Africa in general.

The party is the foundation of political leadership (Michels, 2001). The political recruitment and governance functions of political parties enable the establishment of the legislative and executive branches of government, party dominance in government appointments, and collective political accountability for the success or failure of their decisions while in power (Lim, 2023). The ability to do so successfully is determined by the regulatory environment, which includes the external regulatory framework for party competitiveness and the inside party regulations that promote harmony and cohesion.

Parties require votes in order to remain in power (Dalton et al., 2011). Party membership and loyalty are declining, according to Dalton et al. (2011), because of internal conflict and discord as well as the perception that parties don't fairly represent members' views in the legislative

process. Direct primaries are where all the party members have the most opportunities to choose the candidates. Dalton et al. (2011) state that the rise of "non-party actors" and elite control that opposes direct primaries present a constant threat to parties in emerging democracies such as Nigeria.

Direct primaries, which involve the majority of party members in selecting party leaders and public elective candidates, are in line with the Participation Theory; however, they are not always preferred due to the inescapable existence of a small but influential leadership group that can overrule the majority. Sklar (2015) claims that the original founders of Nigerian political parties opposed participatory democracy for self-preservation reasons—they believed the public was incapable of making educated political choices.

Participation Modes of Presidential Primaries in Nigeria

Textual data available to this paper indicated that direct primaries procedure for the selection of presidential candidates of political parties has only become recently more attractive due to participation of newly registered ones and youth political activists.

Between 2011 and 2023 during which four presidential elections were conducted in Nigeria, a total of 125 parties participated in the primaries as detailed in the table below indicating a trajectory.

Table 1: Presidential Primary Election Modes in Nigeria, 2011-2023

S/N	Year	No. of Contesting Parties	No. Using Direct Primaries	%	No. Using Indirect Primaries	%	No. Using Consensus Candidate	%
1.	2011	20	1	5	19	95	Not Applicable	N/A
2.	2015	14	0	0	14	100	Not Applicable	N/A
3.	2019	73	1	1.37	72	98.63	Not Applicable	N/A
4.	2023	18	10	55.56	8	44.44	0	0
	Total	**125**	**12**	**9.60**	**113**	**90.40**	**0**	**0**

Source: Compiled from INEC General Election Reports for 2011, 2015, 2019, & 2023.

Table 1 presents information about registered political parties that held primaries to choose

their candidates for president during this period. Several of the parties nominated candidates for

other elective offices in the corresponding General Election, but not for president, according to INEC's official reports. From the Table above, while one political party used direct primaries procedure in 2011 and 2018, no party used the procedure in 2015. However, 10 out of 18 political parties constituting 55.56% of political parties adopted direct primaries procedure in 2022 for the 2023 General Election. This was an exponential increase in participation by party members in the selection process of candidates as provided by electoral law. It is further indicative of demand for active voice which appears to resonate better with participation in direct procedure.

Figure 1: Direct Presidential Primaries Procedure adopted by Parties in Nigeria 2011-2023

Direct Presidential Primaries Procedure adopted by Parties in Nigeria 2011-2023
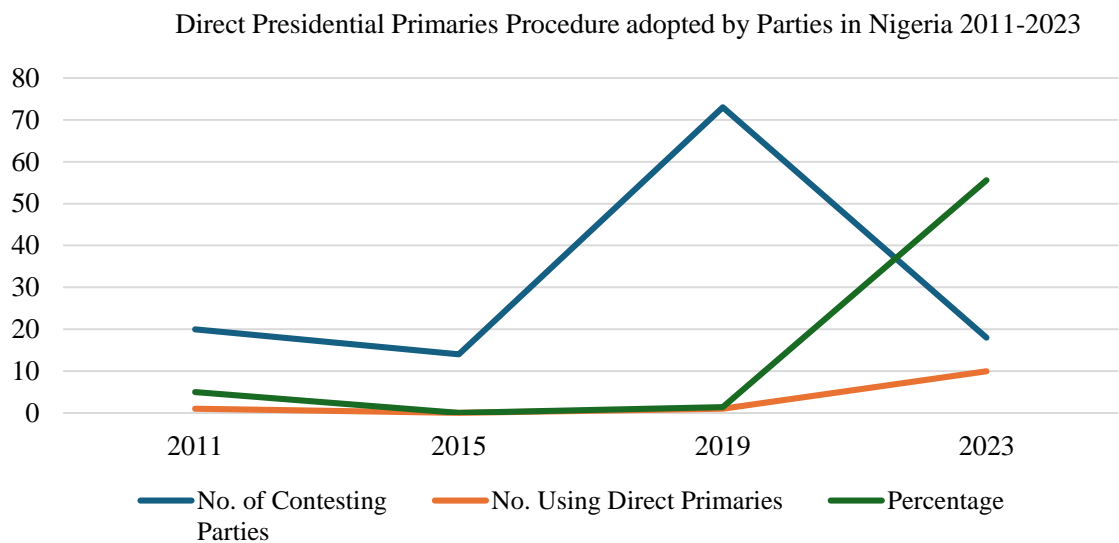
Source: Adapted from INEC General Election Reports for 2011, 2015, 2019, & 2023

The figure diagrammatically shows the steep rise in the percentage of parties that have used direct procedure in selecting their presidential candidates during the period. This is further indicative of increased participation in the decision-making process of candidate selection.

Empirical data from participants in the study affirmed that out of the three primaries procedures discussed in this paper, direct primaries remain the most participatory in the selection process of candidates.

Table 2: Perception of Primaries Procedures and Inclusion in Candidate Selection Process

Primaries	Direct	%	Indirect	%	Consensus	%	Neutral	%	None	%
Promoted democratic inclusion in the selection of candidates.	23	57.50	13	32.50	3	7.50	1	2.50	0	0
Offered greater opportunity for political equality of all members.	27	67.50	10	25.00	2	5.00	1	2.50	0	0
Facilitated fair and competitive candidate selection processes.	26	65.00	11	27.50	3	7.50	0	0	0	0

Source: Authors' Field Note, 2024.

Table 2 above represents participants' perceptions of how the three different party primaries procedures promoted political inclusion and participation in the selection process of candidates through a simple survey. From the analyses of responses to the questions, 23 of the 40 participants representing 57.50% revealed that direct procedure promoted democratic inclusion in the selection of candidates while 13 participants representing 32.50 % believed that indirect procedure does likewise. 7.50% of the participants viewed consensus candidate option in like term with 2.5% being of neutral view.

Furthermore, 27 participants representing 67.50% revealed that direct procedure offered greater opportunity for political equality of all members in the selection of candidates while 10 or 25.003% viewed indirect procedure as offering the same opportunity. 2 participants or 5.00% believed that consensus candidate did that as well with 1 participant being neutral.

On the question of which primaries procedure facilitated fair and competitive candidate selection processes, 26 or 65.00% of the participants stated that direct procedure is their answer while 11 or 27.50% thought that it was indirect procedure. 3 participants constituting 7.50%, supported consensus candidate and none was neutral.

Figure 2: Perception of Primaries Procedure and Inclusion in Candidate Selection Process

Perception of Primaries Procedures and Inclusion in Candidate Selection Process.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3
Direct (%)	57.50	67.50	65.00
Indirect (%)	32.50	25.00	27.50
Consensus(%)	7.50	5.00	7.50
Neutral (%)	2.50	2.50	0.00
None (%)	0	0	0
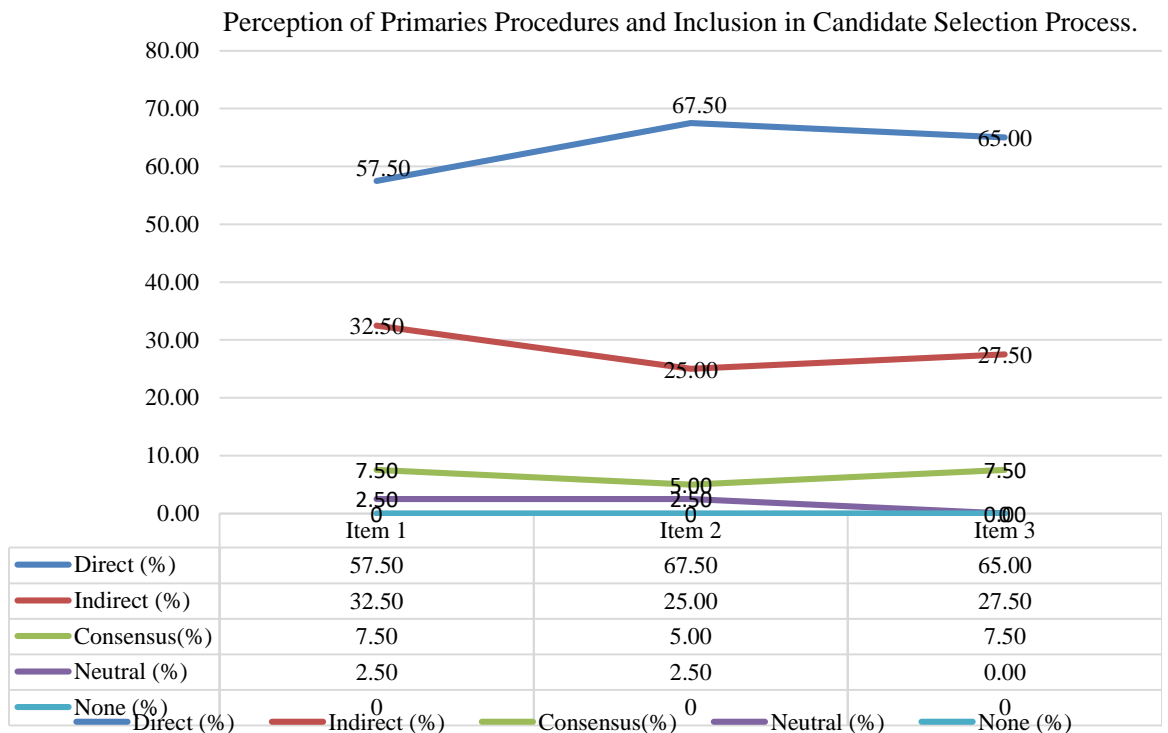
Source: Authors' Field Note, 2024.

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic presentation of Table 2 showing perceptions of respondents to the questions regarding the primaries and participation.

The evidence from the primary data supported majority view that direct primaries promoted participation in the metrics used. Further support for this position came from secondary data that direct primaries procedure has reportedly become the preferred option for participation since 2023 (INEC (2024). Scholars claim that the process lessens intra-party disputes and the exclusion of specific party factions and, by encouraging inclusion, helps to publicly resolve intra-party disputes related to the processes used to choose electoral candidates (Babalola & Abba, 2017; Nnaji, 2021; Nnamani, 2018; Obianyo & Alumona, 2022; Ndeche et al., 2023).

Lipset (2000) argues that nascent electoral democracies such as Nigeria need to institutionalise social structures that enable the greatest number of people to select political candidates, i.e., political parties, and therefore participate in important decision-making processes. The case for promoting participatory democracy is strengthened by the example of Switzerland, a federal republic similar to Nigeria that constitutionalised the use of direct party primaries to choose candidates for office. Because direct primaries are inherently transparent, Kurfi (2013) argued that they will enhance electoral integrity, promote internal party democracy, and conform to global best practices.

Scholars like Coller and Cordero (2018) assert that adopting the direct primaries system improves internal democratic legitimacy, boosts affiliation, and improves the party's reputation. It also encourages engagement within the party and encompasses a broad coalition of interests. According to other research (Bassey et al.,

2023; Asuquo, 2022; Ndeche et al., 2023), it will be difficult, if not impossible, to financially induce every party member participating in a direct primaries system. Direct primaries processes have been promoted based on research in an effort to lessen the judicialisation of primary outcomes through litigation and the related expenses, intra-party conflicts, and electoral corruption (Ihembe & Isike, 2022).

Compared to the indirect approach, which is constrained and excludes a broad spectrum of party members, the direct primaries procedure provides more opportunities for coalition building (Asuquo, 2022). The direct primaries' natural tendency to promote engagement and unity in a multilingual, multiethnic, and multireligious federation like Nigeria explains why new parties are adopting it in recent time.

Primaries provide a democratic, intra-party, and inclusive means of choosing candidates. This could also be a beneficial strategy in Nigeria to discourage elite dominance and party process capture (Bagg & Bahita, 2021). In addition to strengthening intraparty democracy and fostering a more democratic culture, the direct primaries procedure increases the accountability and representation of elected officials and party leaders. Only 12 political parties out of 125 that presented presidential candidates between 2011 and 2023 used the direct method, indicating that the majority of party elites continue to favour the less participatory indirect delegate system over the more democratic system (Ndeche et al., 2023; Asuquo, 2022; INEC, 2024).

The success of most parties, including those that just registered and used the direct primaries procedure in 2023, refutes the claim that adopting the procedure has been severely impeded by the logistical costs of conducting and supervising direct presidential primaries in each of the nation's 8,809 electoral wards. Once more, considering the procedure has been successful in selecting candidates for councillorships since 2011, it is the recommended choice for increasing participation in Nigeria. According to Ndeche et al. (2023), this statutory provision is evidence that direct

primaries are a good way to encourage grassroots electoral participatory democracy in the nation and can be expanded to selection of all state and national legislative assembly seats.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

According to this study, majority of Nigerian parties now consider the direct primary process over other methods when choosing candidates since it gives members equal voting rights and the chance to participate in democracy. The trajectory has come to represent a new trend in democratic participation of party members.

At the municipal level of electoral representation, the well-thought-out and required direct primary process currently in place for selecting candidates for council seats could possibly end ultimately providing the foundation for significant political participation in the future.

This paper concludes that parties should use direct primaries if they want to fortify their internal democracy in order to win elections. From the empirical evidence of its participative democratic and inclusionary opportunity offered the members, direct primaries procedure for selecting candidates has empowered and engaged diverse groups that had been hitherto marginalised like women, youth, and people with disabilities in the political space. According to the report, direct primaries are a more democratic and participatory process that would foster inclusion and political literacy both within and outside of the nation.

The study recommends that in accordance with the Participation theory, direct primaries be used to increase participation among Nigerian political parties in the process of choosing candidates. The basis for harmony, peace, coherence, and togetherness inside the party is the voice of the members as expressed through their sovereign vote for the candidate of their choice.

As part of the electoral process reforms, the present obligatory direct primaries procedure for candidates running for council seats should be followed by an expanded scale up of the

democratic process of allowing party members to participate at the grassroots level in choosing candidates for public legislative offices. Direct primaries for the nomination of candidates to the 36 State Houses of Assembly in the federation should be made constitutional in future legal framework changes. Given the anticipated success of state legislative representation, there may be good chances to make the direct primaries procedure obligatory for the nomination of all candidates seeking legislative seats in the National Assembly, which is composed of 360 federal constituencies and 109 senatorial districts nationwide.

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ROLE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC STAFF IN IGNATIUS AJURU UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study examined the role of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) in the management of academic staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The study adopted descriptive research design. The sample size of this study is three hundred and nineteen (319) academic staff which is 20% of the entire population. They were selected using simple random sampling techniques due to the large size of the population. The instrument used for the study was self-developed questionnaire. The study revealed that TETFUND intervention has played a vital role in the improvement of staff development among male and female staff in Ignatius Ajuru University among others. The study concluded that despite the roles of TETFUND cooperate organizations and well-meaning individuals should be financially involved in ensuring that tertiary education have adequate infrastructure to enhance teaching and learning. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends that TETFUND should do more by increasing the funding of tertiary institutions in the area of human resources development for the research and academic growth of government owned tertiary intuitions in Nigeria and bureaucratic bottlenecks connected with TETFUND approved funds should be removed to promote easy access by government owned tertiary institutions.

Key words: Role, TETFUND, Management, Academic Staff, Staff Development

Introduction

Education is widely accepted as a major tool for promoting socio-economic, political and educational development in Nigeria. Asiyai (2015) sees education as a critical tool through which citizens of any nation acquire the right knowledge, skills, values, attributes and attitudes for peaceful living within the society. Education is regarded as the key to the entire development of an individual Ali (2015). Education is generally accepted as a tool for promoting developmental strides such as socio-economic, political and cultural emancipation of any given nation. There are three stages in Education: the primary, secondary or post primary and tertiary levels. University, polytechnics and colleges of education belong to the third level of education which is the tertiary education. It is needed to provide for acceleration of social change, economic sustainability and human development. Ekundayo and Ajayi (2016) noted that university

education in Nigeria provides the much-needed manpower for all spheres of human needs. Tertiary Education refers to the third level, third stage or post-secondary education. It is the education level following the completion of secondary education. Tertiary education inculcates polytechnics, colleges of education, colleges of technology and the health and universities. Tertiary education generally culminates in the receipt of certificates, diplomas and academic degrees. The following are the goals of tertiary education as stipulated in the National Policy of education FRN (2014).

Contribute to national development through high level relevant man power training, development and inculcate power values for survival of individuals and society. Develop the intellectual capacity of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment, acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society. The Longe Commission proposed funding of higher education through taxing of companies operating in Nigeria. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) was established as an intervention agency under the TETFUND Act – Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Establishment, etc Act, 2011). The act repealed and replaced the Education Tax Act Cap E4 Laws of Federation of Nigeria 2004 and Education Tax Fund Act no. 17, 2003 (TETFUND, 2014). It is a government intervention agency which was aimed at providing supplementary supports to all level of public tertiary institution with the main aim of using funding to restore all the lost objectives of Tertiary Education in Nigeria. According to Agbedo (2015) TETFUND is targeted not only towards the intervention of infrastructural development but also is targeted towards academic staff development and training for M.Sc and PhD degrees.

Nigeria education report (2012) states that the total abandonment of responsibilities on the part of the state government such that TETFUND alone is left with the burden of ensuring tertiary institutions are up to standard.

There is general decay in human and material resources in Nigeria tertiary institutions due to lack of staff development, research grand awards and academic growth in post-doctoral degree. The importance of university education in a developing country such as Nigeria cannot be neglected. This is due to the fact that the overall growth and development of the nation is hinged upon the success of the educational sector. The educational sector all over the world plays a key role in providing the needed balance in the form of skilled manpower, inculcation of acceptable societal norm, developing techniques and methodologies that are required for the nation to thrive. However, the basic resources needed to provide quality service delivery in the nation through the educational system are usually in short supply. Therefore, since the overall development of the nation is anchored on the survival of the educational system, all efforts need to be made to ensure that those institutions survive in all of their endeavours. It is therefore against this backdrop that this study seeks to examine the role of TETFUND intervention in the management of academic staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, Nigeria

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of TETFUND in the management of academic staff in Ignatius Ajuru University, the objectives seeks to;

1. ascertain the impact of TETFUND intervention on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University?
2. determine the impact of TETFUND intervention on research grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University?
3. To examine the impact of TETFUND intervention on academic growth post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University?

Research Questions

The researcher formulated the following research questions that guided the study

1. What are the effects of TETFUND intervention on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University?
2. What is the impact of TETFUND intervention on research grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University?
3. What is the impact of TETFUND intervention on academic growth post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University?

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions posed above, the following null hypotheses were stated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on research grant award in Ignatius Ajuru University
3. There is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on academic growth in post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University.

Conceptual Clarification

Establishment of TETFUND

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) is one of the intervention agencies of the government that established with the responsibility of seeing to the survival of the tertiary education system in Nigeria. In the face of human resource, economical and material inadequacies in the nation's tertiary institutions, the standard of teaching, learning, research and community development continually been threatened.

There are various agencies in Nigeria that are responsible for managing the University education system. One of these agencies set up by the government to oversee the monitoring of the university system of education is the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND).

TETFUND came into existence in 2011 after it metamorphosed from the Education Trust Fund (ETF) which was established in 1993 (Ogunde, 2011). As an intervention agency, the institution has been responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the public tertiary institutions in the country are met through the provision of necessary resources. Although a new agency; the TETFUNDs presence has been felt in virtually most of the Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education in the country. The focus of this body is to ensure that the tertiary level of education in the country can compete favorably with other universities in the continent and around the world.

TETFUND has been responsible for the distribution of intervention funds to the various public higher institutions in Nigeria. This includes the Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and other levels of education. Although the agency also takes responsibility for the funding of other lower levels of education within the country, however, their major task has been in the area of distributing and monitoring fund among tertiary institutions in the country (Ogunde, 2021).

The TETFUND is an interventional measure of the Federal Government to tackle inadequate facilities in our tertiary institutions (Nairaland, 2013). This is the major role which the agency has been playing over the years since it came into establishment in 2011. Various government agencies such as the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) release funds to the TETFUND as a channel for distributing same to the various tertiary institutions within the country. However, funds from the TETFUND are usually made available only to public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. In an interview with the former Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Professor Oladapo Afolabi, by Adeleye (2013), it was noted that the reason for having the TETFUND is actually to assist public tertiary education programme. The TETFUND therefore does not put into consideration the management of private tertiary institutions within the country. This on its part has led to much argument for

the review of this trend. The mission of the body as spelt out is:

To provide focused and transformative intervention in public tertiary institutions in Nigeria through funding and effective project management.

TETFUND through its activities has also seen to the management of other non-financial needs of the various levels of education in the country. Some of the institutions that have benefited from the TETFUND in one way or the other are: Yaba college of Technology, University of Port Harcourt, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Kano State University among others (Source: TETFUND website).

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has been intervening in the management of universities in Nigeria through a number of activities. Over the years, the TETFUND has assisted universities in a number of ways which includes: hence, demands accountability from the college authorities. Evidently, the injection of TETFUND projects into college ensures that goods (education) with public goods characteristics are efficiently and effectively provided. By so doing, education as public good is made available and affordable to the greater majority a situation that government as well as its stakeholder's interest/benefits.

Management

This involves the process of planning, organizing in an institution (Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, Nigeria) and controlling the human resources, financial, physical and information resources of an organization to reach its goals efficiently and effectively. Resource scarcity is a central focus of economics. This is because resources (time, information, money, material and human capacity) are scarce in supply relative to the various uses to which they can be applied. Economics has therefore evolved to establish how to best apply limited resources to achieve the greatest advantage.

This formula applies to educational institutions as organizations. In 2006, Nigeria's population was 140 million with at least 45% of the total population under 15 years of age (Okojie 2018). World Bank country poverty assessments reveal that 88 million Nigerians are living below the international poverty line of US$1.25 a day (World Bank, 2009). This, in turn, means that a significant percentage of Nigerians cannot invest in sending their children to school. Consequently, the opportunity to acquire an education for a large proportion of the school aged population depends on the provision of education as a social service. For the Nigerian state this means that there are many people to be educated and many educational programmes to be implemented. The resources needed to accomplish this feat are, to say the least, lacking. A review of previous educational programmes in the country shows that resource inadequacy has long been a central factor in chronic education shortcomings (Fafunwa, 2014; Taiwo, 2015; Aiyepeku, 2019). The state resources provided for the execution of education programmes are inadequate and irregular. This inadequacy is compounded by the mega budgetary allocations for education in recent years, which have been steadily declining over the past two decades. While in 2007 the education sector was allocated 11% of the national budget, this fell to 13% in 2008, 8% in 2009 and 6% in 2010. Both the global economic recession and a growing demand for education in all developing countries have compound the already-compromised state of Nigerian education. In 2009, there was a near collapse of the education sector in Nigeria as virtually all labour groups involved in education embarked on nation-wide industrial actions. Learners at all levels were forced to sit at home for several months and wait for the resolution of the dispute. The industrial actions were intended to achieve greater financial and material support for the school system in Nigeria (Ololube, 2016). The questions that emerged, however, included:

Should students sit at home because the school system is inadequate? Should education be

abruptly terminated because schools are not properly equipped? Should the education sector be expunged from the sectors of organized human endeavour because the government is not providing adequate funds? Many suggestions have since been put forward by researchers and observers to ensure improved funding and more resources for the effective implementation of Nigerian education. This outpouring is, in part, a result of the expectation that the education sector will facilitate technological advancement and economic development in Nigeria, given adequate resources (Ololube, Ubogu & Egbezor, 2017). With reference to tertiary education in Nigeria, Okojie, (2018) highlights the human and capacity development expectations of the federal government. In his words, "the academic community is being increasingly called upon to provide useful answers to the countless anxieties of our society, not the least of which is the anxiety over the true foundations of our national development which underlines late President Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda." Specifically, the federal government expects universities to offer perspectives on development policies and strategies, the nature of investment resources, modalities for effective implementation of educational programmes, monitoring and evaluation indicators, impact assessments for identified programmes/projects, and the implementation and prioritization thereof over the next three to four years. Describing Nigeria as Africa's great hope transformed into Africa's great disappointment, with a real per capital income of about 250 dollars in 2008, Okojie contends that while Nigeria was once sub-Saharan Africa's most promising and oil rich country, over the last two decades its economy has floundered in the face of political instability and bad governance. It is therefore not surprising that the same government that places such enormous expectations on the academic community allocates a smaller percentage of each subsequent annual budget to education; this at a time when other countries are increasing their education spending.

The prospect of the education sector receiving adequate funding as a social service becomes less likely with each passing day. As such, the best alternative in the effective management of education is prudence in the use of those resources which are available. When a given level of resources is utilized efficiently, more services are provided and more goods produced. Such economy in the use of resources begins with the adequate exploration of all sources of relevant resources. This is the mark of efficiency in management. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the problem of resource inadequacy in the education sector in Nigeria and the importance of achieving managerial effectiveness through the use of prudential measures to facilitate the achievement of education objectives, particularly at the primary and secondary levels.

Staff Development

The importance of staff training and development in any organized institution cannot be ignored most especially in the university system. According to Ebong and Ezekiel-Hart (2016) "training is crucial as one of the staff development procedure. An employee may have the qualification needed for a job, but may not have the necessary experience and skills to perform the task required effectively". Based on this premise, one can identify that the productivity of an employee in any organization especially in the educational sector is majorly dependent on the level of training acquired on the job. Therefore, in order for the staff of the university to function effectively, they need to be trained continuously. In fact all staffs of the university system whether academic or no-academic should be exposed on the best practices of their responsibilities at work. Most of academicians have also requested that the activities of the TETFUND in terms of human capital should be extended to the non- academic staff just like their academic counterpart (Ogar, 2012). This is a necessity because this staffs jointly work for the advancement of the university and the quality of their input at work is of utmost importance in enhancing the image of the university. Therefore, since all staff of the

University plays one major role or the other in ensuring the effective administration of the institution, they should all be exposed to quality training and development in order to improve on their capacity building. For example, while the bursar is trained on ways to generate and manage university funds, the Librarian should be trained on how to develop the knowledge capacity of the university, lecturers should be trained on new methods and techniques and nonacademic staffs should be enlightened on best practices. All of these will go a long way in enhancing the quality of the University system.

Research Grant Award

Aside the funding of Universities, TETFUND also assist in the facilitation of projects. Project facilitation just like the funding function of the TETFUND should be carried out with a zero exclusion ratio. That is, in monitoring and ensuring project execution, the TETFUND should endeavor to monitor projects to the extent that such projects can make effective contribution to the administration of the university system where such projects are situated. Based on agreed criteria, the TETFUND should ensure that the ratio of projects to teachers and/or students should be reasonable enough for efficient and effective teaching, learning, research and community development. Due to the importance of facilities in the administration of tertiary education in the country, the quantity and quality of projects should be such that can contribute to the management of the education system. Students and teachers should be able to feel the impact of facilities made available in the benefiting institutions. It should not be mere lips service that facilities have been provided, but rather, the agency should ensure that such facilities are qualitative enough. The TETFUND should be involved in assisting institutions facilitate projects that was of benefit. This role can be carried out by collaborating with the National Universities Commission (NUC). This is to ensure that available facilities are able to cater for the programmes being run in these universities. Clear reports from our universities reveal beyond reasonable doubt that available

facilities such as Classrooms, Laboratories, Workshops, Libraries, Office Spaces, Canteens and Common Rooms etc are grossly inadequate for both teachers and students. As such, when the word 'project facilitation' comes to the fore, any one project that TETFUND intends to execute should be such that its impact was felt the university community. The essence of any project in the university environment is only achieved when it is able to add value to teaching, learning, research and community development and this should be the watch-word for the agency.

Role of TETFUND

Emphasis has usually been laid on the role of the TETFUND as a public tertiary institutions intervention agency. The agency has continually intervened in the monitoring of public Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education among others. However, most of the private institutions in the country have continued to bear their mind on the injustice embedded in this kind of policy. According to Ajayi and Ekundayo (2018) tertiary institutions in the country either public or private are jointly responsible for the overall development and transformations of the country. Teaching, research, community development and other functions performed by these institutions are geared towards the overall advancement of the national economy. Proponents have indicated that products of these private institutions have become productive employees in the various sectors of the country. Therefore, the need for private tertiary institutions in the country to be properly involved in the activities of TETFUND in the country cannot be ignored.

One of the reasons why the TETFUND cannot ignore the need to intervene in the activities of private tertiary institutions in the country is that it was revealed that out of the 1.7 million students that sat for the 2012/2013 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), the nations Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education only 500,000 students can be accommodated (Scan News, 2013). The capacity to absorb this figure includes both

public and private tertiary institutions in the country. Since these private universities help to balance the quantity and quality of tertiary education available in the country, they need to be integrated in government's intervention programmes for better service delivery. Also, the Vice Chancellor of Bowen University, Olagbemiro in Adesulu (2012) stated that what private universities need is encouragement and financial assistance to better their lot and add substantial value to the lives of Nigeria's teeming youth. As such, the private institutions need to be provided with the financial and material wherewithal with which they can improve on the absorption capacity of the nations tertiary institutions. In the same vein, the sources of funding accruing to the TETFUND includes taxes raised from the private sector which includes the private institutions, and as such they should not be neglected in benefiting from the revenue which is generated from the private sector.

Furthermore, it is hoped that when these private institutions are provided with the needed resources; human, financial and material, they would be able to expand their capacity to accommodate prospective tertiary education seekers in the country. In fact, administrators of these private institutions have observed that with assistance, they can be able to provide quality education for the less privileged in the country. The expansion of private University education in the country will provide opportunity for most youths in the country to acquire tertiary education. Therefore, neglecting the private universities of our tertiary education system despite their enormous contribution towards manpower development and nation building will not go down well with justice. This is because, graduates of private tertiary institutions in the country are products which was deployed to revamp and contribute meaningfully to the success of most sectors of the economy not minding which type of institution that they actually graduated from.

It is important to point out the fact that in cases of joint development in the country, either in the area of technology, agriculture or political

development through public-private synergy, most private institutions in the country will lack the willingness due to shortage of resources to partner with colleagues from the public institutions. The interest of the private institutions was minimal considering the fact that they would have little or no encouragement to contribute immensely towards national development. This is the case when intervention agencies such as TETFUND do not put them into consideration in their activities.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive survey design. This design is considered appropriate because it described the role of TETFUND in the management of academic staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rivers State, Nigeria. The Population of this study was one thousand five hundred and ninety-four (1,594) academic staff. One thousand and two (1002) comprises of male academic staff while five hundred and ninety-two (592) are female academic staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, respectively. The sample size of this study is three hundred and nineteen (319) academic staff from the Rivers State University, which comprises of one hundred and fifty-nine male staff and one hundred and sixty female staff in Rivers State University. 20% of the entire population was studied using simple random sampling techniques due to the large size of the population. The data collecting instrument for the study was self-developed questionnaire titled "Role of TETFUND intervention in management of academic staff questionnaire "(RTIMASQ). The questionnaire was divided into two sessions, A and B: Section A dealt with demographic information of the respondents while section B contained twenty (20) items based on the objectives of the study. The response scale was structured on 4-point Likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points; Agree (A) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 point respectively. Copies of the questionnaire was administered

face to face to the respondents by the researcher and two research assistant who would aid the researcher in distributing the copies of the questionnaire after being trained. Instructions about filing of the questionnaire werecarefully made to the respondents. The data collected from the field was analyzing. Mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) was used to answer the research questions. The following decision was used to rate questionnaire items. The null hypothesis formulated was tested using

z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance which is a test of difference of mean. The decision rule was to accept the null hypothesis where the calculated z-value is less than critical z-critical value of. 1.96, but reject the null hypotheses where the calculated z-value is greater than critical z-critical value of 1.96.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does TETFUND intervention improve staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Table 1: Mean Rating on the Role of TETFUND intervention on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

S/No	Items	Male Staff (159)			Female Staff (160)		
1.	There is ease accessing TETFUND funds that allow more academic staff apply for and granted funds for publications training and development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	2.51	1.11	Agree	2.71	0.84	Agree
2.	Enough funds are disbursed through TETFUND intervention for academic staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education conference attendance.	2.70	1.13	Agree	2.94	0.70	Agree
3.	There is a positive impact on academic staff performance through TETFUND intervention.	3.13	0.94	Agree	2.81		Agree
4.	TETFUND intervention in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is one of the biggest interventions that transformed teaching and learning positively through academic staff development programmes.	2.60	1.24	Agree	3.08		Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	**2.74**	**1.11**	**Agree**	**2.89**		**Agree**

Source: Field survey, (2024)

The result of the finding on table 1 above revealed the role of TETFUND intervention on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. This includes: There is ease accessing of TETFUND funds that allows more academic staff apply for and granted funds for

publications, training and development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Enough funds are disbursed through TETFUND intervention for academic staff in Rivers State University for conference attendance. There is a positive impact on academic staff performance

through TETFUND intervention. TETFUND intervention in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education is one of the biggest interventions that transformed teaching and learning positively through academic staff development programmes. With the mean status of 2.52, 2.70, 3.13, and 2.60 for male Staff and 2.71, 2.94, 2.81, and 3.08 for female staff respectively. Also, the grant mean values for male and female staff were 2.74 and 2.89, and the grand standard deviation values for male and female staff were 1.11 and 0.94.

Research Question 2: How does TETFUND intervention facilitate research grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Table 2: Mean Rating on the Role of TETFUND intervention on Research Grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

S/No	Items	Male Staff (159)			Female (160)		Staff
1.	TETFUND intervention play a significant role on research and academic growth in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.	2.76	2.18	Agree	2.68	2.08	Agree
2.	TETFUND intervention has contributed to research programmes for academic staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education	2.77	1.22	Agree	2.82	0.70	Agree
3.	There is positive relationship between TETFUND intervention on research grant and increased academic performance.	2.92	1.11	Agree	3.09	1.06	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	2.87	1.50	**Agree**	2.86	1.12	**Agree**

Source: Field survey, (2024)

The result of the finding on table 2 above revealed the role of TETFUND Research Grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. This includes: TETFUND intervention play a significant role on research and academic growth in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education TETFUND intervention has contributed to research programmes for academic staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. There is positive relationship between TETFUND intervention on research grant and increased academic performance. With the mean status of 2.76, 2.77, and 2.92 for male Staff and 2.68, 2.82, and 3.09 for male Staff respectively. Therefore, grand mean values for male and female staff were 2.87 and 2.86, and the grand standard deviation values for male and female staff were 1.50 and 1.12.

Research Question 3: How does TETFIJND intervention enhance academic growth post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education?

Table 3: Mean Rating on the Role of TETFUND intervention on Academic growth in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

S/No	Items	Male Staff (159)			Female Staff (160)		
1.	TETFUND intervention enhance growth doctoral degrees by creating opportunities to earn doctorate degrees.	2.75	1.01	Agree	2.75	1.15	Agree
2.	TETFUND intervention plays a role on post-doctorate degrees by granting access to doctorate degree programmes.	2.73	2.14	Agree	2.93	1.67	Agree
3.	TETFUND intervention plays a significant role in academic growth by ensuring standardize doctorate degree programmes.	2.80	0.30	Agree	3.01	0.58	Agree
4.	TETFUND intervention enhance academic post-doctorate degree which is free form of encouraging professionalism.	2.94	1.06		3.14	0.51	
5.	TETFUND intervention has play a vital role on academic growth on post-doctorate degree which led to higher productivity among academic.	3.03	0.92		3.20	0.31	
	Grand Mean/SD	**2.84**	**1.10**	**Agree**	**2.86**	**0.82**	**Agree**

Source: Field survey, (2024)

The result of the finding on table 4.3 above revealed the role of TETFUND intervention on academic growth in post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. This includes: TETFUND Intervention enhance growth doctoral degree by creating opportunities to earn doctorate degree. TETFUND Intervention plays a role on post doctorate degrees by granting access to doctorate degree programme. TETFUND intervention plays a significant role in academic growth by ensuring standardize doctorate degree programme. TETFUND Intervention enhances academic post doctorate degree which is free form of encouraging professionalism. TETFUND Intervention has play a vital role on academic growth on post-doctorate degree which led to higher productivity among academy. TETFUND Intervention improves academic doctorate degree which leads to a high instruction. With the mean status of 2.75, 2.73, 2.80, 2.94, 3.03 and 2.76 for male Staff and 2.75, 2.93, 3.01, 3.14, 3.20, and 2.96 for female Staff respectively. Also, grand mean values for male and female staff were 2.84 and 3.00 and the grand standard deviation values for male and female staff were 1.10 and 0.82.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND Intervention between male and female staff on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis on the significant of TETFUND intervention on male and female staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Students	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	Df	z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Female	159	2.74	1.11				
				317	-1.30	+1.96	Accepted
Male	160	2.89	1.16				

Source: Researcher's analysis, 2024

The result on table 4.5 revealed that the z-calculated value of-l.30 was less than the z-critical value of +1.96, hence the hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND Intervention between male and female staff on research grant award in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Table 5: Z-test Analysis on the significant of TETFUND intervention on male and female staff in research grant award in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Students	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	Df	z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Female	156	2.87	1.50				
				317	-0.07	+1.96	Accepted
Male	160	2.86	1.12				

Source: Researcher's analysis, 2024

The result on table 4.6 revealed that the z-calculated value of 0.07 was less than the z-critical value of + 1.96, hence the hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on research grant award in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND Intervention between male and female staff on academic growth in post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Table 6: Z-test Analysis on the significant of TETFUND intervention on male and female staff on academic growth in post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Students	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Df	z-cal	Z-crit	Decision
Female	159	2.84	1.10				
				317	-1.47	+1.96	Accepted
Male	160	3.00	1.82				

Source: Researcher's analysis, 2024

The result on table 4.5 revealed that the z-calculated value of -1.47 was less than the z-critical value of +1.96, hence the hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on academic growth in post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Discussion of Findings

Role of TETFUND intervention on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Findings on the influence research question 1 on Table 4.1 revealed that TETFUND intervention has played a vital role in the improvement of staff development among male and female staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The finding is in line with (Ogar, 2012) Most of academicians have also requested that the activities of the TETFUND in terms of human capital should be extended to the non- academic staff just like their academic counterpart. Hypothesis 1 on Table 4 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on staff development in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education with the z-calculated value of -1.30 which is less than the z-critical value of +1.96

Role of TETFUND intervention on Research Grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Findings on the influence research question 2 on Table 2 revealed that TETFUND intervention has played a role on research grant award among male and female staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education The findings is in line with Agunbiade (2016), however, highlighted various projects that have been funded by the TETFUND under his library development programme. Hypothesis 2 on Table 5 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on research grant awards in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education.

Role of TETFUND intervention in Academic growth in post-doctoral degrees in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Findings on the influence research question 3 on Table 4.3 revealed that TETFUND intervention has played a role in enhancing academic growth in post-doctoral degrees among male and female staff in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The findings is in line Agbedo (2015)

TETFUND is targeted not only towards the intervention of infrastructural development but also is targeted towards academic staff development and training for M.sc and PhD degrees. Hypothesis 3 on Table 6 revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean rating of TETFUND intervention between male and female staff on academic growth in post-doctoral degree in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, with the z-calculated value of which is less than the z-critical value of +1.96.

Conclusion

TETFUND has played a pivotal role in the management of academic staff in universities in Nigeria. From its establishment, TETFUND has demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of education in Nigeria through effective management, staff development, and support for postdoctoral degrees. Through its various interventions, TETFUND has enhanced the capacity of academic staff, improved teaching and research infrastructure, and promoted a culture of excellence in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The impact of TETFUND's initiatives has been evident in the improved quality of research, teaching and learning outcomes in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. As Nigeria continues to strive for academic excellence, TETFUND's role remains critical in supporting the development of academic staff and the overall growth of the education sector. Therefore, sustained funding and support for TETFUND's initiatives are essential to realizing the university's vision for a world-class education system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the above findings and conclusion:

a. TETFUND should do more in the area of human resources development for the research and academic growth of government owned tertiary intuitions in Nigeria.

b. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should participate in the funding of government owned tertiary institutions in

Nigeria through assistance in the development of human resources, construction of buildings and laboratories. This will reduce the financial burden on the part of Federal and State Governments,

c.   Bureaucratic bottlenecks connected with TETFUND approved funds should be removed to promote easy access by government owned tertiary institutions.

d.   TETFUND should foster collaborations with international organizations, universities, and research institutions to expose academic staff to global best practices and innovative research.

e.   TETFUND should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the impact of its initiatives and programs, identifying areas for improvement and optimizing resource allocation.

f.   TETFUND should introduce incentives and recognition schemes to motivate academic staff to excel in teaching, research, and community service.

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ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON FOOD SECURITY IN SELECTED RURAL COMMUNITIES OF IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the effect of climate change on food security in rural communities of Imo State, Nigeria. The main objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of climate change on food Security in the selected communities of Imo State. with a view to mitigating the negative effects. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, 150 questionnaires were administered for the quantitative data while 54 key informant interviews. The study employed snowball sampling technique in selecting respondents. This sampling method involves a primary data source nominating other potential data sources that will be able to participate in the research studies, thus snowball sampling was used to select 150 respondents from the communities in the study area. Important information on indigenous agricultural practices in relation to their environment and climatic conditions was elicited from the respondents. The study revealed that, farmers observed elements of weather fluctuation in the study area. Respondents refer to the change in weather currently experienced as bad compared to what was experienced 20 years ago or more in the study areas. The result suggests that the adverse effects of Climate Change on rural farmers is overwhelmingly great and that an urgent solution is required. Therefore, the study suggests a policy approach that will create incubation centres, provide intervention funds, and enhance the meteorological centre to provide global best practice services.

Key words: Climate Change, Food Security, Agriculture, Farmers and Rural Communities

1) INTRODUCTION:

Nigeria is today unarguably surrounded by a catalogue of poverty which have become endemic in her rural areas where over seventy (70%) percent of her population including small scale farmers resides (NBS, 2021). With faming as main occupation, the use of primitive farm implements such as hoes, cutlasses and family labour have overshadowed any attempt at commercial production thereby making subsistence agriculture a prevailing circumstance (Obi and Uche, 2019). This is not also to overlook the reality of life for this teeming population as they equally lack adequate basic necessities of life such as good nutrition, shelter, clothing, adequate and good drinking water and in this pathetic circumstance

are vulnerable to various kinds of risks. What is most peculiar about this category of farming population is that they earn their living from farming but in most cases, have to depend on family relations and friends for financial assistance for subsistence since their earnings can hardly sustain them throughout the year.

Climate change is one of the most significant challenges facing human society in the 21st century. Recent scientific findings by individuals (e.g. Stern, 2006; 2008), and institutions such as the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, (2010) have demonstrated that climate change is a reality and a primary environmental threat to sustainable development in the 21st century. Industrialization has led to the release of greenhouse gases (GHG's) into the atmosphere, with subsequent changes in the earth's temperature and weather systems. Mean global temperature is predicted to increase by between 1.4 -5.80c over the coming century (IPCC, 2001), which will cause changes in the distribution of rainfall, frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, and sea-level rise. Many human systems will be affected by these changes, particularly agriculture, water resources, and industry and human health. However, the impacts of climate change will not be uniform across the globe and considerable differences are expected among different regions (McCarthy et al, 2001)

local weather predictions, soil and water conservation, shifting cultivation, bush fallowing, food production and processing, multiple cropping, pottery, building, bush burning, sand mining and smiting among several others. The effects of these changes are posing threats to food security in Nigeria and particularly in rural communities in Imo State, Nigeria where a large proportion of its population are farmers. This research will have six sections thus: i). Background ii) Methodology iii) Literature Review iv) Conceptual clarification v) theoretical framework, vi) conclusion and recommendation.

2) METHODOLOGY:

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. This triangulation includes sourcing materials from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source was through the introduction and application of questionnaires, interviews while the secondary source involves the review of previous empirical works and literature.

The data collected from this study was subjected to SPSS for both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the socio-economic characteristics of respondents and other variables such as volume of harvest, variation in coping strategies, and types of coping strategies.

The population of interest in the unit of inquiry will include: Farmers, Traditional Rulers, Civil Servants; and Officials of Ministry of Agriculture. Identifying a population of interest, certain techniques were employed to form sample groups which are both achievable and cost effective. Once a sample population was taken, and research concluded, the data collected was used to describe the entire population of interest. In this study, the researcher used snowball method of sampling to get sample population of 150 participants from all the communities in the selected communities from the 6 Local Government Areas of Imo State.

2:1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

i. What are the effects of climate change on indigenous small holder farmer's livelihoods and farming practices in the selected communities in six Local Governmenr Areas of Imo State.?

ii. What are the effects of climate change on food security in the selected communities from the six L.G.A of Imo State?

iii. What is the perception of local farmers to climate change in the selected communities from six L.G.As of Imo State?

iv. What are the coping strategies taken by the local community to avert problems arising due to climate change?

v. What are the local adaptation mechanisms and perceived hindrances to climate change adopted by farmers house hold in agriculture and food security in the selected communities from six L.G.As of Imo State?

2:2 Research Objectives:

i) Examine the effects of climate change on indigenous small holder farmer's livelihoods and farming practices in selected communities from six L.G.As of Imo State.

ii) Determine the effects of climate change on food production in Owerri North Imo State.

iii) Ascertain the perception of local farmers to climate change in the selected six L.G.As in Imo Sate.

iv) Investigate the coping strategies taken by the local community to avert problems arising due to climate change

v) Find out the local adaptation mechanisms and perceived hindrances to climate change adopted by farmers house hold in agriculture and food production in the selected communities in Six L.G.As in Imo State?

2:3 Socio-demographic characteristics:

In view of the research questions and objectives of the research the following socio demographic characteristics of the studies follow:

2:4 Based on the Socio demographics characteristics of the study 15-19 years were 4%, 20-35 years were 44.7%, 36-45 years were 27.3%, 46 years and above were 24.0%. The study clearly revealed that the young population are actively involved in farming activities within the study area. In terms of income distributions 46.7% earn between 100,000 and 300,000 naira, 20% earn 100,000 naira, 16.6% earn 400,000 and 500,000 naira while 6% earn between 500,000 and 900,000 naira, and only about 4% earn above 1 million naira.

The study revealed that 36.7% agreed that they work as daily labour okada rider, 30% purchase

house needs on credit, and 13.3% cut down daily intake. The deficit in annual income and expenditure especially during crop failure, weather disaster are managed differently in the study area, as this is done through loan from banks, religious bodies, neighbors, and mortgaging of farmland to middlemen who buys products from the farmers.

The study also revealed that most common existing farming systems in the study is a reflection of the farming systems in the state. The farming systems in the area include crop farming, mostly grain crops (i.e. production of crops alone, mixed cropping (that is keeping of different species of crops) and shifting cultivation. Much of these activities are greatly on subsistence level with little mechanization. The table further revealed the age of respondents in the study area, 15-19 years were 4%, 20-35 years were 44.7%, 36-45 years were 27.3%, 46 years and above were 24.0%. The study clearly revealed that the young population are actively involved in farming activities within the study area. The implication of the statistics of the respondent's ages further shows that the respondents are within the economically active population involved in farming and can serve as a vehicle of controlling GHG generation if properly informed. For example, through good and adequate enlightenment programme on appropriate cultural practices that minimizes GHG generations (e.g. zero tillage, non-burning of grasses after clearing, minimal grazing, etc.) The majority of the respondents are married (48%), 36.7% are single, 2.7% divorced, and 12.7% widow. The educational attainment of farmers are 11.3% have no formal education, also 14.7% has adult education, 26% has primary education, further findings stated that 20% farmers have secondary education, while 28% has tertiary education, therefore majority of farmers are literate. The findings further reveal that the household size varies 21.3% are from 1-2, 23.3% 2-4 persons per household, 24% 5-7, 13.3% 8-10, 18% 11 and above.

2:5 Income Distribution in the study area:

The study revealed that 46.7% earn between 100,000 and 300,000 thousand naira, 20% earn 100,000 naira, 16.6% earn 400,000 and 500,000 naira while 6% earn between 500,000 and 900,000 naira, and only about 4% earn above 1 million naira. From table, most of the farmers earn less than one million naira (1,000,000.00) per annum. This may be due to the nature of farming in the area (mostly peasants). This level of income may be responsible for poverty in the area, it can also be responsible for the low capacity of people to cope with weather hazards occasioned by climate change in the area.

The study further revealed responses of the farmers that the yearly expenditure of the farmers in the study area is above their annual income. 93.3% agreed that their expenditure is more than money realize from the farming only about 6.7% agreed that they make profit from the farming activities.

2:6 Strategies to Overcome Income Deficit:

The study revealed that 36.7% agreed that they work as daily labour okada rider, 30% purchase house needs on credit, 13.3% cut down daily intake. The deficit in annual income and expenditure especially during crop failure, weather disaster are managed differently in the study area as revealed in table 3 as this is done through loan from banks, religious bodies, neighbors, and mortgaging of farmland to middlemen who buys products from the farmers. Also, some of the farmers result to working as daily labourers as agric labourers, Okada riders, etc. and sales of livestock and livestock products.

2:7 Crops Grown in the Study Areas :

As shown in the study, 15.2% grow beans, while 25.3% of the farmers grow yam, however 21.7% of the respondents of the farmers grow cassava the findings further revealed that 8.4% of the respondents grow cashew and 15.8% of the respondents grow maize also 4.0% of the farmers grow soya beans and 3.8% of the farmers grow plantain and 5.9% of the farmers grow tomato. The findings show that the major crop grown are yams and cassava this is attributed to the fact that most of the farm produce are sold out and little are consumed by family members. The crops grown may be conducive for the type of crops grown within the study area.

2:8 Membership of Organization:

As shown in the study revealed that 100% of the farmers in the study areas belong to various organizations such as ADP, Cooperative Societies and this has help them to source for funds for farming activities. The result from the findings revealed that most of the farmers belong to one or two organizations because of the benefits attached to it. Membership of organizations are entitled to loans from bank as an association and cooperative societies.

The study shows that 49.1% of farmers belong to an organizational group ranging from (1-2) while 50.9% of farmers belong to more than 2 groups ranging from 3 and above. The findings further revealed that there are some benefits derived by farmers which been a member of this organization, 59.3% of farmers receive loan as benefit while 21.3% receives input, also 19.3% for educational purpose, therefore it shows that farmers who are not in any of this organization do not benefit from the above stated criteria

2:9 Farmers Awareness and Understanding of Climate Change as it affects food productivity:

Farmers' ability to understand climate change is a key condition for them to adapt to such conditions. From the field survey, it shows that about 85.3% claimed to understand the meaning of climate change while only a little over 14.7% stated that, they do not understand the meaning of climate change. This implies that, most respondents in the study have knowledge about climate change. Basically, those who claim to know the meaning of the term state it to be, -the change of weather condition which is totally different from what they have been experiencing before. Climate change by the respondents is referred to as, increase in temperature.

The study sought to know the level of local farmers' knowledge of weather fluctuation in their immediate environment. The study shows that majority of the farmers are aware of local changes in the climate of their area. From the result, 46% (70) are aware to a reasonable extent of local climate change in their environment.17% (25) are aware to a great extent. While 27% (40) knows little about local changes in their climate and 10% (15) do not know at all about changes in their local climate.

The local farmers understanding on weather fluctuation is that weather is continuously changing especially with regards to pattern of rainfall and that it is getting worse all the time (from FGD/Interviews). Bad years with regards to rainfall are becoming more frequent than before, resulting in poor performance of crops. On the other hand, with regard to other weather elements e.g. temperature changes, the result of the questionnaire survey reveals that the level of awareness of the local farmers of climate change and its impacts were reasonably high.

shows that the government is creating awareness to enlighten farmers on the implication of climate change.

2:10 Duration of Notice of Change in Climate:

The study further shows the period for which the respondents seemed to have started noticing change in climate of the study area. As shown in the study , high number of the respondents, (53.3%) agreed that between 2009 to 2019 they noticed changes in climate, close to 18% of them said they notice the changes in the last five years (2004-2009), about 15.3% of the farmers confirmed that, they have noticed changes in climate within 11-15 years while a little over 13% believe that changes have been observable even before 1999 which was 15years ago. This shows that climate change began to occur well above 20 years ago but it wasn't noticed by all farmers. This might have an effect in their ability to adapt to climate change thus making them somewhat vulnerable

2:11Farmer's coping strategies to Adopt to climate change in the Study Area :

This part of the work centers on the various adjustment's farmers makes in their farming activities when they perceive weather fluctuation of the study area. From the study, it was observed surprisingly that, even though a large number of farmers in the study area noticed changes in weather, over 66.7% did not undertake any major remedial action(s).

Though, this may not be strictly scientific, farmers in the area responded differently to changes in temperature and rainfall. A number of adaptation measures or options are identified in the study area. These adaptations are farmers different on-farm responses in the face of increased variability in rainfall pattern.

When asked on the sources of these innovative strategies for climate change adaptation, about 70% of the respondents (IDI respondents) remarked that they did not copy or learn the practices from anywhere and that they are indigenous to them. Some of them opined that, these measures have helped them well in soil conservation and management. Although the farmers could not easily indicate a local term for weather fluctuation they noted that the above measures and many others have been practiced for so many years because of the peculiarity of their environment even before weather changes became a major issue of discourse in recent times.

It is evident that farmers in the study area have been practicing traditional adaptation measures even before the more recent concept of climate change/weather fluctuation became a topical issue of discourse. The finding that these innovative practices are indigenous to farmers in the area have some implications for climate change and development policy in the Local Government Area.Policy makers and other stakeholders in the Local Government Area can involve farmers and learn from the adaptive measures they are already practicing and integrate some to modern techniques for maximum result. Time, thinning of crops, mixed cropping.

3) LITERATURE REVIEW /THEORITICAL PRESENTATION:

3: 1 Conceptual clarification:

3 :2 Climate Change Concept

Climate change is one of the most outstanding challenges facing the global community and as such has been given different definitions by different authors according to their perception and the way it affects them. Ozor (2009) defined climate change as change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity and is widely recognized as the most serious environmental threat facing our planet today. This definition elicits the seriousness of the threat posed by climate change and the urgency of the need for countries to rise up to this urgent clarion call of combating the negativeeffects of climate change.

Climate cannot be said to be static, but variations are very insignificant that it is only climatologists identify it. Over the years, the change becomes more pronounced and significant. This is as a result of earth's natural variations and man 's activities which causeemissions of greenhouse gases thereby increasing global warming. This global warming is what actually induces the change in climate. Over the past 100 years, theearth 's average surface temperature has risen by around 0.74°C (Direct Gov., 2010). And if nothing is done, there is going to be more rise in theearth 's temperature to theextent that it will be difficult to cope with it. This statement buttresses more the seriousness of the threat poses by climate change to countries that depend mostly on climate-sensitive resources for sustenance of livelihood and overall development.

Eboh, Ojo, Oji, Amakom and Ujah (2004) stated that countries in sub-saharan African, including Nigeria are likely to suffer the most because of their geographical location, low incomes, low institutional capacity as well as their greater reliance on climate-sensitive renewable natural resources sectors like agriculture. This is further supported by Watson (1997) which stated that African countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change because of their dependency on rain fed agriculture, high levels of poverty, low levels of human and physical capital, inequitable land distribution and poor infrastructure. Adaptation to climate risks in Nigeria is therefore a primary necessity. Government need to integrate climate change issues as well as adaptation strategies into the countries development plan as the climate change risks is not only a challenge to agriculture development (food security) but to the country's general development and livelihood sustenance of theentire citizenry.

Climate change can involve both changes in average conditions and changes in variability, including, for example, extreme weather events. It has become common knowledge that the poor are likely to be hit hardest by climate change, and that capacity to respond to climate change is lowest in developing countries and among the poorest people in those countries. It seems clear that vulnerability to climate change is closely related to poverty, as the poor are least able to respond to climatic stimuli. Furthermore, certain regions of the world are more severely affected by theeffects of climate change than others. Generally speaking, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change are urgent issues among many developing countri

3:3 Food Security:

Food, being one of the most basic needs for living, has become one of the most important concerns for the world, as more and more people are living in poverty and hungry. According to Gopichandran et al. (2010), food security has been a matter of concern in recent years due to the global food crisis and rising food prices. In spite of the highest priority accorded to hunger elimination among the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that the number of people going to bed hungry is increasing. When UN-MDGs were adopted in 2000, about 820 million wereestimated to be under-nourished. Now, it is over 1 billion (Swaminathan, 2010). Food

security is a concept that has evolved during the 1990s far beyond a traditional focus on the supply of food at the national level. This concept has been given general definitions in time past but in recent times, there has been a divergence of ideas on what food security really means.

Food security is defined as access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life. The committee on world food security defined it as physical and economic access to adequate food by all household members without undue risk of losing the access. However, the definition adopted by the countries attending the world food summit of 1996, and reconfirmed in 2002, accepts the USAID'S concept which has three key elements viz; food availability, food access and food utilization. However, a fourth concept is increasingly becoming accepted namely, "the risks that can disrupt anyone of the first three factors" There are therefore four major elements of food security. They are food availability, food access, food utilization and not loosing such access. Availability, access and utilization are hierarchical in nature. Food availability is necessary but not sufficient for food accessibility and access is necessary but not sufficient for utilization. In a larger sense, two broad groups of factors determine food security. These are supply side factors and demand side factors. Thesupply-side factors are those that determine food supply or food availability. In other words, they are determinants of physical access to food at national, household and intra-household levels. The demand side factors on the other hand are factors that determine the degree of access of countries, households and individuals to available food. They are, in other words, determinants of economic access to food or determinants of entitlement to available food.Food insecurity or lack of access to nutritionally adequate diet in a household or country can take various forms. For example, chronic food insecurity exists when food supplies are persistently insufficient to supply adequate nutrient for all individuals. Transitory food insecurity occurs when there is a temporary decline in access to adequate food because of instability in food production, food price increases or income shortfalls.

Poverty dimension of food security is one of the targets of the sustainable Developmental Goals and is widelyconsidered as important measure for evaluating the progress of a country in terms of wellbeing (SDG, 2015). Despite, various concern by governments all over the world on ensuring thatevery household can at least provide three square meals for their family, food insecuritycontinues to be a major development problem across the globe, undermining people's health, productivity, and often their very survival (Smith and Subandoro, 2007). Global hunger issevere, as nearly 30 per cent of the world's population is currently suffering from one or moreforms of malnutrition, including inadequate caloric consumption, protein deficiency, poor dietaryquality, and inadequate concentrations of protein and micronutrients (Basudeb, Acharya, andDavis, 2007). Worldwide, approximately 840 million people are undernourished or chronicallyfood insecure, and as many as 2.8 million children and 300,000 women die needlessly every yearbecause of malnutrition in developing countries. (Basudeb et al, 2007).

The situation isparticularly worrying in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Were lack of sustained economicgrowth is an important determinant of hunger; the persistence of hunger also feeds back to limiteconomic growth. Basudeb, Brinda and Meenakshi (2007), provideempirical evidences whichpoint to the negative impact of hunger and malnutrition on labour productivity, health, andeducation, which ultimately leads to lower levels of overall economic growth. Hunger is thus asmuch a cause as an effect of poverty.

These studies suggest that hunger has a direct effect onpoverty and good nutrition is an investment in human capital that raises output as well as thereturns on investments in education and health care. Taken together, these findings provide powerful evidence that public spending in reducing hunger is an

investment with high returnsand should constitute a top priority for developing countries.

According to (Maxwell, 1996) as cited by Mauro, Davis, Calogero, and Kathleen (2007), theconceptualization of food security has evolved over time, partly preceding and partly parallelingsimilar evolutions in poverty. Since the World Food Conference (WFC) of 1974, food securityparadigms have shifted from the global and national level to the household and individual level. Measuring food insecurity at the individual/household level rather than the national level differsfrom the more traditional approach of identifying food insecurity as the inadequacy of aggregatesupply of and accessibility to food. Given the weaknesses of the supply side approach to foodinsecurity, several methods have been put forward including measuring variables (e.g.household income, height to weight ratios) generally thought to be correlated with foodinsecurity. Recently, however, dissatisfaction with these measures has led to the use of directmeasures of food insecurity such as household food consumption and expenditure data (based onrecalls) and qualitative measures.

We may distinguish between national food security and household food security. This distinction is necessary because an aggregate supply of food, from domestic sources or import or both, are prerequisite but certainly not a sufficient condition for a food secure situation in a country. In other words, adequate availability of food in Nigeria on a per capital basis does not necessarily translate to sufficient and adequate food for every citizen. Food security at household level is a subset of the national level and it requires that all individuals and households have access to sufficient food either by producing it themselves or by generating sufficient income to demand for it. According to Webb et al, (2006) as cited by Mauro (2007) argued that Measuring and assessingfood insecurity hinged on two contending views; objective-quantitative methods and subjective qualitative techniques for the measurement of food insecurity. However, more recently,

thesetwo methods have been increasingly viewed as complementary, and it has becomeevident that asuite of indicators is necessary to capture the multifaceted nature of food security. Towards thisend, the use of household expenditure and consumption surveys containing both objective and subjective information on the same household potentially provides a valuable workbench for this study.

4) THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: There are several theories that explain the climate change phenomena including; **the Milankovitch Theory which describes the relationship between the sun and the earth and the Astronomical Theory**. The warming will not be globally uniform but will differ significantly between geographical regions. Since there are many theories on Climate Change but due to relevance to the topic being discussed, the researcher will discuss the above mentioned two in brief.

4:1 Milankovitch Theory of Climate Change:

A century ago, Serbian scientist Milutin Milankovitch hypothesized the long-term Collective effects of changes in Earth's position relative to Sun are a strong driver of Earth's long-term climate and are responsible for triggering the beginning and end of glaciation periods (Ice Ages) Also in 1941 he linked ice ages to Earth's orbital   characteristics.

4:2 The Astronomical Theory of Climate Change:

Nicolaus Copernicus was a Polish astronomer and mathematician known as the father of modern astronomy. He was the first European scientist to propose that Earth and other planets revolve around the sun, the heliocentric theory of the solar system.9 Nov 2009. The warming will not be globally uniform but will differ significantly between geographical regions.

5) CONCLUSION:

The Study affirmed that Climate Change has adverse effects on farmers output growth and thus affect their performance and contributions

to the growth of the economy. Among other things the effect of Climate Change outcomes on rural farmers output growth can never be overemphasized.

Its deleterious impact could result to shut down of some businesses, while some would function below operating capacity or optimum level, because of their inability to cope, overcome or surmount these cancerous effects of Climate   outcomes.

However, to reduce or surmount the active effect of Climate Change on productive sectors of Nigeria the following recommendations were made:

6) RECOMMENDATIONS:

i) Government should establish Climate Change Control Act.

ii) The meteorological centre should be upgraded and be well funded to be proactive against the imminent danger posed by Climate Change.

iii) Federal Government should create and fund incubation centre around the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.

iv) The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) or the Bank of Industry (BoF) should be able at all time to rescue rural farmers through intervention funds or as a lender of last resort.

v) More emphasis on dissemination of weather fluctuation issues through the mass media is highly needed**:** Government should broadcast programmes to enlighten farmers on adaptation strategies to reduce factors that aggravate climate change and as well as show case successful adaptation techniques adopted elsewhere that have local relevance**.**

vi) Create conducive policy that will enhance adaptive capacity of the farmers**:** given the high degree of uncertainty about how weather fluctuation may affect farmers, and rural people in dry land area, government policy intervention in the state should focus primarily on addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability of the people and the limited adaptive capacity of the farmers, including their high dependence on natural resources, persistent poverty, inadequate education and employment alternatives/opportunities. Such policy must be adapted to local content and integrated into broader long-term development plan at different scales. Strengthening local public and private institutions and raising awareness among them about climate related risk will be key, since local institutions play a major role in supporting or hindering communities in their process of adapting to change.

vii) Also there is a need for international agencies, researchers and extension agents to provide programmes such as female cooperative groups that support female farmers from being extremely vulnerable to climate change. By so doing, it will go along way in improving the standard of living of households in the selected communities from 6 Local Government Area of Imo State.

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THE NIGERIAN STATE: A REGIONAL POWER AND ITS CONTAINMENT

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Abstract

The paper is set to highlight the application of an uncoordinated and aimless Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy during the 70s and 90s that led to the containment of the Nigerian regional power potentials by the West. The regional power potentials of Nigeria were vigorously displayed in the 70s and 90s to rid Africa of colonialism and restoration of peace. Pursuing an Afrocentric foreign policy, Nigeria championed the liberation struggle of southern African countries of Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola with funds, military training, and military equipment, diplomatic and economic support. These supports upstaged the economic, political and geostrategic interest of Western nations especially the United States, Portugal and Britain. In the erroneous perception of the Western nations, Nigeria was aiding and abetting the Soviet takeover of southern Africa. This created deep seated animosity between Nigeria and the Western nations. In the 90s, Nigeria's regional power status erupted again when she used deft diplomacy and powerful military force under the auspices of Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to restore peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Nigeria went further to conduct elections and restore democratically elected government in the two countries. Using the qualitative approach and the descriptive narrative style, some secondary sources and archival records revealed there was a deliberate plan to undermine, prune and contain the Nigerian state using the principles of Balance of Power Theory by which some nations conspire to undermine a rising power. In this regard, Nigeria was physically and diplomatically pruned and contained. This has made it difficult for Nigeria to re-enact its diplomatic influence of the 1970s and the military projections power of the 1990s.

Keywords: Containment, Destabilization, Balance of Power

1. Introduction

Nigeria undoubtedly is a regional power in Africa based on her past antecedents and perceived status. Regional powers have unique attributes of strategic geographic location, a well-equipped military with significant strength, natural endowment and good economic base (Destradi, 2010; Stewart-Ingersoll & Frazie, 2011). In addition, a regional power must have demographic power that will be translated to

workforce, market potential, and potential military manpower, strong diplomatic influence and active in global institutions (Ihonvbere, 2009). Nigeria ticked all the qualities of a regional power. Nigeria has a vast landmass of 924,000 square kilometres and 853 km long coastline with a population of about 200 million which makes it the most populous country in Africa (Bach, 2007). Nigeria has over 130,000 strong armed forces with adequate funding and battle hardened combat personnel, making it one of the strongest militaries in sub-Saharan Africa (Habeeb, 2014).

The Afrocentric foreign diplomacy of Nigeria made her a frontline state in the struggle for the liberation of southern African countries of Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique (Azgaku, 2015; Omoruyi et al., 2020; Ukaogo et al., 2020). Having funded the South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), Namibia's South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), Mozambique's Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANUPF), the United States misconstrued these Afrocentric supports to mean Nigeria undermining the interest of the United States in Africa (US Embassy, 1976b, 1976c). The Western backed mercenaries in Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique were after the natural resources of these rich Southern African countries and maintenance of the West's international geostrategic status quo. Nigeria's Afrocentric diplomacy to liberate these African countries was interpreted as undermining the United States in Africa. Characteristic of the United States, any country perceived to be working against its interest will face US covert destabilization plots.

With her impressive peacekeeping pedigree, its motivated armed forces, Nigeria became the first black nation to restore peace by force of arm, not once but thrice. It restored peace in Liberia and restored democratic culture in Liberia. In Sierra Leone, Nigeria restored peace by force of arm, conducted elections that installed Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as a democratically elected president. When he was

overthrown in a military coup led by Major John Koroma in May 1997 (Lima, 2002), the Nigerian armed forces defeated the junta and reinstalled Ahmad Tejan Kabbah again to power (Lyons & Khadiagala, 2008). No black nation has demonstrated this feat in history. However, the salutary performance of the Nigerian military was to become the concern of francophone neighbours who see Nigeria as a threatening hegemon, erroneously thought to be on a mission to intimidate and dominate the West African sub-region. Considering the part Nigeria played in the liberation of southern African countries and the ECOMOG performance, Nigeria has the semblance of a rising regional power in Africa. Even Western nations that have colonial hegemonic control over their former colonies were apprehensive of Nigeria's rising posture. Consequently, in the perception of Western nations, Nigeria might use its diplomatic influence, large population, wealth and powerful military to dominate Africa and undermine Western interest in the continent and consequently needed to be contained.

2. Conceptual Clarification

Traditionally, academic papers require that scholars do conceptual clarification to eliminate ambiguity, vagueness or lose in meaning of terminologies in their work (Babbie, 2013). Terminologies do have different meanings in different contexts. In this regard therefore, it has become mandatory as required by the tenets of scholarship to carry out a conceptual clarification of some terms used.

2.1 Containment as a Policy

Containment policy became the most veritable tool of United States' foreign policy during the Cold War (Barnett & Lord, 1989; Rositzke, 2020). Containment became necessary, in order to contain the spread of communism throughout the world. The containment policy was developed by George F. Kennan in his 1947 "Long Telegram" letter in which he advocated for the containment of the Soviet communism spread around the world (Sempa, 2007). The containment policy was implemented using military, economic, diplomatic, informational

and subversive structures; covertly and sometimes overtly (Gadiss, 2005; Goldman, 2015). Containment policy of the United States was designed also to destroy countries considered as a threat to the interest of the United States. Though the containment policy was a Cold War doctrine, it still applies in the 21st Century US foreign policy. This can be seen applied to prune the rising regional power potentials of Russia, Iran and China in the 21st Century geo-strategic maneuvers.

2.2 Destabilization

Destabilization in the context of nation states implies the deliberate, overt and covert structures erected to undermine the peace, stability and security of a nations state using the instrumentality of political, economic and social disorder (Hancock, 2018). The main objective is to weaken the state and undermine the power using the structures of state as well as non-state actors as vehicle of conveyance. In accordance with the principles of neorealism and the anarchic nature of international order, destabilization has become a tool employed by nation states to prey on their rivals by fomenting internal armed conflict, creating ethic/religious tension as well as supporting secession or political turmoil (Lévesque, 2018; McGehee, 2015; Murshak, 2019). In addition, destabilization could be achieved using economic structures by undermining the currency, encouraging debt, corruption and de-industrialization as well as pilfering of natural resources. Destabilization can also be achieved by foreign nations meddling in the election process, youth unrest, labour union protests, funding terrorism/insurgency, proliferation of arms and training of dissidents to undermine the target country.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the structure which positions a research paper with the view and interpretations of past related thoughts or theories of scholarly giants in the subject of investigation. It is within this framework that the subject under inquiry is measured and evaluated (Kivunja, 2018). In view of this

therefore, this inquiry will be positioned in the Balance of Power Theory.

3.1 The Balance of Power Theory

It was in the 18th Century that David Humes started to trace the origin of the Balance of Power Theory when he argued that its origin and application is as old as antiquity (Dinneen, 2018). His claim was hinged on the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon in their account of the Persian (492–449 BC) and Peloponnesian Wars (431–404 BC) (Erskine, 2016). The Peloponnesian War was fought between the Greek city states of Athens and Sparta for land as well as domination (Griffiths, 2007). Other city states like Corinth and Thebes developed a mutual policy to collaborate to ensure that no tyrant domineering city state emerges from the Greek city-states (Dinneen, 2018)..

The Balance of Power Theory has become a landmark theory in the study of conflicts. In general, the concept of Balance of Power Theory posits that states survive the anarchic international environment by preventing other state from having powers to dominate them, by that process maintain the international order (Griffit & O'Callaghan, 2014; Paul, 2004). Emergence of new regional powers will challenge the hegemonic status quo of the existing international order. In this regard therefore, existing powers gang up against any emergent power. In this manner, the balance of power is maintained through hostile containment policies. The rising power of China, Russia and Iran as regional powers is being challenged by the West that dominated global affairs since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Should these regional powers (China, Russia and Iran) emerge, they will challenge the hegemonic status of the Western power. In this regard therefore, the western powers are applying containment measures to maintain an international system that guarantees their dominance as well as geostrategic interests.

The activities of Nigeria during the liberation struggles of southern African countries became a threat to the interest of the Western powers

in Africa. Again, the military success of Nigerian led ECOMOG was threatening the hegemonic colonial control of Britain, France and the United States in the West African sub-region. Nigeria's activities since the 70s shows the characteristics of an emerging regional power whose ascendancy will upset the international order in the West African sub-region and perhaps in Africa. In this sense and in the tenets of Balance of Power, it is expected that other nations will conspire to prevent the rise of Nigeria as a regional power through subversive activities, destabilization and containment. Consequently, the Balance of Power Theory is relevant to this investigation as the theory is used to explain the suppression of Nigeria's rising profile and thereafter eclipse Nigeria through diplomatic and physical containment policy reminiscent of the Cold War era.

4. Methodology

In order to identify and understand the processes, stages, means and actualization of the containment of the Nigerian State, this paper adopts the qualitative approach using descriptive and narrative content analyses technique to examine the archival and secondary data sources. These sources are used to investigate the genesis, nature and use of containment policy against the Nigerian state.

5. Nigeria's Diplomatic and Economic Regional Power Projection

Projection of strong diplomatic and economic power are some of the hallmarks of a regional power (Destradi, 2010; Fawcett & Jagtiani, 2024). With this rare pedigree, Nigeria was set to take its position as a regional power in Africa (Stewart-Ingersoll & Frazie, 2011). Upon gaining independence, Nigeria designed an Afrocentric foreign policy that made Africa the centre of its foreign policy (Osaherumwen & Motunrayo, 2017). The foreign policy was hinged on the unity, security, liberation, economic and diplomatic independence of the Africa continent (Barika, 2014). The formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU now AU) in 1963 and the Economic Community of West African Countries (ECOWAS) in 1975

provided the diplomatic platforms to pursue the different components of her Afrocentric foreign policy (Abegunrin, 2009). Having been endowed with all the requisites and accolades of a regional power; Nigeria set off implementing her Afrocentric foreign policy by becoming a "frontline state" in the battle for the liberation of southern African countries under the yoke of white minority rule in Mozambique, Angola, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Namibia and South Africa (Azgaku, 2015; Omoruyi et al., 2020; Ukaogo et al., 2020).

Nigeria used her diplomatic weight to ensure the expulsion of South Africa from the Commonwealth and the creation of the Anti-Apartheid Committee at the United Nations which she chaired for 30 years (Ukaogo et al., 2020). Again, Nigeria mobilised other African countries to support Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and Namibia's South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) (Imam & Nuru, 2018). To further put diplomatic pressure for the independence of Zimbabwe, Nigeria partly nationalised the British-owned Barclays Bank as well as the British Petroleum (BP), first to stop Nigeria's crude oil being sold to the South African apartheid regime and second, to force Britain not to recognize the white puppet government of Abel Muzorewa in Rhodesia (Abegunrin, 2009; Ojo, 2012). Apart from diplomatic support, Nigeria provided funding for the liberation wars in Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe (Gwadabe, 2012) (Ukaogo et al., 2020). With the economic and diplomatic weight of Nigeria, the southern African countries of Mozambique, South Africa, Namibia, Angola and Zimbabwe won their liberation struggles and eventually became independent to the discomfort of western nations like Portugal, United States and Britain. There is no doubt that Nigeria displayed the shrewd capabilities of a regional power.

6. Nigeria's Military Support for Liberation Fighters

A powerful, well-trained and equipped military is another hallmark of a regional power. With

over 130,000 men under arms, Nigeria has the largest army in West Africa (Khan & Cheri, 2019). This has put her in the position and unique responsibility toward other black peoples all over the world, and particularly in Africa in reclaiming black dignity and respect as was proclaimed by the then foreign minister, Jaja Wachukwu:

> Nigeria, as the country with the largest concentration of black peoples anywhere in the world, owes a duty to all the black people of the earth to do everything possible to eradicate the humiliation of the black man anywhere in the world. Whether Nigeria likes it or not, it is its duty; it is part of Nigeria's destiny; if Nigeria does not do this then it has failed in its mission (Abegunrin, 2009 .p 25).

In preparing the liberation fighters for military success, Nigeria provided funds for the training and sustenance of the guerrilla movements. This was acknowledged by the late Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, who gave a special commendation for the role Nigeria played in liberation of Zimbabwe by making it pubic that Nigeria spent more than US$8million for the training of freedom fighters during the liberation war in Zimbabwe (Gwadabe, 2012). During the liberation war of Mozambique, Nigeria supported the freedom fighters by donating millions of dollars to the Mozambican resistance fighters FRELIMO (Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, which translates to the Mozambique Liberation Front) to defeat the South African backed Resistencia Nacional Mozambicana (RENAMO). Similarly, Nigeria immensely supported the Namibian liberation movement of SWAPO with military training, supply of equipment and logistics to the tune of more than US$1.01 billion (Gwadabe, 2012). Furthermore, on the liberation of Angola, Nigeria supported Angola's MPLA guerrillas with military aid worth over US$20,000,000.00 (Twenty Million Dollars) (Gwadabe, 2012; Osaherumwen & Motunrayo, 2017). This is how dedicated and uncompromising Nigeria was in the defence of African nations.

7. Nigeria's Military Regional Power Projection

On her credential as a stakeholder in the world peace; Nigeria has participated in over 40 out of the 55 peacekeeping mission of the United Nations (UN), which constitutes well over 73% of all UN peacekeeping operations (Oladimeji, 2022). Again, with the civil disorder and armed conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone; Nigeria, through the instrumentality of shrewd diplomacy brought together other West African countries to form a peacekeeping force, the ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group) in 1990 with the responsibility amongst others to ensure a ceasefire between the warring factions in Liberia, create the structures for dialogue that would lead to restoration of peace, political settlement and a democratic election (Draman, 2003; Ogwang, 2014). In the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone, Nigeria took responsibility of funding 70% of the ECOMOG Operations costing billions of dollars and thousands of soldiers' lives. Finally, as the dominant power in the West African sub-region; Nigeria leveraged on her military prowess and financial resources to restore peace in the sub-region costing over US$8 billion peace missions in Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, and Sierra Leone (Khan & Cheri, 2019).

8. Nigeria' Afrocentric Policy Unsettled Western Powers

The manner in which Nigeria projected military and diplomatic clout in the liberation of African countries and restoration of peace in West Africa unsettled the Western powers. The United States had, through different channels complained about Nigeria's hostility to her interest in Africa. In a US Embassy cable leaked by Wikileaks, the US Ambassador expressed his dissatisfaction about Nigeria: "…We have received indications during the trip that the Nigerians have actually been opposing us all around Africa…"(US Embassy, 1976a). It will be pertinent to examine the Nigerian activities that constituted threat to western interest in Africa.

In Angola, Nigeria opposed the United States stance on Angola's independence struggle which provoked the United States. Nigeria's support for a pro-Soviet MPLA was considered inimical to the geopolitical influence of the United States in Africa especially in the containment policy against the spread of communism in southern Africa. The United States favoured the pro-Western National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) that was supported by South Africa to form the government in Angola. Unfortunately, Nigeria backed the pro-Soviet socialist MPLA with funds, military training, logistics and diplomatic support. The United States felt unhappy about Nigeria's uncompromising stance in importing pro-Soviet regime in southern Africa while it was fighting the spread of communism through containment policy. This was interpreted as aiding the spread of Soviet sphere of influence while undermining the spread capitalism in a vicious Cold War conflict.

> The United States permanent representative to the United Nations, Mr Daniel Moynihan addressed a press conference on the situation in Angola during which he alleged a new colonialism by the Soviet Union was controlling the sea route via the horn of Africa and therefore the oil route from the Middle East… the Soviet Union was gaining an influence over the cape route through Mozambique and … with Nigeria (support) the Soviet Union would now control the vast oil fields and west coast of Africa and implant communism in Africa … (US Embassy, 1976 .p 2).

Within the context of the above, the concerns expressed by the United States against Nigeria were fabricated. Nigeria was perceived as aiding and abetting the Soviet spread of communism from West African coast to the East African coast, supposedly making it possible for the United States to lose control of the sea route up to the Horn of Africa and by implication the oil route from the Middle East as well as loss of control of the vast oil fields in Angola. By their

erroneous perception, the United States will loss influence over the Cape Route through The Strait of Magellan in South Africa up to Indian Ocean access to Mozambique. These vast strategic locations and sea routes, would, in the perception of the United States be under the control of the Soviets where communism will spread. By this act, the western world has lost the Cold War to the Soviet because of the support given to the liberation groups by Nigeria. By interpretations of United States, Nigeria's support for the liberation struggle is a support for the Soviet Union to exclude United States from the economic, political, geostrategic and diplomatic influence in Africa as well as access to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans for maritime trade and naval hegemonic control. To the US deep state, Nigeria is an ally of the Soviet Union, therefore a threat to the interest of the United States and consequently must be contained.

9. The West Suspects Nigeria of Regional Domination

The Afrocentric foreign policy of Nigeria was being misread by the West as having regional ambition and domination which threatens the colonial and geostrategic interest of the West. This can be adduced from the part played by Nigeria in the liberation struggles of the southern Africa countries and her projection of military power in Liberia and Sierra Leone. To the West, Nigeria is announcing itself as a regional power, militarily and diplomatically. Nigeria's presence in Sierra Leone threatened the British influence over Sierra Leone by the manner Nigeria enforced peace, took charge of the command and training of the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces (Abdulai, 2011; Rashid, 2013). The British are reading it as a covert takeover of their ex-colony as well as an expansionist tendency of the Nigerian State. Similarly, the Nigerian led military success in Liberia was a naked display of military power which announces Nigeria as a military power that could threaten the US colonial interest/hegemony in Liberia. Again, the French were very apprehensive that the size of the Nigerian military might eclipse her interest in the

francophone colonies in West Africa. The exhibition of these latent levers of power and inherent or potential capabilities displayed by Nigeria cannot be allowed to subsist, judging by the concept of Balance of Power Theory. Nigeria deserves to be contained by the perception of Western powers. It is unprecedented that a Third World country in Africa will oppose the United States' interest in Africa or constitute in any way, a threat to the security of the United States.

10. Physical Containment

In order to commence the pruning of Nigeria's emerging regional power status, the Balance of Power Theory will be used to throw a cordon around Nigeria in a physical containment structure. The physical containment of Nigeria by the United States and her allies was done in phases with gradual militarization of neighbouring countries. For example, on 10 January 2004, the US sent in 500 troops into Mauritania under operation Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) ostensibly on anti-terror mission and a week later 400 US Rangers deployed into Chadian/Nigerien border (Burgess, 2018; William, 2013). By this time, their military presence has covered from Mauritania to the borders of Nigeria.

With the PSI operations going on in the Sahel, the US was not satisfied with the number of troops in the Sahel, consequently, in 2005, the PSI was replaced by Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) (Burgess, 2018; Mendelsohn, 2009). Under this new dispensation, the area of coverage will include Senegal, Algeria; with Morocco, Tunisia, and Nigeria joining as observers (Mendelsohn, 2009). According to US officials; the objective of TSCTP was to prepare participating nations to have the capacity to control its own territory, including its borders as well as to stem the flow of illicit arms, goods, and people across borders and deny terrorists sanctuary in the Sahel region (Forte, 2012; Harmon, 2014). Despite militarily occupying the Sahara Desert and the Sahel belt, the US Administration was not satisfied with its military presence in West Africa. In this regard therefore, the US Administration established the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) on October 1, 2007 which was formally activated on October 1, 2008 (Ifeka, 2010; Karang, 2010; Keenan, 2013). Finally, when AFRICOM was established, the then president of United States George Bush claimed the objective was to strengthen the US security cooperation with Africa , but in reality, it was a containment cordon around Nigeria (Francis, 2010; Karang, 2010). The AFRICOM bases in West Africa look like a containment drawn around Nigeria as reflected in figure 1.

Figure 1: United States Physical Containment of Nigeria
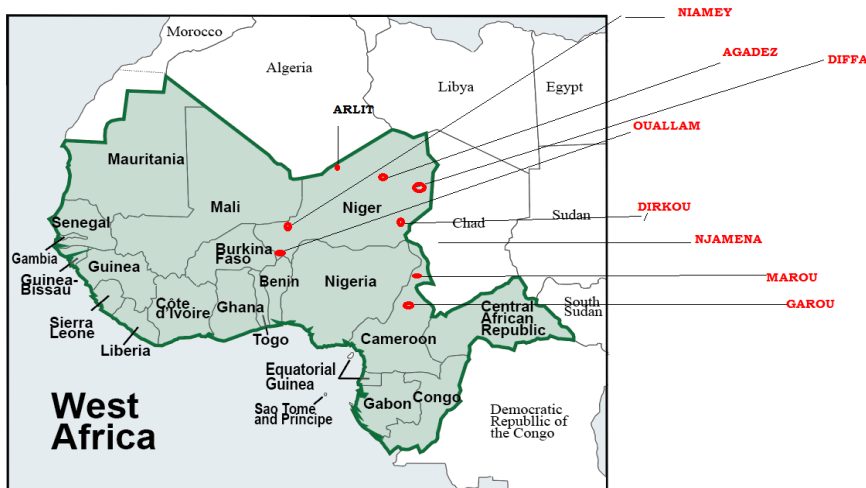
Source: Mail & Guardian

Figure 1 shows US AFRICOM military installations and bases all around Nigeria thereby creating a containment cordon. In Niger Republic alone there are about six (6) US military bases in Agadez, Arlit, Niamey, Dikou, Diffa and Ouallam; all sandwiching Nigeria to the north. In Chad there is the N'Djamena US military base. In Cameroon, there are about two (2) US military bases in Garoua and Maroua and a noticeable US presence in Benin Republic. Towards the Atlantic Ocean to the South, the US Navy is constantly showing its presence ostensibly to fight sea piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. So, all around Nigeria, the United States surrounded Nigeria with its military bases and footprints. United States were not alone in the military containment; the French have military bases in most francophone Nigerian neighbours.

11. Diplomatic Containment of Nigeria

To further tighten the noose of the physical containment of Nigeria, the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) designed a strategic plan to contain Nigeria militarily and diplomatically in a document called the Africa Crises Response Initiative (ACRI). What is ACRI and its objectives?

> ACRI stands for Africa Crises Response Initiative …came to being from the secret reports and recommendations separately by the Africa-America Institute and the Brookings Institute commissioned by the Central Intelligence Agency, …Both reports zeroed in on the pivotal role Nigeria was playing in the ECOMOG initiative and noted pointedly the phenomenal success recorded by ECOMOG in containing the Liberian crisis without any significant role or intervention from any of the major western powers including the United States. The report concluded that should ECOMOG be allowed to go the whole hog, the major beneficiary will be Nigeria and that might form the basis for a pax Nigeriana in the West African sub-region eclipsing the influence of former colonial powers France and Britain…The reports also called on the United States Government to note that Liberia being its creation should not be allowed to fall into Nigerian hands with consequences to US strategic interests in the country and the region. Specifically, both reports noted that should Nigeria be allowed to have a foothold in Liberia, it will further embolden Nigeria to challenge the US and the West in carving its own sphere of interest at their expense. In this regard, the report further recalled Nigeria's role in helping to liberate the southern African countries in the 70's and 80's in clear opposition and defiance to the interests of the United States and its western allies which resulted in setback for Western initiatives in Africa at the time (NewsRescue, 2012 p.2).

The above quote from NewsRescue, (2012) is self-explanatory. The United States decided to prune the potentials and rising influence of Nigeria within the African region. While Nigerian led ECOMOG was busy restoring peace in the two beleaguered countries; the CIA was plotting to undermine the Nigeria's efforts using the Balance of Power Theory. The CIA highlighted the significance of Nigeria led ECOMOG in containing the crises in the two countries without the help or direction of the United States or any Western nations. The CIA advised that Nigeria should not be allowed to conclude the restoration of peace in the two beleaguered nation, otherwise the credit and prestige will embolden Nigeria to displace US, Britain and France in the West African sub-region. It reminded the US Congress that Liberia was the creation of the United States and therefore must not be allowed to fall into the control of Nigeria. The CIA, in their report was emphatic that should Nigeria be allowed to settle the two wars, the countries will be in Nigeria's sphere of influence. Consequently, the need to contain the rising influence of Nigeria became urgent. In

order to undermine Nigeria, the CIA recommended that the United States and her allies should adopt quiet diplomacy in order not to antagonize Nigeria but insisted that Nigeria must be left out in any future arrangements to restore peace in the two countries. Through the US covert shuttle diplomacy, Nigeria was diplomatically contained.

12. Conclusion

The Afrocentric diplomacy of Nigeria in the 70s helped the liberation of southern African countries of Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. Nigeria supported the freedom fight with funds, deft diplomacy, military training and social program support. Nigeria's role upstaged the economic, political, geostrategic and prestige of the Western powers in southern Africa especially the United States, Britain, France and Portugal. Nigeria was perceived by the Western nations as a stooge of the Soviets who was on a mission to hand over southern Africa space to the communist sphere of influence in a fiercely raging Cold War era. Arising from the growing influence of Nigeria's diplomacy matched with military power, the west considered it expedient to contain Nigeria's growing power. In this venture, the CIA carried out an estimate in which they realized that, should Nigeria be allowed to bring peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia; the diplomatic influence will eclipse the influence and status of Britain, France and the United States which might end the hegemonic control of Western powers in West Africa. In this regard therefore; they advised the US Government to upstage Nigeria, dismantle the ECOMOG military structure, prune the diplomatic influence of Nigeria and supplant ECOMOG with AFRICOM.

In these devious covert plans, Nigeria's regional power projection was contained physically and diplomatically.

13. Recommendations

Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy carried out for the liberation of southern African irked the West. Nigeria's funding, military training and diplomatic support were misinterpreted by the West to mean a support for Communism. Similarly, the military peace enforcement in the West African sub-region was misconstrued as quest for regional dominance and territorial ambition; thus, necessitating the containment policy of the West against Nigeria. From the forgoing, it is therefore recommended that:

a. Nigeria's Afrocentric Foreign Policy should be redesigned to pursue her national, geopolitical and geostrategic interest than being an instrument of vacuous and pretentious international showmanship.
b. Nigeria's diplomatic and military levers of national power must be coordinated and integrated in pursuit of her national interest, then being deployed in piecemeal in an uncoordinated and unsynchronized manner.
c. Nigerian leaders should be properly schooled in the art of geopolitics and statecraft so at to understand how to use levers of state powers like the military and diplomacy.

Nigerian leaders should be educated on the geostrategic implication of having foreign military bases around their borders and be ready to design appropriate monitoring and response systems.

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EFFECTS OF INSECURITY ON QUALITY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigates the effects of insecurity on quality of tertiary education in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study adopted the Democratic Peace Theory as the theoretical framework to guide the study. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Qualitative data was used and instrument for data collection was Key Informant Interview. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The study concluded that insecurity in Plateau state gave way for loss of manpower in educational institutions, poor quality of education, destructions of infrastructural facilities, closure of educational institutions, internal displacement of staff and students, reduction of private investment in education. This study therefore recommends that the government both at federal level and in Plateau State should address all issues fueling insecurities in the state and ensure higher institutions are secured and safe for teaching and learning. The governments should invest in higher institutions' securities across the state. Since the military might is failing, the government must have the political will to fight the insecurity in the state through the use of best strategies, which must include Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and this must be guided by honesty and sincerity. This ADR process must include the youths who known to be agent of insecurity in the state.

Keywords: Effects, Conflict, Insecurity, Tertiary institution, Plateau State.

1. Introduction

The quality of education, wherever it may be found, is largely determined by the peace and security that permeate the learning environment. Okoli and Okpaleke (2014a) noted that education is intended to help people develop their skills and abilities so they can reach their full potential and lead productive, fulfilling lives. In preliterate societies, education was primarily focused on hunting, cooking, following the stars, and obeying the gods. Education is an essential investment for human and economic development.

The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, according to Nzeh (2015), realized the importance of education and declared in its 1999 Constitution that every Nigerian child has the right to an education, regardless of gender, tribe, religion, or race. It makes sense to state that the high standards of education outlined in the Federal Republic of Nigeria's constitution would be realized in a calm and supportive school environment. Ndoma-Egba (2014) asserts that the noble goals of education can never be achieved in a vacuum. Both teachers and students are likely to be discouraged if there is a sense of insecurity in and around the school, which could impair the students' academic performance. A lack of peace can result in widespread devastation, extreme insecurity, intimidation, and fear, which can close schools and halt instruction for the duration of the school day. Nigerian Institutions that have faced insecurity have experienced many setbacks in terms of academic growth and infrastructural destruction (Nwosu, 2016).

In Nigeria, however, there has been an unprecedented level of insecurity, threatening national security and prompting a significant portion of the national budget to be allocated to security. The alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has increased the rate of crime and terrorist attacks in various parts of the country, leaving unpalatable consequences for the country's economy and business growth. Agbo (2023) notes that tertiary institutions have not been spared from the negative impact of insecurity. For example, Nigeria has seen a rise in insecurity in recent years, with incidents of kidnapping, armed robbery, violence between communities, terrorism, and other crimes. This has left the educational sector, particularly tertiary institutions, vulnerable to insecurity, with students and staff members at risk of being abducted, attacked, or killed (Agbo, 2023).

Moreso, Umar (2022) noted that the alarming level of insecurity in Nigeria has resulted in an increase in crime and terrorist attacks throughout the country, which has had a negative impact on the country's economy, business, and expansion of education. The

Nigerian people now literally sleep with their eyes open, emasculated by the fear of these terror groups and the suffering and destruction they are capable of causing (Agbo, 2023).

In the Plateau State, the stability and operation of higher education institutions are severely hampered by various forms of insecurity. The state is currently mired in an unprecedented level of growing insecurity. These days, it is easier for jihadists, bandits, Fulani herdsmen, kidnappers, and other criminals to waste a human life than an animal. In Plateau State, tertiary institutions are becoming more susceptible to the destabilizing consequences of insecurity. These include risks to the health and safety of instructors and students, interruptions to the regular course of study, difficulties in keeping up campus facilities, and a decline in the legitimacy and trust of the institution. Academic calendar delays and extended study periods have resulted from the frequent closures and disruptions caused by insecurity. Students and staff members experience psychological trauma as well, which negatively impacts their mental health and general wellbeing.

Furthermore, because parents and guardians would be reluctant to send their children to institutions that are prone to insecurity, insecurity could harm the institution's reputation and lower enrollment rates. It might also result in the exodus of highly qualified academics in search of safer workplaces. The security situation in Nigeria seems to be insurmountable, according to Achumba, Ighomereho, and Akpor-Robaro (2013), and many have claimed that the government at all levels has not done enough by not addressing the issue head-on and taking decisive action. Some, however, contend that the circumstances have a political undertone or inclination intended to further the goals of certain political gods who are angry and unsatisfied with the political manifestations in the nation. The question that borders everyone in Plateau State and indeed in Nigeria today is that: can there be security? Is security of lives of students and staff of the tertiary institutions and properties achievable? It is in this regard

that the study intends to examine effects of insecurity on tertiary institutions in Plateau State, Nigeria.

2. Purpose of the Study

Specifically, the purpose of this study is to:

i. Explore the perceptions of students and staff regarding the impact of insecurity on academic activities and institutional operations

3. The Structure of a Study

The structure of a study on the effects of insecurity on the quality of tertiary education in Plateau State.

Introduction: Provide background information on the issue of insecurity in Nigeria and its impact on education and the purpose of the study.

Theoretical Literature: This section Reviewed existing literature related to insecurity and its effects on education.

Methodology: the research design adopted was descriptive survey design and Key Informant Interview was used to elicit information from the respondents. The study adopts both primary and secondary data.

Conclusion and Recommendations: the study was concluded and recommendations made.

References: under here, citations made in the work were all duly acknowledged.

4. Methodology

Descriptive method was utilized in carrying out this research. The study adopted both secondary and primary data. The secondary data include: books, government papers, journal articles: print and online, conference proceedings, and materials related to the subject matter. The major source of primary data was Key Informant Interview. A question guide designed by the researcher was used in gathering of data from the respondents. The respondents were selected from different section of the society in Plateau state. These include: the students leaders, university staff, and government officials. The data gathered will be analysed using content analysis.

5. Theoretical Literature

Theoretical Framework

The Democratic Peace Theory is used in this study to explain Nigeria's security issues. This theory, put forth by Michael Doyle in 1998, holds that a security policy's long-term goal must be the spread of liberalism and that security primarily rests on assisting liberal institutions in carrying out their duties in an honorable manner (Doyle, 1998). Thus, promoting democracy, universal respect for human rights, and the growth of civil society are the paths that lead to peace. However, such a conclusion is primarily predicated on a stable and strong correlation between a state's democratic nature and its propensity for peace. Therefore, liberal states are assumed to refrain from waging war on other liberal states by the democratic peace theory.

Michael Doyle initially presented this theory in a keynote paper published in the Journal of Philosophy and Public Affairs (Doyle, 1998). Doyle therefore contended that liberal behavior toward liberal societies differed from liberal behavior toward non-liberal societies. The democratic peace theory makes clear recommendations from a security perspective.

6. The Concept of Insecurity

As a fundamental idea, insecurity is frequently linked to circumstances where values are threatened, particularly the survival of people, groups, or objects in the near future. As the name suggests, insecurity therefore refers to the incapacity to pursue desired political and socioeconomic conditions that are supportive of democracy. A state of no safety, confidence, and the pervasiveness of danger, fear, and doubts is known as insecurity. It might also refer to a situation, in which one is unsafe, poorly guarded, or both, and where instability predominates as opposed to desired stability. Fear or anxiety resulting from a real or perceived lack of protection is referred to as insecurity. It alludes to insufficient or nonexistent safety from harm.

The most obvious type of insecurity is physical insecurity, which is reflected in this definition. Physical insecurity also contributes to many other types of insecurity, including social and economic security. According to William (2008), feeling uncertain, erratic, unsteady, nervous, or lacking in confidence are all examples of insecurity. This may stem from one's upbringing, uncomfortable situations, maltreatment, or personal fears. The term nsecurity describes a condition in which one is constantly confronted with threats, dangers, molestation, intimidation, harassment, etc. One way to conceptualize insecurity is as threats to the state, which is why there has often been a race to acquire weapons, including nuclear weapons, in order to defend the state.

According to Ajodo-Adebanjoko (2014), insecurity is a state of fear or anything that has the potential to cause fear, harm, injury, or destruction to a person, a group, or a country. Ali (2013) claims that since Nigeria returned to democratic rule in 1999, there has been a rise in terrorism-related incidents, which has added to the country's growing sense of unease. People's perception of their level of safety from fear, economic, political, social, cultural, and psychological is known as security. People's relative perception of the existence of social, political, cultural, psychological, and economic fear is known as insecurity. Economic insecurity is the most prevalent type of insecurity among them all and the one that makes other types of insecurity more apparent. Other types of insecurity emerged as a result of economic insecurity. There are several meanings associated with the term insecurity, including: lack of protection, danger, hazard, uncertainty, and absence of safety. Beland (2005) cited in Ewetan and Urhie (2014), states that insecurity is a condition of fear or anxiety brought on by a lack of security.

The absence of safety and peace is what is commonly referred to as insecurity, which is problematic because security is unquestionably the cornerstone required for the advancement of society, politics, and education. Any nation's citizens are under grave danger from insecurity, which also acts as a cankerworm that eats away at the foundation of any nation.

7. Empirical Review

Nwakpa (2015) examined the effect of insecurity on quality tertiary education in Nigeria. The study was conducted in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study found out that examination fever, lack of self-confidence, frustration and not being admitted into a course of preference/choice are the source of insecurity that affects the quality of tertiary education in Nigeria. The study recommends that government should fund education properly and effectively monitor the activities of private operators in the education sector. There is need for proper and regular counseling of students and their parents/guardians to eschew fraud in education. causes, of insecurity in tertiary educational institutions, and strategies to be employed. Finally, the study made some recommendations to include, full implementation of the suggested strategies.

Agazuma and Mochi (2021) conducted a research on emerging insecurity challenges and its impact on quality tertiary education in Nigeria. The study was done in Delta State University, Abraka and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted and a total of 682 respondents were selected for the study using the random and proportionate-stratified sampling method. A correlation index of 0.81 was obtained to determine the reliability of the instrument that is, the questionnaire which was self-designed. Responses to the questions raised were analyzed using the mean statistics and the hypotheses were tested using the chi square statistics of 0.05 level of significance. The study discovered that insecurity has drastically and to a large extent affected effective and efficient running of the school system in Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma and Delta States University, Abraka. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that: Government and school administrators should

shun corruption, oppression, and highhandedness and take unbiased stand in handling matters affecting the students. Also recommended was that the university system must at all-time stick to rules of engagement. All acts capable of breeding crisis must be discouraged.

Abubakar, Abdulkadir and Shuaibu (2023) investigated the security challenges and control measure in six (6) college of education libraries in North-East, Nigeria. Survey research design was employed. Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. Frequency and percentages were the statistical tools used for data analysis. The population and sample consisted of 20 staff (librarians, library officers and library assistants) from the six colleges used for the study. Results from the study revealed absence of the use of information communication technology (ICT) to safeguard library collection as a results of poor power supply; that both print and electronic materials are targets of crime in libraries, with non-return of library materials, theft and mutilation constituting security challenges in these libraries. It was also discovered that various methods were adopted for stealing and mutilation of library materials such as ripping off book page(s), removing the book jackets, and hiding of books under their clothes and in pockets. It was recommended that photocopy service should be provided to enable the library users to photocopy books that are few in the library; that managements should provide multiple copies of materials to meet the information needs of their users.

Hassan (2023) examined the effect of insecurity on the education system in Kaduna state. A total of 1000 made up of 500 each of male and female students responded to a self-structured validated questionnaire designed for the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Means and standard deviations were calculated to answer the research questions and independent samples t-tests were used for testing the hypotheses. Major findings revealed that insecurity of school environment significantly affects the academic performance of secondary school students while students' gangsterism, smoking of Indian hemp, abusing other hard drugs, cult and related violent activities were some of the factors that constituted insecurity of the school environment which eventually cause boys to leave school and join trading while leading girls to drop out and settle for marriage. Based on the findings, it was recommended that owners of schools and other stakeholders in education should take bold steps to fence and protect school environments from intruders to ensure safety of the students.

Is'haq, Musa and Abdulhafiz (2019) worked on education and Insecurity in Nigeria. This study examined the relationship between state of education and insecurity in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted for the study. One hundred and fifteen (115) respondents were randomly selected across the six geo-political zones in the country. The selection was done through the distribution of the research instrument, questionnaire, titled "Education and Insecurity Assessment Scale (EIAS)". The instrument was designed by the researchers, and constructed in a 4-point likert scale format. Data obtained for the study were analysed using the descriptive statistics of frequency counts, mean (x) and simple percentage. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the formulated hypotheses. The study revealed inadequate education as the root cause of insecurity and; significant relationship between inefficacious education and insecurity associated with penury, unemployment, corruption, kidnapping and insurgency in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, accordance of education priority in the national budget, and creation of effective database in Nigeria among others are recommended.

8. The Perceptions of Students and Staff Regarding the Impact of Insecurity in Tertiary Institutions in Plateau State

The main goal of Nigeria's postsecondary educational institutions is to provide students with a solid and high-quality education that will enable them to succeed in any field they choose

and contribute to society (Iyoha et al., 2010 cited in Agazuma and Mochi, 2021). Due to its extensive effects and direct consequences on education, the economy, and society at large, Nigeria's high level of insecurity has emerged as a social issue and a multifaceted problem that demands attention. The most concerning aspect of modern Nigeria is the emergence of new insecurity challenges, which have become so severe as to nearly completely cripple the country's various sectors, particularly the education sector.

It has been noted that the goals of higher education in Nigeria can only be achieved in settings that are safe, tranquil, and supportive of instruction, learning, and the execution of research projects. The curriculum is implemented by the academic staff. Professional teachers are hired by every educational system to provide instruction as well as other educational services. Teachers are essential to any educational setting. Teachers are thought of as the institution's engine room. Teachers in Nigeria's public schools face a variety of difficulties (Ogunode, Okwelogu, and Ahaotu, 2021).

According to Agazuma and Mochi (2021), an environment marked by violence and insecurity makes it impossible to provide high-quality education. A quality education prepares students to be engaged and productive members of society and is sound both pedagogically and development. Even though there has been a lot of public discussion about the issue of insecurity over the years, it seems that interest in finding a solution is dwindling, and even when it is, the potential socioeconomic and political ramifications are rarely or never considered. As a result, any country with low levels of education will inevitably have low states. For this reason, education has remained a key driver of national development.

Nwosu (2016) noted that competent and seasoned instructors would rather be moved to a different school where their safety is guaranteed. Education resources are always destroyed during times of crisis, and given the

high risks involved, the nations that have historically supported such initiatives will be hesitant to do so in conflict zones. The person who ends up on the receiving end is the leaner. In Nigeria as in most other parts of the world, educational institutions and higher learning centers are frequently singled out during times of crisis. According to UNESCO (2010), in accordance with this submission, students will not be able to concentrate fully on their studies because they will not be at ease. The threat will always make them fearful in schools. Research indicates that there is a rise in deviant behavioral traits across the nation, and in the higher education system in particular. Due to the ongoing instability in the Nigerian state, the majority of Nigeria's postsecondary educational institutions are having a lot of difficulty realizing these educational objectives. Effective given the current state of insecurity in the nation. This all boils down to the idea that an organization, society, or system is threatened by insecurity.

According to Omorogbe (2016), the nation's insecurity has the potential to significantly lower the performance, goals, and objectives of the educational system and, if left unchecked, could completely destroy the education sector. For this reason, this study will promote peace and the absence of conflict and insecurity in Nigerian education system. These institutions are continuously on fire due to the demonic activities of cult members. Insecurity breeds fear, anxiety, uncertainty, death, and disruption of academic activities and programs, among other negative emotions. Campus insecurity has a detrimental impact on the educational process. It sometimes causes disruptions to the academic calendar and instills fear and feelings of insecurity in tertiary institution staff and students. Because no nation can grow above the capabilities of its tertiary institutions, the disruption of learning on campus poses a threat to national development. Ohiare-Udebu and Ogunode, Rauf (2021) note that the closing of schools, which has impacted the country's higher education system's academic calendar, is the most concerning aspect of the insecurity.

Due to university closures and the discontinuation of numerous academic programs, numerous faculties and departments are unable to graduate their students. A riot over a fee bike and a lack of facilities occurred in November of 2015. The student's union requested that the management discontinue the annual ICT and development levies because, in their words, the students were not using the facilities. 2016 saw the University of Jos' Naraguta complex library burned down. This was another instance of property damage, specifically to the building, its amenities, its books, and the processed results of the students' exam scripts. According to Ogunode and Musa (2020), academic staff members are being forced to relocate across the nation as a result of the ongoing insurgency and violence plaguing higher education institutions, as well as the ongoing murders of academic staff members by bandits and rebels. Many lecturers are leaving states with high security risk to states where the security risk is lower. This submission is confirmed by Jimada, who observed that many schools have closed down due Boko Haram activities and lack of talented lecturers. Teachers have abandoned their schools for other schools in another peaceful states leading to brain drain in such regions. More than 800 school buildings have been affected in the North leading to some students having their classes under trees and canopies.

In support of the above view, as observed by an informant interviewed:

"The ongoing attacks on lecturers in and around higher education institutions in Nigeria and especially here in Jos are causing a shortage of qualified teachers. Many academic staff and professors have left the high-risk, prone areas because of the risk of insecurity. Many academics are being forced to move to more peaceful areas of the country due to the insecurity in Plateau State".

A professor interviewed asserted that:

"Numerous research projects at universities have been suspended or terminated, particularly at universities in Northern Nigeria, such as Jos, where insecurity concerns have forced university closures. There is no way for a lecturer to conduct research in an unsafe setting. The lecturers need to feel comfortable, and the environment needs to be secure, for meaningful research to occur."

One of the UniJos students interview added that:

"Apart from disruptions of classes and academic calendar, it also creates fears among us students and even on the staff members too. Insecurity can lead to a decrease in enrolment as students may be hesitant to attend a school located in an area that they perceive as unsafe. I mean no reasonable parents will send his child to a hostile environment".

Another informant observed that:

"Insecurity in this state has actually affected our academic activities. It has indeed affected the academic activities of a tertiary institution as students and staff may be afraid to come to the campus for fear of their safety. This can lead to a decrease in academic performance and research activities. It has also led to a decrease in staff retention as some may be unwilling to work in an environment that they perceive as unsafe. At least I know some of our staff members who left due to the insecurity that started since 2001".

From the above views expressed by the respondents, it is clear that the effects of insecurity on higher education institutions go beyond direct threats to safety and instead have wider ramifications for reputation, academic integrity, and the quality of the educational process. It takes a careful examination of the

many ways that insecurity manifests itself as well as the various environments in which tertiary institutions function to fully comprehend the complexities of how these institutions are impacted. According to Agazuma and Mochi (2021), there are several ways that insecurity affects education. First, it has a significant negative impact on the effective and efficient operation of the school system. Secondly, students and staff lose faith in the government's ability to protect them. Third, students' academic work and activities are also negatively impacted. Lastly, some staff members and students find it difficult to attend school or even to stay in school because of fear of lack of protection and safety.

Wilson (2019) noted that ensuring efficient student administration and enrollment is one of the responsibilities of school administration; however, the nation's insecurity is deterring parents and kids from sending their kids to school out of fear that they will be kidnapped or killed by insurgents. Many parents have made the decision to keep their kids at home rather than risk having them killed or abducted from schools where there is no guarantee of safety. Parents in Nigeria are considering removing their children from school due to security threats. Wilson (2019) observes that Nigerian education is suffering greatly as a result of the recent wave of kidnappings. In the midst of a pandemic, when some parents have pulled their kids out of school, or have chosen not to send their kids back to school, the unrest and dangers to educational infrastructure will only make an already challenging situation worse. Students' internal displacement in Nigeria is a result of insecurity, particularly in the country's north. The state of unrest has forced many students to leave their schools. Students' administration in educational institutions across the nation is being impacted by insecurity. When a terrorist organization targets a community, schools are frequently among their first targets. Increased numbers of internally displaced people, political, social, and economic upheavals, and sluggish economic growth are some of the effects of insecurity. All of the aforementioned have a detrimental effect on the people who live in such unsafe places.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate effects of insecurity on quality of tertiary education in Plateau State, Nigeria. It is only when tertiary institutions' surroundings are tranquil, safe, and supportive of instruction, learning, and the execution of research projects can the goals of higher education in Nigeria be achieved. A sustainable development of higher education in Nigeria cannot be guaranteed by students, non-academic staff, or academic staff in light of the recent attacks in Plateau State, which have had a significant impact on tertiary institutions. The study concludes that insecurity in Plateau state given rise to disruptions in academic programs and research, loss of manpower in educational institutions, poor quality of education, destructions of infrastructural facilities, closure of educational institutions, internal displacement of staff and students, reduction of private investment in education. This study therefore recommends that the government both at federal level and in Plateau State should address all issues fueling insecurities in the state and ensure higher institutions are secured and safe for teaching and learning. The governments should invest in higher institutions' securities across the state. Since the military might is failing, the government must have the political will to fight the insecurity in the state through the use of best strategies, which must include Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and this must be guided by honesty and sincerity. This ADR process must include the youths who known to be agent of insecurity in the state.

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RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AS AGENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE INTERNAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

In recent decades, religious conflicts have emerged as significant threats to internal security in Nigeria, often resulting in violence, instability, and socio-economic disruption. This study examines the role of religious institutions in ensuring internal security and their potential to influence harmonious coexistence and conflict resolution. Utilising a qualitative methodology, the research draws on secondary sources to explore the dynamics of religious conflicts and the contributions of religious leaders to peacebuilding. The study employs conflict and functional theories to analyse how religious institutions can address security challenges. Key findings indicate that religious institutions play crucial roles in advocating for peace, promoting ethical conduct, and fostering societal stability. They contribute significantly to conflict resolution through dialogue, tolerance, and interfaith collaboration. The study concludes that religious leaders are viable agents for national security, hence, they can enhance the effectiveness of sustainable internal security in Nigeria. One practical recommendation is for policymakers to integrate religious leaders into national security frameworks, ensuring their involvement in conflict mediation and peacebuilding initiatives.

Keywords: Boko Haram, Insurgency, Foreign aid, Government, Intervention, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Internal security in Nigeria is paramount for the nation's stability and development, given the country's complex ethnic, religious, and cultural landscape. Nigeria faces significant internal security challenges, including terrorism, ethnic conflicts, crime, and political instability. These issues not only threaten the peace and safety of its citizens but also hinder economic growth and social cohesion. In such a context, maintaining internal security becomes essential for the nation's overall well-being (Egfebo, 2014; Osajie, 2020).

Religious institutions have historically played a significant role in shaping societal values and norms in Nigeria. These institutions often serve as centers for community support, moral guidance, and social services. Given their substantial influence on large segments of the population, religious leaders and organizations are in a unique position to promote peace and conflict resolution, contributing to societal stability (Sulaiman, 2012).

Religious tensions, particularly between Christians and Muslims, add another layer of complexity to Nigeria's security architecture. Misuse of religious influence by extremist groups can incite hatred and division, often escalating into violence and unrest. These conflicts disrupt social harmony, leading to significant loss of life and property, and undermining national unity (Mordi & Sunday, 2020) Addressing religious tensions and leveraging the positive influence of religious institutions is crucial for sustainable internal security is the goal of this paper.

This study aims to explore the role of religious institutions in promoting sustainable internal security in Nigeria. It seeks to investigate how these institutions can contribute to peacebuilding and security initiatives. Additionally, the study will examine the mechanisms through which religious organizations address security challenges, assessing their effectiveness in fostering harmony and mitigating conflict. The study also aims to analyse the effectiveness of religious institutions in promoting harmony and reducing tensions. This research seeks to answer two primary questions:

1. What role do religious institutions play in ensuring internal security in Nigeria?

2. How can religious institutions contribute to harmonious coexistence and conflict resolution?

Religious institutions, the paper seeks to say, can significantly contribute to sustainable internal security in Nigeria through their influence on societal values and communal harmony. By leveraging their moral authority and community reach, religious institutions can address the root causes of insecurity. Promoting interfaith dialogue, providing social services, and advocating for peace, religious institutions can play a pivotal role in creating a secure and cohesive society. Through their unique position in society, religious institutions have the potential to mitigate conflict, foster reconciliation, and enhance national security. In five sections the study will explore the topic, first is general introduction, the second will cover literature review under three headings. The third will deal with methodology while the fourth presents findings and discusses the issues raised. Conclusion and recommendations would come as the fifth.

2. Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Internal Security

Internal security refers to the measures taken by a state to maintain peace and order within its borders. It encompasses various elements, including social, political, and economic components, all of which are crucial for the stability and well-being of a nation (Alumona & Azom, 2019; Qureshi, 2021). The components of internal security, says Ndukaeze & Adisa 2021) include: social, political, and economical.

Social component involves maintaining social cohesion and addressing societal issues such as crime, violence, and social unrest. Social security also includes the promotion of justice, equality, and human rights. Effective social security measures ensure that communities live in harmony, reducing the likelihood of conflicts and enhancing overall social stability (Alumona & Azom, 2019).

Political stability is essential for internal security. It involves the fair and effective governance of a country, protection of democratic processes, and upholding the rule of law. Political security ensures that there is minimal political violence, corruption is controlled, and the government's legitimacy is maintained. A stable political environment discourages extremism and insurgency, contributing to national security (Nwabueze & Adisa, 2021).

Economic stability is a key pillar of internal security. It involves the creation of employment opportunities, equitable distribution of resources, and sustainable economic growth. Economic security reduces poverty and inequality, which are often root causes of social unrest and conflict. Ensuring economic stability helps in creating a conducive environment for investment and development, thereby supporting national security efforts (Qureshi, 2021; Ndukaeze & Adisa, 2021).

Religious Institutions

Religious institutions play a vital role in promoting societal stability and peacebuilding, leveraging their moral authority and extensive community networks to address security challenges (Sulaiman, 2012; Osajie, 2021).

Religious institutions in Nigeria play important roles in bringing about internal security through various means. They provide moral and ethical

guidance, emphasizing values like tolerance and justice to promote peaceful behaviour and prevent conflicts (Ebonyi, 2018). Additionally, these institutions offer critical social services such as education and healthcare, addressing community needs and enhancing social stability. Religious leaders often act as mediators in conflicts, facilitating dialogue and reconciliation to de-escalate tensions (Mordi & Sunday, 2005). They advocate for justice and human rights, addressing grievances and promoting fairness to mitigate sources of unrest. Moreover, religious institutions promote interfaith harmony through dialogues and initiatives that build trust and cooperation among different religious groups, crucial for maintaining peace in a diverse society (Dimobika & Onyemuwa, 2020).

Theoretical Frameworks

Conflict Theory

Conflict theory, primarily developed by Karl Marx in the mid-19th century, posits that society is in a state of perpetual conflict due to competition for limited resources. This theory emphasizes the power differentials and social inequalities that lead to conflicts within society (Hayes, 2024). Conflict theory focuses on differences in power between individuals or social groups. This theory emerges from philosophical perspectives developed by Niccolo Machiavelli, Thomas Hobbes, and Karl Marx, and emphasizes the idea that people are inherently contentious when competing for resources and power. This theory gained popularity during the Civil Rights Movement as people challenged the traditionally greater power of Whites and men in society (Paige & Fredrick, 2014).
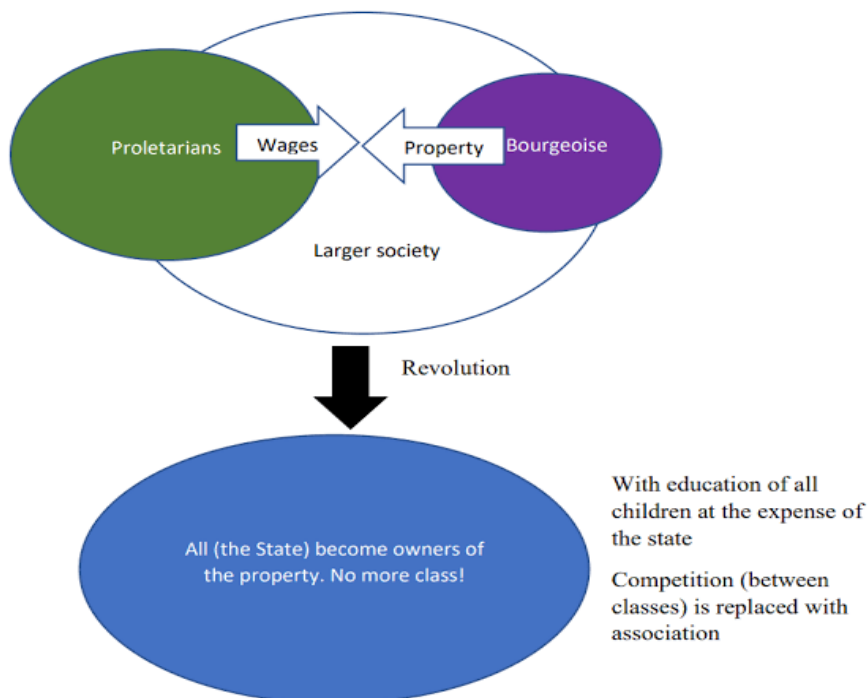

Figure 1 showing the model of conflict theory (source: Hayes, 2024)

The key components of conflict theory include the notion of class struggle, the unequal distribution of power, and the idea that social change is often a result of conflict. Marx argued that the primary driver of societal conflict is the struggle between different social classes,

particularly between the bourgeoisie (owners of the means of production) and the proletariat (working class) (Paige & Fredrick, 2014). Power is unequally distributed in society, and those in power use their resources to maintain their dominance, often at the expense of the less privileged. According to this perspective, social change occurs when marginalized groups push against existing power structures, often leading to significant societal transformations (Mishra, 2013; Hayes, 2024).

Conflict theory, however, faces several criticisms. Critics argue that it overemphasizes economic factors and class struggle, neglecting other forms of social conflict such as those based on gender and race. Additionally, it underestimates the potential for stability and cooperation within societies, focusing predominantly on conflict and change (Mishra, 2013; Hayes, 2024).

Conflict Theory is justified in this paper due to its focus on understanding the power dynamics and inequalities that underlie religious conflicts in Nigeria. This theory examines how dominant groups maintain control and how subordinate groups challenge this dominance, making it highly relevant for analysing the socio-political struggles and tensions that lead to violence and instability. By applying Conflict Theory, the study can better elucidate the structural and systemic causes of religious conflicts, such as economic disparities, political marginalization, and social injustices, and highlight the role of religious institutions in addressing these underlying issues and advocating for more equitable and peaceful solutions.

In the context of religious institutions and internal security in Nigeria, conflict theory can be particularly insightful. It explains how religious tensions and competition for resources can lead to conflict. Religious institutions may exacerbate these conflicts by aligning with specific socio-economic groups or mitigate them by addressing inequalities and promoting social justice. For instance, religious leaders might influence their followers to either challenge or support the status quo, significantly impacting societal conflicts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing strategies to enhance internal security through religious institutions.

Functionalism

Functionalism, championed by Émile Durkheim, views society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. Durkheim's seminal work, "The Division of Labour in Society," published in 1893, laid the groundwork for this theory. Later contributions from sociologists like Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton further developed the functionalist perspective, emphasizing the interdependence of social institutions and their collective role in maintaining social order (Amoah & Anytime, 2018).

The core components of functionalism include the concepts of social institutions, social functions, and value consensus (Gómez-Diago, 2019). According to this theory, institutions such as religion, education, and family are essential for maintaining social order and stability. Each part of society serves a function that contributes to the overall stability and equilibrium of the system. Moreover, shared norms and values are crucial for the cohesion and integration of society, fostering a collective conscience that guides individual behavior (Audu & Osuala, 2019). Figure 2 will demonstrate this theory:
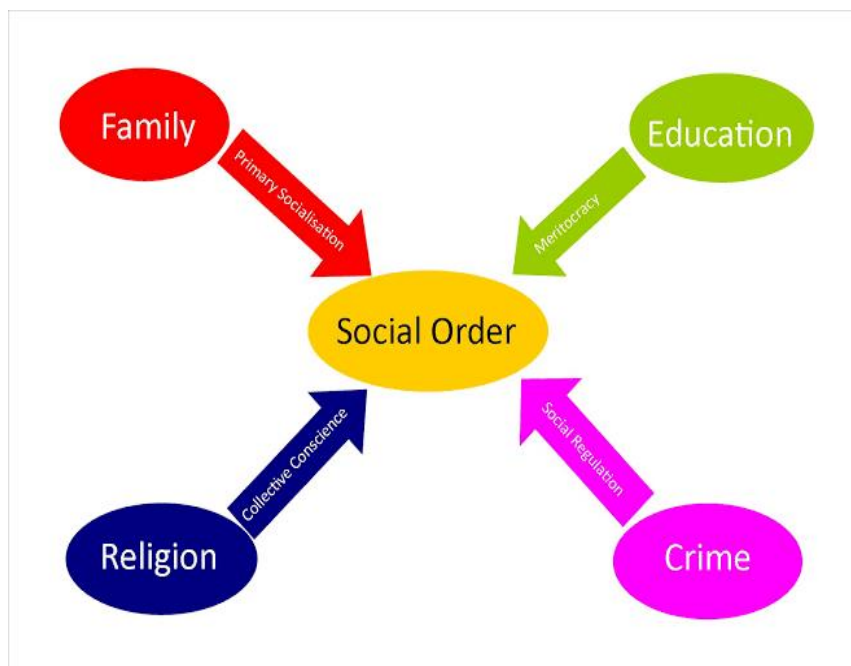
Figure 2: model showing that social order is a combined effort of different structural institutions of society. Source (Thompson, 2023).

Functionalism has its share of criticisms. Critics argue that it tends to overlook social change and conflict, assuming a consensus on values that may not exist in diverse societies (Gómez-Diago, 2019). Additionally, it is often perceived as justifying the status quo and existing power structures, failing to account for the dynamic nature of social interactions (Audu & Osuala, 2019).

In Nigeria, religious institutions can be seen as fulfilling essential functions for societal stability, such as providing moral guidance, social support, and conflict resolution. Functionalism highlights the positive roles that religious doctrines and teachings play in promoting harmony and cohesion. For instance, religious institutions often act as mediators in conflicts, providing frameworks for peace and reconciliation that are deeply rooted in religious teachings. By addressing the functional aspects of religious practices, one can understand how they contribute to internal security and the prevention of conflict.

Religious doctrines often provide ethical frameworks that profoundly influence the behaviour and attitudes of followers. These teachings promote peace, tolerance, and reconciliation, which are vital for internal security. Many religious doctrines emphasize values such as forgiveness, compassion, and the resolution of disputes through peaceful means. Religious leaders, by leveraging these teachings, can mediate conflicts and foster understanding among different groups.

In Nigeria, religious institutions have historically played significant roles in mediating ethnic and religious conflicts. Christian and Muslim leaders, for example, have been instrumental in promoting interfaith dialogues and collaborative initiatives that reduce tensions and promote peaceful coexistence. These efforts demonstrate the potential of religious teachings to influence societal behaviour positively and contribute to sustainable peace and security.

Empirical Review

Egbefo (2014) explores religion's role in enhancing national security and promoting harmonious coexistence in Nigeria, contrasting international ideals with local realities. The study employs qualitative methods, including library research and oral sources, to clarify concepts and contribute to existing literature. It examines Nigeria's state, the interplay of religion with national security and coexistence, and identifies religious threats. The paper proposes roles for religions in national security using Evolutionary, Marxist, and Functional theories, highlighting seven dimensions of human security threats in Nigeria. It envisions future security dynamics and offers recommendations emphasizing the collective responsibility of government, religious bodies, corporations, and the international community in ensuring national welfare and security.

Osajie (2020) examines the potential of religious values and leadership in addressing societal challenges that hinder peace and security for sustainable development in Nigeria. The paper emphasizes religion's role in fostering moral conduct and promoting virtues essential for societal harmony. It conducts a historical and critical analysis of factors impacting national peace and security, including corruption, leadership failures, moral decline, insecurity, and religious crises. The study concludes by advocating for religious leaders and groups to utilize theological perspectives to enhance peace and security, thereby facilitating peaceful coexistence and advancing the nation's aspirations for sustainable development.

Sulaiman (2012) argues that separating religious and moral education is impractical due to their intertwined historical roots. The paper stresses the vital role of religious education in fostering moral values and civic virtues essential for a cohesive society in Nigeria. It examines religious concepts of peace and security, emphasizing their critical importance in the country. Methodologically, the study employs both primary and secondary sources to underscore the significance of religious

education in promoting peace, security, and sustainable development. Sulaiman highlights Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion as pivotal in shaping societal values. The paper concludes that religious education is indispensable for Nigeria's development, advocating for its compulsory reintroduction across all educational levels to combat religious intolerance and promote genuine religious teachings.

Mordi & Sunday (2020) explore the nexus between religion and national security in Nigeria, asserting that religion, if properly harnessed, can significantly contribute to societal development. The paper underscores the critical role of religion in fostering national security and peaceful co-existence amidst Nigeria's persistent security challenges. It emphasizes that security is fundamental for economic stability, social cohesion, and overall national development. The authors argue through logical syllogism that religion, by promoting unity through shared values and ancestry, can enhance national cohesion. The study concludes with actionable recommendations aimed at leveraging religion effectively to bolster national security and social harmony.

Ebonyi (2018) discusses how religion has increasingly become central to violent conflicts globally over the past two decades, posing significant security threats post-Cold War. In Nigeria, religious conflicts manifest as inter-religious or intra-religious disputes, both of which severely impact internal security. Using secondary sources like online journals, government reports, and books, the paper defines key concepts and analyses the dynamics of religious conflicts in Nigeria. It highlights these conflicts' detrimental effects on national unity, stability, security forces, economic activities, and population displacement, emphasizing their grave implications for Nigeria's corporate existence.

Oduwale & Fadeyi (2012) examine the impact of religious fanaticism on national security in Nigeria. It highlights how religious conflicts

fuelled by extremism and intolerance have contributed significantly to insecurity in the country. The study identifies several key factors behind this phenomenon, including aggressive evangelism, divergent interpretations of religious doctrines, economic hardship, and the rise of exploitative religious leaders. These issues erode traditional religious values and institutions, exacerbating social instability and endangering lives and property. The paper calls for comprehensive measures to address these challenges, emphasizing the need for poverty alleviation, secular governance, enhanced security infrastructure, and strengthened societal institutions to foster peace and security in Nigeria.

Dimobika & Onyemuwa (2020) highlight global concerns over rising security threats linked to religious extremism and fundamentalism, evident in Nigeria and worldwide. Religion, once considered low-risk, now fuels insecurity, violence, insurgency, and terrorism. Using historical phenomenology, the study shows religion's ambivalent role—either enhancing or endangering security—amid political, economic, ethnic, or territorial tensions exploiting it. Recommendations stress inclusiveness and ethical leadership by governments and religious figures to redefine religion as a promoter of peace, not conflict.

3. Methodology

This study uses qualitative approach to examine the role of religious institutions in ensuring internal security and their potential to influence harmonious coexistence and conflict resolution. Using secondary data sources such as case studies, academic literature, and reports, it captures insights into the relationship between religious institutions and internal security. Data is analyzed through thematic and content analysis, identifying patterns and examining the context of relevant concepts. Findings are presented through narrative descriptions, highlighting the complexities between religious institutions and security. The discussion provides a comprehensive analysis, exploring contributions and challenges, and concludes with actionable recommendations for policymakers to enhance internal security in Nigeria.

4. Findings and Discussion

Presentation of Findings

1. Egbefo (2014) and Mordi & Sunday (2020) focus on how religion can enhance national security by fostering unity, promoting shared values, and contributing to societal cohesion. They emphasize the positive roles religion can play in mitigating security threats and promoting peace.

2. Osajie (2020) and Sulaiman (2012) explore the role of religious values and education in fostering moral conduct, societal harmony, and sustainable development. They advocate for the integration of religious teachings to address societal challenges and promote peaceful coexistence.

3. Ebonyi (2018), Oduwale & Fadeyi (2012), and Dimobika & Onyemuwa (2020) delve into the detrimental effects of religious conflicts on internal security in Nigeria. They analyze the dynamics of religious conflicts, their impacts on national unity, stability, economic activities, and population displacement.

Discussion

Role of Religious Institutions in Ensuring Internal Security in Nigeria

Religious institutions in Nigeria assume pivotal roles in safeguarding internal security through multifaceted contributions that promote peace, ethical behaviour, and societal stability. Egbefo (2014) underscores their significant function as moral compasses within communities, guiding adherents towards upholding societal norms and values that discourage criminal behaviour and enhance social cohesion. By instilling moral principles rooted in religious teachings, these institutions not only shape individual conduct but also cultivate a collective ethos that fosters law-abiding behaviour and mutual respect among citizens.

Furthermore, Osajie (2020) elaborates on the role of religious leaders in cultivating harmonious coexistence across diverse religious communities. These leaders actively promote virtues such as compassion, tolerance, and forgiveness, which are essential for bridging interfaith divides and mitigating tensions. Their teachings and pastoral guidance often address underlying societal issues such as corruption, inequality, and moral decline, which can be catalysts for conflict. By addressing these root causes, religious institutions contribute to creating a conducive environment for peace and security.

Moreover, through community engagement initiatives, religious institutions serve as platforms for promoting dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting parties. They advocate for peaceful resolutions to disputes and participate in mediation efforts to mitigate conflicts before they escalate. This proactive involvement not only helps in resolving immediate tensions but also builds long-term resilience against communal strife. In essence, the combined efforts of religious institutions in advocating for peace, promoting ethical conduct, and fostering interfaith dialogue play a critical role in ensuring internal security in Nigeria. Their influence extends beyond religious boundaries to encompass broader societal issues, thereby contributing to the overall stability and well-being of the nation.

Contribution of Religious Institutions to Harmonious Coexistence and Conflict Resolution

Religious institutions in Nigeria play a crucial role in promoting harmonious coexistence and resolving conflicts by leveraging their influence to foster dialogue, tolerance, and collaboration across diverse religious communities. Sulaiman (2012) emphasizes the educational function of religious institutions, particularly through religious education programs that instil values of peace and security among their adherents. By integrating teachings on tolerance and mutual respect, these institutions contribute to shaping attitudes and behaviours that support peaceful

interactions and mitigate potential conflicts. Mordi & Sunday (2020) further underscore the role of religious leaders in enhancing national security through their efforts in promoting unity and understanding among different religious groups. Through interfaith dialogue and collaborative initiatives, religious leaders bridge divides and cultivate shared values that promote social cohesion and reduce tensions. Their leadership in advocating for peaceful resolutions to religious conflicts helps in fostering a climate of reconciliation and stability.

Ebonyi (2018) highlights the proactive stance of religious institutions in addressing religious conflicts by advocating for peace and reconciliation initiatives. These efforts include mediation between conflicting parties, promoting understanding of religious differences, and encouraging dialogue as a means to resolve disputes peacefully. By actively engaging in conflict resolution processes, religious institutions contribute to building trust and fostering sustainable peace within communities. Additionally, Oduwale & Fadeyi (2012) emphasize the role of religious institutions in countering extremism and promoting moderation to combat radical ideologies that threaten national security. Through preaching messages of tolerance, rejecting extremism, and promoting moderation, religious leaders play a critical role in dissuading followers from adopting radicalized viewpoints that could escalate tensions and lead to violence.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the findings from various studies underscore the critical role of religious institutions in Nigeria's internal security and harmonious coexistence. They serve as moral guides, promoting ethical behaviour and societal stability. Through educational initiatives and interfaith dialogue, religious institutions contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding, addressing underlying causes of tension such as corruption and extremism. Overall, their efforts highlight the potential for

religious institutions to foster sustainable internal security in Nigeria by promoting unity, tolerance, and peace across diverse religious communities. In the light of findings, recommendations become imperative to improve the status quo as presented hereunder.

1. Policymakers should integrate religious leaders into national security frameworks, ensuring their involvement in conflict mediation and peacebuilding initiatives.

2. Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) should facilitate regular interfaith dialogues at local and national levels to enhance understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among different religious communities.

3. State Governments should provide training programs for religious leaders on conflict resolution, mediation skills, and promoting peace within their congregations and communities.

4. State and Religious leaders should encourage grassroots initiatives that promote dialogue and cooperation among religious groups, emphasizing shared values and goals.

5. Legislative Councils at all levels should strengthen legal frameworks to protect religious freedom and prevent discrimination, ensuring fair treatment of all religious communities under the law.

6. Religious institutions should always launch campaigns to promote religious tolerance and debunk extremist ideologies through media, education, and community outreach.

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PERPETUATION OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS: THE NORTHERN PLATEAU ZONE EXPERIENCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Since the 1960s, African states have passed through different conflicts with reasons such as politics, ethnic, religious, and resource-based conflicts such as border or land disputes, and several other causes. The Northern Senatorial zone of Plateau State, Nigeria has witnessed several violent conflicts between 2001 and 2023 with several scholars assessing the immediate causes and its impact without looking at the remote causes. This study examines the history of conflicts in the Northern Plateau Senatorial zone and its persistent nature with its root causes. The study adopted history research method with specific objectives to traced the root cause of conflicts in Northern Plateau and proffer recommendations. which comprised primary and secondary sources. Data was obtained from oral sources. Also, books and Journals from the University of Jos and the National Library Jos branch provided quality data. The conflict in the Northern Plateau evolved from instances of clashes and skirmishes as a result of spontaneous ethnic and religious provocations and reactions to planned attacks between Christians and Muslins in Jos North and South LGAs starting from 2001. The study revealed that the root cause of conflicts in the Northern Plateau was the British colonial policies of the 1900s, which led to the massive influx of immigrants that settled permanently in the area. It is discovered that the conflict in Northern Plateau has led to pervasive insecurity of lives and property. The study strongly recommends provision of adequate security in the communities and apprehension and punishment of perpetrators.

Keywords: Africa, Conflict, War, Ethnicity, Religion, Herder, Farmer

1. Introduction

Conflicts in Africa cannot be discussed in isolation from colonial experience as it serves as the root cause and the seed of the current conflicts in the continent. At the end of the 19th century, the colonial powers partitioned the previously free constituent parts of Africa joining unrelated areas and people into territorial units

(Olaosebikan, 2010). The establishment of new states was therefore based on artificial borders and boundaries agreed upon by colonial powers at the Berlin conference, ignoring the natural lines of ethnic, cultural, historical and religious groups (Ejimofor, (1987). Consequently, these actions led to contestations by groups which gave rise to intra and inter-state conflicts, particularly with demands for autonomy from dominant ethnic groups and resources/political independence from the regimes of the newly created states. The challenge was compounded by the fact that the framework of colonial laws and institutions had been designed to exploit local divisions rather than to overcome them (Sharamo & Mesfin; 2011). The need to maintain intact this fragile, disparate and multi-ethnic entity led to excessive centralization of economic and political powers which in turn stimulated widespread infringement upon local cultures and led to religious coercion and political repression (Sharamo & Mesfin, 2011).

Meredith (2011) argues that African countries such as Angola, Congo, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia and Eritrea plunged into wars after independence and during the Cold War period. Apart from the challenges of war, there were other conflicts that bedevilled Africa. For example, Congo Brazzaville was convulsed by tribal strife that brought an end to its multi-party politics experiment while the Central African Republic was also torn apart by tribal strife. In Cote d'Ivoire, a succession of leaders stirred up ethnic and religious divisions for their purposes, setting Christian Southerners against Muslim Northerners, eventually precipitating a civil war that engulfed part of Abidjan and split the country apart. In Uganda, Museveni's army commanders were busy plundering in Congo, and Joseph Konyo's atavistic cult 'The Lord Resistance Army' continued murdering and abducting several people in Acholiland. Meredith (2011) states that the turn of the new millennium saw Africa engulfed in more than ten major conflicts and one-fifth of Africans lived in countries battered by war, with some 12 million people classified as refugees. This was the condition found in Nigeria, especially, in the

Northern part of the country, which was tossed by ethnic and religious rift. Plateau State was a major epicenter of these conflicts in the North and the root of these conflicts are traced to the British colonial policies between 1900 and 1960.

In Plateau State, the outbreak of violent conflict within the city of Jos from 2001 among Muslims and Christians has been brutal, disastrous and endemic, (Higazi, 2011), this later spread to other local council areas across the state. Some of the areas that experienced the backlash were Riyom, Barkin Ladi, and Jos South Local Government Areas. These were the most affected LGAs in the Northern part of Plateau State, which form the context of this study. The relationship between Muslims and Christians, and between herders and the farmers in these areas degenerated after the 2001 crisis through 2023. The recurrent nature of ethno-religious conflicts in the area is intricately linked with history, process and distortion inherent in the state formation from the colonial to the post-colonial period. Since the beginning of the post-colonial period, poverty, class interest and manipulation in the context of the struggle for the control of state power and scarce resources have led to conflicts of varying proportions, characters and dimensions in the area.

The relationship that existed among these groups of people metamorphosed from that of mutual interdependence and complimentary to hatred, violence and conflict. The Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Councils became the epicentre of the farmer-pastoralist conflict in Plateau State. For example, in 2012, after a midnight raid and massacre of 50 villagers in Riyom LGA, the mass burial led to another major attack by suspected pastoralists, who were armed with sophisticated weapons. That incident led to the death of a serving Senator, Gyang Dantong and Hon. Gyang Danfulani a Member of the Plateau State House of Assembly. This incident ignited further attacks and conflict in Riyom, Barkin Ladi and Bassa LGAs. Within the period under review, warring parties engaged each other in open confrontational warfare, secret or guerrilla attacks and wanton destruction of lives and

property, displacement of civilian populations and the informal and unofficial partitioning of settlements along ethnic and religious fault lines (Best, 2006).

Northern Plateau has witnessed several conflicts between 2001 and 2023 most of which are referred to today as ethno-religious conflicts, while in the Riyom, Bassa and Barkin Ladi areas, herder-farmer conflicts form the basis of their conflicts. While ethnicity has contributed to the conflicts, religion has always added enormous impetus to the conflicts. It is often used as a variable for identity which has worsened the protracted conflicts in the area and has led to the death of thousands of people, and the displacement of men, women and children into IDPs across the Northern part of Plateau. It has also led to the destruction of businesses and sources of livelihood.

2. Problematique

Ethnic and religious conflicts cum herder-farmer conflicts in the Northern part of Plateau State since 2001 have caused severe economic, social and political consequences on the citizens and the government through displacement, deaths, huge financial loss by the government and a total collapse of the people's livelihoods. Since Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999, Plateau State, North Central Nigeria has become a vulnerable flashpoint of violent conflicts. The state which had hitherto been one of the most relatively peaceful in Nigeria has been deeply enmeshed and suffused in political and ethno-religious conflicts characterized by genocidal attacks, bombing, maiming and killing of several persons, loss of business investments and properties worth several billions of naira. Jos, the state capital and other parts of the state witnessed a series of violent conflicts which has been tied to issues surrounding ethno-religious identity, citizenship-indigeneship dichotomy and political differences. The roots of these conflicts can be tied to British colonial economic policies in the former Jos Division and Plateau Province as a result of tin mining by colonial mining companies which pulled in immigrants from

Northern Nigeria and other parts of the country to Jos. These led to the emergence of large Hausa and Fulani settlements in the Northern part of Plateau State. Intra and inter-group relations between the indigenous groups such as the Afizere, Anaguta, Berom, Irgiwe, Rukuba, Buji and Amo were fluid (from mutualism to conflict). The conflictual aspect led to the 2001 violent conflict that spread across the state. This conflict has lingered up to 2023 with huge impacts on the belligerent and the government.

3. Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to trace the root cause of conflicts Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas in Northern Plateau and proffer recommendations. The specific objectives are to:

i.   Identify the causes of the conflicts in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs of Plateau State
ii. Identidy the dimensions of insecurity in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs of Plareau State
iii. Make recommendations for arrest and punishment of actors in the conflict as well as ensure justice for the victims

4. Research questions

It is good to ask the following questions:

i.   What were the causes and course of conflicts in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs of Plateau State?
ii. How did the conflict affect Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs and Nothern part of Plateau State in the period under review?
iii. What recommendations can be proffered to ensure parpetrators are brought to justice and victims compensated?

5. Conceptual Framework

5.1 The Concept of Conflict

Conflict arises from the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals or groups in defined social and physical environments. Changes in the social environment, such as access to new political

positions, or perceptions of new resources arising from development in the physical environment, are fertile grounds for conflicts involving individuals and groups who are interested in using these new resources to achieve their goals. By thus recognizing the inherent nature of conflict in heterogeneous and competitive situations, people, more or less compellingly, sustain their societies as ongoing social systems through the resolution, transformation and management of conflicts. (Nandes & Akande, 2015).

One of the most quoted traditional definitions of conflict regards it as "a struggle over values, claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the opponents aim to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rivals" (Coser, 1995:8). In the same direction, Park and Burgess, cited in Abdu (2010:146), argue that "conflict is designed to resolve divergent dualism and achieve some kind of unity even if it is through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties". Conflict may not be regarded only in a negative light of dysfunctional or disjunctive process and a breakdown of communication as some scholars tend to suggest. (Lundgerg, 2006). Conflict is a conscious act involving personal or group contact and communication. Together with, though distinct from competition, struggle, and contest, etc. conflict is a normal process of interaction particularly in complex societies in which resources are usually scarce. Although conflict may generally exist wherever incompatible activities occur, and may result in a win-lose situation; the resolution, transformation and management of conflict may produce a "win-win" outcome.

Hence, Coser's elaborate definition of conflict becomes a useful clarification:

> Social conflict may be defined as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate their rival. Such conflict may take place between individuals,

between collectivities, or between individuals and collectivities. Inter-group as well as intra-group conflicts are perennial features of social life. (Coser, 1999).

Conflict can hardly be discussed outside the concept of pluralism. As Smooha cited in Abdu (2010) points out, both pluralism and conflict are related in complex ways. Furnivally (2000) argued that plural societies are vulnerable to conflicts and this is as a result of divergences in goals. He used the "Medley people", a society in Burma and Java, where Europeans, Chinese Indians and the indigenous groups were perceived to "mix but do not combine," to depict a situation of co-existing diverse and cultural arrangements involving dominance and subordination in the same social setting. This idea of pluralism was picked up for systematic and serious analysis by several scholars, for example, Kuper & Smith cited in Ibrahim (2010) and various contributors. Recent and current ideas of pluralism regard it as multidisciplinary and multidimensional and define it in the context of cultural diversity and social segmentation of an encapsulating society.

5.2 Insecurity

The concept of insecurity according to Ali (2013) is "the state of fear or anxiety, stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." It refers to a lack of adequate 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 and social security. Insecurity connotes absence of safety, danger, hazard, uncertainty and lack of protection. As affirmed by Beland (2013), it is a state of fear or anxiety as a result of absence of protection. Adeola and Oluyemi (2012) provide two definitions of insecurity. First, as the condition of being subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury and secondly, as the condition of being vulnerable to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague

unpleasant emotion that is experienced in expectation of unfortunate incident. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. As far as this paper is concerned insecurity is defined as a breach of peace and security.

5.3 Internal displacement

This refers to a much broader concept which encompasses millions more persons displaced by natural disasters and development projects. According to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, internally displaced persons (also known as "IDPs") are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or to avoid the effects of armed conflict. Abdulazeez (2016). The main triggers of displacement include armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, human rights violations, sudden onset disasters and slow onset disasters.

Development investments, such as large infrastructure or urban renewal projects, can also cause displacement and human rights violations at a large scale. In addition to the triggers, there are a range of structural conditions and underlying drivers of displacement: poverty and inequality, fragile governance, rapid urbanization, climate change and environmental degradation are some of these. Internal displacement can be caused by multiple and overlapping factors. In such contexts, it can be even more difficult to unpack the root causes of displacement and find solutions to it. What we see in reality is that, often there is an inextricable accumulation or sequence of different drivers and factors that trigger displacement and a single cause cannot be assigned anymore. For example, natural disasters (such as flooding, climate change, earthquakes), development, mining and conflicts.

6. Dimensions of the Conflicts in Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs

The genesis of over two decades of violent conflict in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas began in the metropolitan city of Jos the state capital. This source of the conflict is deeply rooted in the historical process by which the city emerged and developed. Within this context, patterns of migration and inter-group relations, in addition to the decisive role of tin mining under colonial administration all combined to help the socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-political life of the people living in Jos and the state. It is pertinent to point out three major ethnic groups: the Afizere, Anaguta and Berom who widely embraced Christianity from European missionaries attested to have inhabited the Jos area since time immemorial. (Best, 2006). As Mangvwat (1999) called them autochthonous groups. Other ethnic groups, especially the Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Idoma, Tiv, Urhobo and many others were largely brought into Jos for tin mining activities by the colonialists in the early 1920s when labour was in higher demand by the expatriate companies on the minefields. Jacobs (1998) stressed that a large number of migrant labour was obtained from places such as the Chad region, Niger and even Cameroon (Jacobs, 1998).

Before the conquest by the British, the Jos Plateau societies and adjoining lowlands were virtually independent and autonomous of both Bauchi and Zazzau emirates due to the rocky terrain of the area and strong resistance put up by the Plateau highland peoples against the Jihadists. (Nengel, 2001). The conquest and colonization of the Plateau area by the British led to the exploitation of natural resources by the colonial mining company (ATMN), which altered the traditional pattern of human settlement during the twentieth century. (Ikime, 1977). Wherever tin was discovered, communications and road networks were provided to facilitate the exploration and exploitation of the tin ore. This in turn attracted settlement and served as an agency for congregating large populations along the roads,

tin mines and routes. These towns became areas of population concentration and rapid development. Gonyok (1987) states that The British tin mining industry established on the Jos Plateau at the beginning of the twentieth century was the single largest employer of labour. (Gonyok, 1987). Larab (2011) argues that the existence of rich tin deposits at the onset of the colonial period drew many European companies and a massive influx of migrants into the area. Therefore, colonialism and its economic policies led to the emergence of Hausa communities in Jos, Barkin Ladi, Bassa, and Bukuru. Fulani herders established settlements in Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Bassa and Jos South, Jos East and Jos North LGAs. However, the early settlements in these areas are linked to the Afizere, Anaguta and Berom through ancient Nok civilization and Stone Age civilization. (Larab, 2011). The cohabitation of these groups of people from the colonial period was peaceful but became fierce and violent in the post-colonial period, especially in 1994 and 2001.

Indigenous inhabitants of Plateau State had coexisted with their visitors until the early 1990s (precisely 1991) when the then military government under General Ibrahim Babangida Badamasi created Jos North Local Government out of Jos Local Government (Best, 2007) and the interpretation given to this delineation of wards and creation of an area council by the Afizere, Anaguta and Berom left so much to be desired. This action ingrained the seeds of conflict because the Hausa-Fulani community in Jos viewed the creation of the new local government area as a welcome development whereas the indigenous groups opposed this seeing it as an attempt by the Federal Military Government of IBB to give political leverage to the Hausa/Fulani Muslim community in Jos at the expense of the owners of Jos, neglecting the cultural and demographic factors which were quite important for such an exercise (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

The crisis of 2011 was a particularly bloody year in Jos. The victims and casualties run into hundreds in the first six months of the year. In fact, between 15 August and 12 September, more than 150 people lost their lives, with about 50 records in a week. Victims of the gruesome killings included pregnant women, children and an entire family. The sudden upsurge of violence in this particular period also went along with silent killings. At the height of these attacks in jos metropolis, it spiralded to oher parts of the state which led to the dead of two prominent Berom sons (Hon. Gyang Dantong and Gyang Fulani) in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area. (Dickson, Juliet & Ibrahim, 2019).

Figure 1: Bomb Explosion

Source: Gettyimages.com, 2003

6.1 Barkin Ladi Local Government Area

The spread of violent conflict from Jos to Barkin Ladi and other LGAs was swift after the outbreak of Jos crisis in 2001. Prior to the September 7, 2001 Jos crisis, Barkin Ladi had not experienced open violent conflict except conflicts associated with farmers-pastoralists just like other areas in the Benue valley which were often resolved amicably through the functionality of traditional institutions. Dickson, Juliet & Ibrahim (2019) argues that the genesis of the skirmishes in Barkin Ladi appears similar in many respects even though, with peculiar circumstances. It is often a disagreement between the locals and Fulani herdsmen or others tagged settlers which degenerate easily into a sectarian dispute resulting in a cycle of violence. The side initially at the receiving end mobilizes for reprisals, then counter-reprisals and so it continues (Turaki, 2015).

The conflict in Barkin Ladi LGA started in Heipang District in 2001 as a result of a Fulani herder, Mallam Zumudi who was acting as a town crier to the Sarkin Hausawa, he announced thus: "Sarkin Hausawa is appealing to the residents of Heipang to remain calm in their houses and to continue to live in peace without fear, to avoid what happened in Jos from escalating in Heipang. All should remain calm, he kept reiterating" (Oral Interview, 2023). In the course of appealing for calmness, he became the first victim to be killed in Heipang. This unfortunate event led to the un-wanton destruction of lives and properties on both sides of the divide. Being the minority, the Fulani fled the district to adjoining villages. Some went to Manjahotta, which the area later served as a Fulani camp; this equally led to the sacking of most Berom people in the area. The Fulani from Heipang district left with their cattle, but this development would lead to intense cattle rustling in different districts of Barkin Ladi by criminal elements (Oral Interview, 2023). In September, the conflict spread to other areas such as Bakin Kogi in Foron district, resulting in the killing of a Berom woman by Fulani men which led the Fulani to evacuate some villages of Foron. This development accounted for the origin of the hostility between the Berom and Fulani in Foron (Oral Interview, 2023).

In 2012, Barkin Ladi witnessed another outbreak of hostilities in Kakuruk village and Matse, a border area between Riyom and Barkin Ladi Local Governments Areas. Similarly, Kakuruk, a village under Gashish was stormed with violence on 9th July, 2012. Sixty-three (63) persons were killed during this conflict and the mass burial, forty-three (43) persons were also killed along with the then-Senator representing Plateau North Senatorial Zone in the National Assembly (Gyang Dantong) and the then-member serving and representing Barkin Ladi at the State House of Assembly (Gyang Fulani). (Lomang, 2013). Lomang (2013) went further to state that a day after this hostility, one hundred and fifty (150) dead bodies were discovered in the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) building. The victims were killed in an inferno as the attackers were said to have stood by to shoot anyone who tried to escape (Dickson, Juliet & Ibrahim, 2019). The Meyeti-Allah Cattle Breeders Association dismissed the act as propaganda. The group repeatedly denied the allegation that they were behind the frequent attacks and also denied the allegation that some of them were among the cattle rustlers. The then Secretary, of Plateau State Chapter of the Meyeti- Allah Cattle Breeders Association (MACBAN), Mohamadu Nuru Abdulahi alleged that the crisis of Barkin Ladi Local Government Area had continued because those who were benefiting from it would not give up (Oral Interview, 2023).

On the 26th of November 2013, four (4) communities were attacked in one night where thirteen (13) persons were killed in Katu Kapang, eight (8) persons at Daron, nine (9) at Tul and seven (7) at Rawuwu (Daily Trust, 28, September, 2013). A week after, the Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Plateau State Chapter, Soja Bewarang on the 3rd December, 2013, officiated a mass burial of 51 persons, killed at Talu area of the same local government with victims predominantly pregnant women, children, and aged persons who could not run. Also, on 20th June 2013,

there was a hostile confrontation in the central area of the Local Government Area, one (1) person was killed and thirteen 13 others were injured on the 3rd of July, 2013 two (2) weeks after the incident, two (2) women were killed at Gwarang. On the 20th of April and 3rd of May, 2013, Lukfie and Ruku were attacked respectively by gunmen suspected to be Fulani herdsmen. (Dickson, Juliet, & Ibrahim, 2019). The whole villages were ransacked, six (6) persons died in the attack and most of the houses in the two communities were razed down including two churches and a public-owned school. Kantoma and Ganan Daje border villages with Mangu were also attacked on the 3rd of August, 2013. In the attack, ten (10) persons were killed, seven (7) houses were also razed and different crops were destroyed (Turaki, 2015).

The coming into power of Governor Lalong in 2015 witnessed a palpable peace, but attacks continued in 2017. It first started in Bassa on 3rd October 2017 when a young Fulani herder was murdered by an Irigwe man (Danladi, 2017). The culprit was arrested, but there was a reprisal attack, which led to the deaths of 11 persons. Foron was attacked and 11 people were found dead, as several houses were set ablaze. In 2018, there were cases of cattle rustling and pocket attacks in Barkin Ladi LGA. The Fulani herders in villages such as Gashish, Sho, and Foron complained of the continuous increase in the incidences of cattle rustling in their domain. The Fulani accused the Berom youth as the suspects carrying out such acts (Oral Interview, 2023). The Berom also complained of how their cattle were rustled and accused the Fulani herders as the suspects too. (Oral Interview, 2023). This blame game continued without the arrest of suspects. The attacks in Barkin Ladi continued through 2023 and went on without arrest by the security. The seeming inaction and mismanagement of the conflicts by the state Governor, Simon Bako Lalong who was busy campaigning for his party as the Director General of the APC presidential flagbearer for the 2023 elections in Nigeria made the APC to lose elections to the PDP in

Plateau State. The post-2023 elections witnessed increased attacks on communities across Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Mangu and Bokkos in the central Plateau.

6.2 Riyom Local Government Area

Riyom local government has suffered from series of conflicts. Its headquarters is in the town of Riyom and it is situated in the North-West of the State, 50 km from the State capital. It is predominantly occupied by the Berom ethnic group. Ganawuri and Atakar ethnic groups constituted the minority with the Fulani herders. The Local Government Area has boundaries with Kaduna and Nasarawa State, Bassa, Jos South and Barkin Ladi LGAs. It is the gateway to the State when coming from the East and Abuja. (PIDAN, 2010). The conflicts in the Riyom Local Government Area picked off shortly after the Jos conflict of 2001 and differ in terms of the causal factors. The Local Government is one of the four Local Government Areas clustered around the city of Jos that were under a state of emergency from December 2011 to June 2012. The conflict in the area was purely ethnic and religious between the Berom farmers and Fulani herder groups in the community. The conflict started on the 27th of March 2010 at Byei village, which was similar to the one launched on Dogo Nahawa village (Sunday & Nwogabaga, 2014). An eyewitness narrated that:

> The attackers of the 27th March, carted away one hundred and seventy (170) cows and six women were gruesomely killed, including a pregnant woman who was burnt with another child strapped to her back. He went further to explain that five others were injured and taken to the Vom Christian Hospital for treatment. (Oral Interview, 2023).

Dauda (2010) acknowledged that the attackers dressed in military uniforms launched the attack at about 1.00 am, setting houses ablaze and attacking the people as they ran out of their dwellings. On the 28th of April 2011, seven (7) Farmers were attacked and killed at Rim village

and on the 23rd of the same month, seven farmers were attacked and killed at Rahoss village of Riyom and on the 11th, of August of the same year, a fifty (50) year old man was killed at Jol Village from Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State. After a family of eight (8) was attacked and killed at Heipang, a bomb was found at the centre of Riyom Main Market on the 5th of September, 2011. (Oral Interview, 2023).

On the 2nd of May, 2012, thirteen (13) persons were killed in a coordinated attack in Riyom villages of Tahoss, Bangai, Sopp, Angwan Werem, Dajol and Gwon. (Dickson, Juliet, & Ibrahim, 2019). An eyewitness who lost his younger brother in the carnage stressed that thirty (30) houses were burnt, farm produce and religious centres were also destroyed. He went further and explained:

> The Fulani came in a large number. Their mode of attack is that they will start shooting from a distance to scare the villagers and as soon as the villagers run out of fear, they will come out and set our houses ablaze. In my village alone, they burnt more than ten (10) houses during the attack. (Oral Interview, 2023).

In an interview with a former member of the Plateau State House of Assembly (PSHA), Emmanuel Jugul who held from the area said:

> The government at the Federal and State levels did not help matters. The attack was a coordinated type with serious bloodletting. When the attack started to its end, the security agencies were not serious with their job or not sincere at all. This is because they did nothing to stop the conflict in the villages of Riyom Local Government Area. (Oral Interview, 2023).

On the 7th and 8th of July, 2012, there were several clashes between the herding Fulani and Berom farmers in Riyom. In the attacks, dozens of people were killed and injured in the skirmish and the conflict forced more than 5,500 people to flee their homes. After the attack, fifty (50) bodies were also discovered burnt in a church at Matse village of Riyom Local Government Area of the State, a day after the funeral of sixty-three (63) persons killed at Kakuruk village in Barkin Ladi Local Government Area, a neighbouring Local Government of Riyom Local Government Area. (Dickson, Juliet, & Ibrahim, 2019). On the 8th of October 2012, Sopp village was attacked and 17 persons were reported dead. Several houses and farm crops were also destroyed. The nature of the violent attacks in Riyom Local Government Area is reprisal and cattle rustling. (Dickson, Juliet, & Ibrahim, 2019). The destruction of farm crops by cattle is the major cause of this conflict. It has affected a lot of socio-economic activities in the local government area such as schools, trading and commerce.

A day after the attack on the 8th of October 2012, Saleh Baleri, a leader of the State Meyeiti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN) condemned the view that the act was carried out by the Fulani herders. He said Berom Christians were just trying to carry out ethnic and religious cleansing of the Fulani in the State. The Fulani herders are not what they are mostly being perceived by many people in the State. (Radio, Nigeria, 2012). In 2013, Bachit village was attacked on the 13th of January and four (4) persons were killed. On the 22nd March of the same year, twenty-three (23) persons were also killed at Atakar village of Ganawuri district of Riyom Local Government Area. A few months later, one John Dariya, a PDP ward chairman of Sharubutu as well as his wife were killed in the village of Rim. (Oral interview, Dadu, 2021). Data from the Nigerian Watch (NW), Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and Armed Conflict Location, and Event Data (ACLED) in 2013, all suggested that the violence in Riyom spiked after the state of emergency was lifted in June 2012 and they further states that issues such as cattle rustling, destruction of farm products and reprisal attacks were the major cause of conflicts in Riyom in 2013. Commenting on the 2013 conflict in Riyom, Piyo Josephine, the then

chairperson of the local government stressed that:

> The land is administered by the state government on behalf of the federal government. There are also procedures to follow before obtaining land and grazing areas. Nobody can acquire land by force. Now Mahanga area which belongs to the Berom has been forcefully acquired by the Fulani through conquest. They put a red flag on the land and said it was the land they had acquired by conquest. We have suffered from one attack to the other and many of our houses, schools, churches, markets, and clinics were burnt down by the attackers and most of the villagers in the attacked communities are taking refuge in public facilities at the local government headquarters. (Oral Interview, 2021).

In 2014, over a hundred people were killed in four separate attacks in Shonong village of Riyom Local Government Area of Plateau State between January 6th and 7th February 2014, thirty (30) people sustained various degrees of injuries while hundred (100) cows were stolen within the same period. A month after, Atakar and Jajat villages of Riyom were also attacked, thirty (30) people, including two soldiers were also killed, while scores of others were wounded. (Dickson, Juliet, & Ibrahim, 2019).

On the 21st March 2014, Kaura village was attacked and four persons were found dead. On the 2nd and 4th of October, four (4) persons were confirmed dead at Bachit village of Riyom Local Government Area. On the 12th of October of the same year, another twelve (12) farmers were also found dead in the same community and on the 29th of November, 2014, Rim village was attacked and four (4) persons were confirmed dead. Farm activities and trading were also affected as a result of the attack. (Oral Interview, 2021). Similarly, the then-chairperson also narrated the 2014 ordeal of the people in Riyom. She stated:

I cannot tell you if this is the actual problem or the reason for the continuous attack in Riyom. Even what people regard as fresh or renewed attacks after a break for some time are not the causes because there have been ambushes and silent killings continuously. The security operatives have been trying in their way but they need to do a lot. (Oral Interview, 2021).

In 2015, there were numerous attacks in a lot of villages. Prominent among the attacks were the attacks of 30th March, 10th May, 27th, 28th and 30th at Kwi, Rim, Shonong and Bachit, where several persons were killed by the attackers. These attacks in Riyom usually affect schools, marketplaces and worship centres. Cattle rustling and destruction of farm crops were the basic causes of the uprising. The Plateau State police advised the people to try and settle their differences because they had held a series of meetings and sensitized them on the need for peace. (Radio Nigeria, 2015).

On the 10th of July 2017, some youths of the Joll community were attacked and murdered on their way back home from mining activities by suspected herdsmen. Similarly, on the 24th of October, 2017 16-year-old Susan Daniel and Joel Choji were also killed while returning home from a neighbouring village called Vwak. These series of events equally prompted the arrest of some Fulani herdsmen who were grazing in the farms of the natives by the local vigilante group and handed over to the police in the locality. (Dickson, Juliet, & Ibrahim, 2019). But this did not end the unfortunate experience as a series of attacks went on in 2019 up to 2023. These attacks were heinous, callous and gruesome. The attacks were mostly carried out by militias, in a plan, coordinated and executed with a high level of military professionalism.

7. Major Study Findings

1. The root cause of conflicts in Bakin Ladi and Riyom LGAs as well as other parts of Northern Plateau is traceable to British colonial administration of the Jos

Division and later Plateau Province as a result of the tin mining activities and the influx of immigrants to Jos.

2. The growth in population in Barkin Ladi, Riyom, Bassa, Jos East and South LGAs has increased the contestation for access to land-based resources such as pasture, water, and living space mainly between the farmers and herders respectively.

3. The competition and conflict for scarce resources between farmers and herders in the Northern Plateau has been hijacked by certain criminal elements and politicians. Politicians have utilized this difference to aggravate the conflict to the detriment of the belligerents, Christians and Muslims or farmers and herders.

4. The study discovers that properties such as shops, houses, farms, cows, cars/trucks; among many others were destroyed.

5. A lot of persons were killed and thousands displaced into IDP camps causing trauma to families, men, women and children.

8. Conclusion

Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Governments in particular and Northern Plateau State in general has witnessed several conflicts between 2001 and 2023 most of which are referred to today as ethno-religious conflicts. While in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government areas, herder-farmer conflicts form the basis of their conflicts. Ethnicity has contributed to the conflicts and religion has always added enormous impetus to the conflicts. It is often used as a variable for identity. This has worsened the protracted conflicts in the area which has led to the destruction of businesses and sources of livelihood and death of thousands of people, and the displacement of men, women and children into IDPs across the Northern part of Plateau.

9. Recommendations

Arising from the above findings, the study recommends that both the federal and state governments should ensure they provide adequate security to affected communities; traditional, religious and communities leaders should continue to preach peaceful coexistence among citizens of the communities; government should ensure appropriate punishment for actors in the conflict, justice and compensation for victims of the conflict and freedom for all Plateau people and settlers alike to participate in economic, social and political activities.

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EVALUATING CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MECHANISM FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

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Abstract

Confidence-building is critical to the operation of a crisis management, designed to address the perpetual eruption of socio-politico crisis in Nigeria's polity. But the confidence-building mechanism in crisis management appears waning, given the frequency of crisis occurrence and its implications for sustainable development. This paper evaluated confidence-building measures for crisis management within Nigeria's socio-politico space, considering the spate of crises that pitch terrorist, abductionist and pressure groups against both society and government. The paper adopted a qualitative design, using thematic exploration and contextual analysis. Sources of qualitative data are essentially secondary from extant literature. The study relied on butterfly theory and contingency theory as theoretical framework. Both theories align with strategies to stem crisis in Nigeria's multi-ethnic ecosystems. From analysis, it was found that successive governments have not achieved any sustainable crisis resolution, owing to aggrieved parties' loss of confidence in government's crisis resolution mechanism. In conclusion, although each confidence-building measure has its strengths and weaknesses, government's politicization of issues and processes is the bane of its integrity. Among the recommendations, the paper emphasized entrenchment of good governance and rule of law as confidence-building principles and as a means to achieving enduring crisis resolution in the polity.

Keywords: Crisis, Mechanism, Management, Confidence-building, Evaluation

1. Introduction

Like conflict, crisis is an inevitable feature in societies. It is inevitable because of differences in perception and the struggle for the acquisition and possession of resources. The emergence of crisis is traceable to diverse reasons and objectives beyond the scope of this paper. But suffice it to assert that crisis occurrence is multi-dimensional for which reason a crisis management system is imperative (Onwe & Nwogbaga, 2014)**.** Most multi-ethnic societies more often manifest crisis across all levels, and studies in crisis management have shown that the quest for crisis resolution must demonstrate evidence of reliable confidence-building mechanism. Intractable crisis has implications for society growth and development. Indeed, it facilitates the impetus for suspicion, hatred, factionalisation and regional division.

In recent times, within the Nigerian socio-political landscape, terrorist incursion and kidnapping have presented new dimensions of social crisis over which neither compromise nor resolution remains intractable. Obvious reasons for such imbroglio are not unconnected with unpatriotic interests on the one hand, and weakness of strategies amidst lack of confidence and trust on the other hand (Mlambo, 2024). Over the years, Nigeria is beset with religious, political, and ethnical crises. Crisis occurrence and perpetuation have negative implications for socio-economic development across society. For this reason, a system of management need be put in place to

curtail the impact of crisis. This has resulted in the notion of crisis management.

For effective crisis management, confidence and trust among the parties involved are sine qua non. Strategies for crisis resolution may not work effectively in a particular situation for environmental factors or lack of understanding of the underlying background issues, but in the same vein, poor implementation approach is responsible (Muhammad & Ahmed, 2019). However, there can be no assertive declaration that a strategy is bad because it has not produced results in a particular context. Effectiveness of every crisis management strategy is a function of proper planning and understanding of the implementation blueprint. Further, capacity for engagement of the various stakeholders should be an in-built feature of the team whose task is to management the crisis on ground. Mechanism for crisis management need be associated with enduring qualities that boost effectiveness of crisis management and ultimate resolution. There is occurrence of persistent crisis in Nigeria traceable to multidimensional root causes, but the gravity of the Boko Haram terror in the Northern part of Nigeria is most debilitating, given that it aggravates food insecurity, violence and displacement of persons, resulting in poor quality of life and fear (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2024).

Suspicion and lack of trust among parties in other crisis situations tend to becloud the route to crisis resolution, and crisis management for peaceful relationship. This is a social flaw, arising from dissonance in perception of what is ethical. Continued suspicion therefore exacerbates the crisis over which a sustainable resolution is imperative. Nigerian communities are subsumed in religious beliefs, ancient traditions and socio-cultural hegemonies that rural dwellers hardly intend to compromise (Wibisono, Louis & Jetten, 2019). As a result, any encroachment upon these generational beliefs incurs resistance, and further threat revolves into crisis. Similarly, different groups pick up the gauntlet against the government or other ethnic or religious groups over certain interests, resulting in debilitating crisis. The objective of the present paper is to evaluate the mechanism for building confidence to manage crisis in contemporary Nigeria. The rest of the paper is structured in four sections. In what follows, section 2 is a description of the methodology while section 3 is focused on conceptual clarification and theoretical frame. Section 4 is hinged on evaluation of confidence-building measures. In section 5, conclusion and recommendations are provided.

2. Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative approach using thematic exploration, given the behavioural nature of the variables under analysis. The variables are treated contextually. A critical review of confidence-building mechanism is driven by the application of contingency theory and butterfly theory, both of which are relevant to crisis situations. Extant literature provided the sources of qualitative secondary data, which inevitably guided the direction of empirical case. The crisis experience of Nigeria's North-East, North Central, South-West and Eastern zone is a point of focus in the paper, considering the frequency of terrorist insurgency and allied problems.

3. Conceptual Clarification and Theoretical Frame

Crisis Management

In the first instance, crisis is a major disorientation of normal condition or system of existence such that results in danger or harm to stakeholders (Watson, 2023). Crisis is a disruption of the natural course of events to the extent that it upsets the ability of the affected parties to cope. Crisis is characterized by suddenness of occurrence and negative impact. Prolonged and unresolved crisis is inimical to progress for which reason crisis management is inevitable. Knowledge of management, which involves such activities as planning, designing, organizing and strategizing, is pivotal to crisis situation, thus necessitating the objective of forestalling further crisis perpetuation. Crisis management encompasses dealing with immediate effects of crisis; it is infused with

techniques of prevention and elimination of crisis altogether (Adewuyi, Salami & Dogara, 2021). Crisis management describes the process of devising measures of reducing and mitigating the destructive impact of crisis in human communities. Measures of crisis management are contrived according to the nature of such crisis. There is evidently no rigid or universally acclaimed best measure of crisis management.

Consequently, crisis requires prompt response because its impact becomes greater if the crisis is allowed to linger, owing either to inability to cope, lack of capacity infrastructure, shock or inappropriate information. In essence, if the crisis duration lingers, it portends more serious consequences for vulnerable stakeholders. Crisis management is a process and a strategic approach designed to identify and respond to any critical occurrence (Adelaja & Weatherspoon, 2020). The capacity to anticipate a threat is inherently factored into the process of crisis management. In absolute terms, an articulate system of engaging and mitigating threat to survival, threat to livelihood and threat to strong-held resources qualifies for the conception of crisis management (Oshodi, 2018).

The impetus for crisis management originates from the emergence and consequences of unforeseen, unexpected disasters. Crisis is multidimensional and various magnitude. Occurrences that leave or could leave devastating effects on individuals, groups and organizations in any society are technically tagged as crisis. It is appropriate to devise strategies for understanding, curtailing and preventing such crisis. This necessity is responsible largely for the emergence of crisis management. Crisis is risk-embedded, and according to Strother (2016), certain crises may be pre-empted while some others occur without any warning signs. For instance, terrorist attacks, bombing and kidnapping give no warning to vulnerable victims or to security agents. For the same reason, crisis management integrates a four-phase level such as issue management; prevention planning;

crisis analysis; and post crisis review, all of which by implication show that some 'threats can be identified in advance, but some cannot' Strother, 2016:4). Given that most crises, arising from terrorism and life-threatening acts, are unforeseen, the government and law enforcement agencies need to extend efforts to contingency plans with robust capacity to swing into action immediately against any spontaneous threat to public peace, lives and property. Contingency plan for little occurrences that may snowball into large crisis consequences should emerge from an understanding of the Lorenz's butterfly theory.

Confidence Building

Conceptualization of confidence building is perceptual. This characteristic tends to tilt any confidence building approach. However, it is significant to acknowledge that confidence is a critical input factor in crisis management. In the first instance, confidence building is associated with trust, transparency and reliability (Saraki, 2021). Confidence is the state of assurance that a pursuit will be attained, but certain conditions are necessary for attainment of confidence. Confidence empowers the individual or group of individuals who are directly involved in negotiating peace, settlement and stability in a crisis situation. It follows then that confidence is generated by possession of certain privileged information and ability to control both environmental and psychological factors. Confidence is devoid of trepidation, suspicion and cynicism (Mahiga & Nji, 1987). Consequently, openness among the parties in issue is one visible attribute that need be displayed as a sign that the parties are prepared to engage in cooperation and business of resolution. In the context of socio-politico crisis, confidence-building measures are techniques designed to avert hostilities, deter crisis escalation, ease tension and build trust between opposing parties (Higgins, 2021).

Objective of confidence-building is similarly to achieve proper coordination of all stakeholders, attain cooperation and forestall antagonism. In essence, unity of purpose among parties in crisis

is desirable for effective negotiation and mediation. Parties, especially the aggrieved, can only be willing to negotiate when they build a considerably good level of confidence in the mediating personality or group (Bazin, 2014). Confidence-building precedes the main process of negotiation or dialogue between parties in dispute. Certainly, an aggrieved party may not be willing to submit to dialogue, mediation or negotiation once there is no confidence in either the negotiating process or in the mediating party. Landau and Landau (1997) aver that effectiveness of mediation and negotiation is largely influenced by four attributes of confidence-building measures which are willingness to talk, willingness to listen, willingness to respond to the other party's needs, and commitment to improve relationship on a long-term basis. All the attributes must, however, be clearly demonstrated by the opposing parties.

Theoretical Framework

Plausibility of theoretical explanation of crisis management is promising, not only for resolution purposes, but for impactful understanding. Some theories enable insight clarification, and their integration into scientific investigation contributes to making a profound study. Crisis management in the Nigerian society, considering the multi-ethnic and religious inclinations of the people, is aligned with both the butterfly theory and contingency theory in the design of appropriate strategies. In the light of the above, the butterfly theory of crisis management and systems theory find expressive application in this paper.

Butterfly Theory

Rationale for choice of the butterfly theory is its affinity with the escalation of issues and its applicability across other fields. The theory has been traced to Edward Lorenz (1963). In its modest form, the butterfly theory suggests that a little occurrence or slight sign of an issue may evolve into a large scenario with consequences. From Lorenz's view, a small input or stimulus results in exceptionally large, but undesirable output in a social setting, if not properly managed. The theory is partly synonymous with chaos. The butterfly theory tends to emphasize the magnitude of the outcome of a small occurrence. The theory is both a warning signal as well as an exposition of the magnitude of the implications of crisis. It is a pointer to the dangers inherent in locations that are prone to crisis of any nature, which may equally assume some other dimensions. Strother's (2016) analysis and application of the butterfly theory provide empirical insight into its relevance in volatile environments. The essence of the theory is motivation for crisis management, anticipation and ready preparation in response to the emergence of little issues that have the potential to evolve into dangerous crises. In other words, small events could evolve into large effects.

Contingency Theory

Given the evidence that crisis may sometime erupt without any specific warning signals, constituted agencies tasked with the responsibility to handle social crisis need be crisis-ready. As a consequence, the term contingency aptly fits. But evolution of contingency into a theory holds significance. Contingency theory is ascribed to F. E. Fieldler (Cole, 1988). The theory holds that in the circumstance of problem occurrence, whatever measure that appears feasible on the spot could be adopted. In other words, immediate action is justified. In Fieldler's view, the nature of a particular problem evidently dictates the right approach to adopt.

The contingency theory attempts to suggest the adoption of a practice that can help institutions and organizations to obtain expected result in present circumstances (Heikkila, 2019). It is otherwise known as theory of best fit since it is contingent on the environment of operations. The best fit theory emphasizes the importance of ensuring that strategies are appropriate for the circumstances and culture in which a crisis or problem occurs (Dyer, 2005). The best fit theory therefore ensures an explicit link between internal people processes, external environment. Application of the contingency

approach does not preclude the contribution of other factors. The theory has found application in scientific studies across disciplines, and its use in leadership is widely given credence. It has assumed the posture of immediacy, implying therefore that there is no best universal strategy to resolve a problem. If one strategy fixes a problem in one context, a similar problem in another context may not be resolved with the same strategy. However, attention ought to be given to the nature of the problem as well as other situational factors. The contingency theory is thus hinged on conditional factors. It takes cognizance of the prevailing circumstances at a particular time and suggests that it is the situation that should dictate immediate decision, steps and methods to address a prevailing problem. In the main, the theory is anchored on environmental factors thereby, drawing policy makers' attention to the dictates of the environment. It helps to determine what should be done immediately when crisis arises.

4. Evaluation of Confidence-Building Measures

Nigeria is ridden with crisis in every zone. The North-East of the country contends with *Boko Haram*, kidnapping and unprovoked destruction, resulting in retrogression and displacement of persons (World Bank, 2022). The North-Central zone is characterized in recent times by banditry while in the Eastern zone, the fight for cessation remains endless, resulting also in destruction, killings and loss of productivity, owing to orders issued by separatist leaders urging the people to stay at home (Campbell & Page, 2018). In the South-West zone, Fulani herdsmen have continued to threaten farmers, resulting in the people's agitation for cessation. Each of Nigeria's six geo-political zones is encumbered with diverse types of crisis. Crises range from communal clashes, religious infractions, land disputes, Fulani herdsmen's criminality, Boko Haram attacks, to abductions and destruction of farmlands among others (Akanbi & Ladi-Ladosu, 2022). Government's intervention to stem terrorist attacks has yielded little result since terrorist insurgency still continues unabated. Indeed, the Amnesty leverage extended to a group of terrorists during President Muhammadu Buhari's administration failed to secure permanent peace.

Because of diverse environmental factors which prompt crisis occurrence, efforts at understanding the root causes of crisis are desirable. Indeed, it is imperative to ensure that confidence is reposed in the crisis resolution mechanism in the public space. Effective communication and ability to regulate behavioural tendency are critical factors for confidence building and crisis management. The communication factor imposes a responsibility on opposing parties to be open with facts and figures. Indeed, transparency is the hallmark of communication at the negotiating table. Evidence of insincerity on one side of the opposing parties renders the whole process ineffectual (Onyekachi, Onwuzuruigbo & Ihembe, 2024). This is perhaps one of the reasons for failure of the crisis resolution mechanism in Nigeria's public space. From the various responses of the Nigerian government to crisis situations, government's approach objective to crisis has never been in alignment with opponents' objective. There has been evidence of dissonance. Consequently, crisis resolution is either coerced or relatively short-lived. This has continually prompted re-emergence and perpetuation of crisis in affected zones.

A group in Eastern Nigeria, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which emerged to step up the fight for emancipation, begun by Movement for the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), has not had any peaceful engagement with successive Nigerian governments, owing principally to mistrust on both sides. Consequently, no discernible crisis resolution measure has receded the crisis. From historical survey, the Nigerian government appears not to have leveraged past experience of socio-politico crises. Attitude towards crisis management is lukewarm, sentimental and largely unethical. Most processes of negotiation and mediation reveal indictment by opposing parties against

the government (Imongan & Ikelegbe, 2016). Government tends to take recourse to coercion and force against international best practices in democratic setting.

In communities where crisis erupts, negotiation and mediation tend to achieve a relatively peaceful resolution, given the parties' avowed commitment to adhere to state laws with the participation of justices of peace. The situation is, however, to the contrary with the government. Apparently, there appears to be justification by majority of the people for loss of confidence in government's approach to crisis management. Furthermore, politicization of issues and processes is the bane of government's integrity. Given this perception, confidence may not thrive with parties where government is involved in the crisis management process

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As much as crisis is an inevitable feature of every human society, its management is equally indispensable. However, effectiveness of crisis management strategies is contingent upon the perception and behavior of the parties involved. While some crisis may give a warning signal, other crises may just erupt suddenly.

Management of social crisis is not tied to one best mechanism. Understanding and communication by opposing parties are imperative, and help parties to attain some degree of cooperation. Each mechanism adopted for crisis management has its potential strength, but effectiveness of application lies in the behavioural approach of stakeholders as well as the display of motives. Overtime, public management of crisis in Nigeria has remained weak, owing to mistrust, coercion and divergent interests.

Crisis can be better managed through other behavioural options. Following are efforts could build more trust and facilitate the resolution of crisis in the Nigerian socio-politico landscape. First, opposing parties need to agree to listen to a reputable mediator on mutual terms. Similarly, public agency established for social issues need be prepared to engage contingency plans when spontaneous crisis such as outbreak of terrorist attacks, epidemics, oil spillage, kidnapping and communal clashes among others. Confidence-building will suffice among aggrieved stakeholders when good governance with respect for rule of law is entrenched in the Nigerian polity. The strong recommendation is good governance.

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EFFECT AND MANAGEMENT OF MARITAL CONFLICTS AMONG CHRISTIAN COUPLES IN LAGOS METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Background: Marital conflict is one of the oldest forms of complex challenges that beset all human societies. This form of conflict has its specific genre within a space and time. While various studies have explored the dynamism of marital conflict in many societies, such empirical studies have not been attempted in Kosofe Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State, particularly as it affects the Christian religious sect. This study therefore examined the effects and management of marital conflicts among Christians in Kosofe LGA.

Methods: The study is a qualitative approach, though a survey design was employed. Primary data were collected through the administration of 106 copies of a questionnaire on Christian couples who are residents of Kosofe LGA while seven (7) in-depth interviews were also conducted with church leaders and counselors both from the Orthodox and Pentecostal churches within the study area. Secondary data were sourced from books, journals, magazines, newspapers and internet materials. Univariate analysis was conducted on the data collated to identify patterns, sources, and implications of marital conflict in the Kosofe area of Lagos State. Results were presented on descriptive tables.

Results: About 51.9% of Christian couples experienced conflicts in their marriages but the extent was considered low. The results indicate that the conflicts were triggered by communication breakdowns, cultural differences, financial issues, and household responsibilities. The study also revealed that resolving these conflicts posed significant challenges, leading to unresolved marital issues.

Conclusion: Marital conflict among Christian couples in the Lagos metropolis is an issue that has severe implications for the girl child, the peers and the society at large. The study advocates for financial literacy, counseling, and support and communication workshops to reduce the negative effect of marital conflict in Christian homes.

Keywords: Marital conflict, Christian couples and conflict management

1. Introduction

The pervasiveness of social conflict has no limit in its objective sense; as it permeates every stratum of national life including organizations, corporate, environmental, institutional, communal and probably international settings. However, the crucible of their embryonic formation could largely be traced to the family units, which potentially define and underscore the extent of instability and extreme violence within the social strata and the larger society. Marital dispute is one of the oldest forms of social contraction, which is quite different from other forms of conflict as the parties involved share deep and intimate relationships (Gautam, Kulshrestha, & Goswami, 2021). As deep as the social relationships associated with marital involvement, so deeper are the hurts and discontentment that often trail the events of marital conflicts, especially when it reaches the advanced stage of divorce. Splinter (1992) opined that 'anyone going through the experience of divorce will tell of it crazy time, as feelings run rampant, and stress is high". For Goodhand (2001), the direct impacts of marital conflicts will usually manifest in domestic violence and could result in battlefields, injury, deaths, single parenthood, disablement, displacement, and poverty increase which have both short and long-term effects on families and the larger society. Unhealthy marital relationships often lead to maladjustment between husband and wife and marital disruptions with adverse effects on the couple, children and their in-laws Patham (2015).

There exists robust literature that focuses primarily on the causes, patterns, intensity and management of marital conflicts. The authors often drew their empirical analyses and conclusions from various cultural climes globally. For instance, a study conducted in Pakistan revealed that husbands and wives usually have high and unmet expectations and at the same time, experience deviations from perceived norms as the main causes of marital conflicts. In a similar study carried out by Robila & Krishnakumar (2005), the authors interrogated major variables that cause marital conflict in Romania; and discovered that economic pressure and financial stress account for most of the marital discords being witnessed in the country. These submissions are largely true reflections of marital crises being witnessed in most developing countries, particularly Africa, where the socio-economic indices indicate that most families live below the poverty line and have become a serial trigger of marital disputes. In Nigeria, previous studies have equally shown that marital conflicts permeate various strata of society and are considered an alarming trend Dada & Idowu (2006). The authors specifically sampled the perception of educated elites on factors that created marital stability in the Ilorin metropolis in Kwara State.

Tolorunleke (2014) investigated the causes of marital conflicts in Ijumu land focusing on the level of education and length of marriage and established no significant relationships between the variables investigated. Kosofe Local Government of Lagos State is one of the areas that have shown a tendency for high marital conflicts as observed by the authors of this article, which previous research has not covered significantly. It is on that basis that this paper investigated the causes, prevalence and management of marital conflicts among Christian couples in Kosofe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Researching couples with a particular religious sect is unique in the sense that religious values play significant roles in conflict generation and escalation. For instance, the Christian religion, which forms the focus of this paper admonishes adherents that divorce can only be entertained on grounds of infidelity (Matthew 19:3-9).

The paper covers different sections. Section 1 of the paper establishes the background of the study while the concepts applied in the study are discussed in section 2. Literature on previous works on marital conflict and its effects on the girl child were reviewed to identify gaps in knowledge. Section 3 lays out the study mythology while Section 4 discusses the findings and Section 5 the conclusion and recommendations.

2. Clarification of Concepts

Marital Conflict: Marital conflict has wide areas of definition and coverage in terms of actors, frequency, intensity and consequences for the immediate family and the society at large. It also has different dimensions concerning how married partners react and respond to conflict events in their relationships. Marital conflict is described in the context of this study as a couple's disagreements on home finance, child care, handling issues relating to in-laws, sexual differences, and extra-marital affairs among others. In extreme cases, when such situations experience delayed intervention or are not handled constructively, it could lead to domestic violence and outright separation or divorce of the couples.

Christian Couple: This refers to married men and women who practice Christian religious beliefs. They are an adult set of people who belong to different sects within Christendom including both the orthodox and the unorthodox churches as we have them in Catholics, Methodist, Baptist, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Winner Chapel, and Christ Embassy among several others.

Conflict Management: This is used to describe an intervention in an ongoing feud or conflict to limit the influence of the causes of the problem. The term conflict management can better be understood from the general belief that all conflicts cannot be resolved or prevented, but parties can deliberately deploy measures that could minimize tendencies for escalation of such conflicts. This is even more likely in a situation of marriage involving adults whose behavioural dispositions are already formed and may be difficult to change.

Literature Review

2.1 Marital Conflict

According to Graff, Birmingham, Wadsworth & Hung (2024). Marital conflict is a state of tension, struggle, clash, strife, disagreement, or quarrel primarily between a husband and a wife, and sometimes with other members of the household, over opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Cummings (as cited in Olugbenga, 2018). Usually, marital conflict comes in different ways including spouse battering, spousal abuse, sexual abuse, marital irresponsibility, incest, rape, subtle struggle for control between the couples and other abusive behaviors. Marital conflict, which is a variant of family conflict, is recognized worldwide as the most vital form of conflict that affects every clime, culture, nation and global community. Hence, existing literature shows that most researchers and authors that have previously carried out studies on the subject were drawn from various disciplines, backgrounds or fields of study including law, sociology, psychology, peace studies, gender studies and development studies. This is a demonstration of the multi-disciplinary nature and richness of analyses that are currently ongoing on the subject. Most of the analyses focus mainly on the causative factors, patterns, consequences and responses to marital conflicts. According to Tiruwork (2015), and Meaza and Wobedel (2014), several major sources of marital conflict include childlessness, forced marriage, incompatibility, communication gap, interference by in-laws, finance, infidelity, sex of child and ingratitude among others.

Causes of Marital Conflict in Christian Homes

Different issues have been identified as the main triggers of marital conflict. Among them are incompatible personalities. The inability to take responsibility for wrong doings triggers serious conflicts between couples. In such situations, the prospect of divorce becomes high. For some people who are abused sexually when growing up, such bitter experience may affect their sex life and indeed their marriage later in life. This is because the experience of growing up and could take a bigger toll on the marriage if not properly managed. Hence healing from the hurt of such abuse can often take a lot of time and effort and could be quite emotionally affected by marriage.

Incompatibility in needs and aspirations is another challenging area in marital conflicts. When couples have different perspectives on their emotional needs, actions are misinterpreted and may result in disagreements, conflicts and divorce. Such issues are preceded by rejection, complaints, unwillingness to budge, frustration, anger and disengagement. Other causes of marital conflict include sex denial, falsehood, and the influence of technology. Odeleye (2019) lamented sex starvation was discovered to be one of the reasons why divorce has increased among couples. Some women are very spiritual and claim to be praying and fasting every day. This makes the man uncomfortable and he calls for a divorce. Some of the women also usually claim to be going to church for a night vigil, simply to deny their husband's sex. The man endures but gets to a point where he feels that he needs to get another wife and divorce his current wife. In a marriage, a man denying sex to his wife and vice versa could amount to cruelty and may be grounds for divorce.

A falsehood, an untrue statement, or the absence of truth or accuracy has been identified as a major cause of marital conflicts. They are false beliefs (Baima; 2017) that can force couples to lose trust in each other. Ademiluka (2024) did not exonerate each partner from deceptions before marriage and accused young men and women of improper examination before making their choices. According to her, it is amazing that refusal to consult either church leaders or traditional elders has paved the way for continuous conflict in the family. When marriages are contracted under falsehood, half-truth, or undeclared facts, the quest for divorce increases (Alieke; 2022:1).

The impact of modern technology on marital conflict is indisputable. According to Bell (2011; cited in Appathurai (2012), the twentieth century initiated the disintegration of the extended family. The faster modes of transportation and better tools of communication have made the world smaller and smaller but the distance between the members of the family grows wider and wider since communication can be done in any part of the world through telephones and laptops. These modern electronic instruments instead of facilitating the strengthening of relationships often keep couples apart, thus contributing to the growth of divorce, a clear example is the use of the internet day by day more and more children, youth, and adults are becoming addicted to the internet. Priyamk and Jasseer (2022) who have a similar view to Appathurai describe the sad effects of technology saying that it is hard to believe that even on friendship day, people do not want to visit and greet their friends personally, but prefer doing it through the net. Many who are addicted to net pornography are not able to maintain satisfactory sexual relationships in their married life thereby contributing greatly to the growth of divorce cases among Christians in the world.

Lack of mutual respect and materialism are issues that cause conflict between couples. Mutual respect for one's spouse is important for marital union sustenance and lack of it is a crisis factor capable of rocking even the strongest marital foundation of hitherto blissful homes. Adebowale (2018) argues that respect and love are reciprocal in every marital union and as such, a spouse owes it an obligation to respect and love his or her marriage partner, failure to do so may fan the embers of marital discord and discontent. One can quickly assume that mutual respect is *sin qua non* to family stability and sustenance; since a husband might find it difficult to continue to love a wife who does not respect him or his authority; neither would a wife respect the husband who does not love her. Similarly, a common belief about materialism in marriage has been that conflict erupts when spouses disagree on the basics of money and spending. Firstly, spending unwisely creates financial stress in the marriage and secondly high premium on money places less responsive to their partner and less focused on the relationship. Carroll, Badger, Willoughby, Nelson, Madsen, and McNamara Barry, (2009) believe that the premium on materialism hinges on the transition to self-care. Couples that face the above-highlighted challenges will always struggle to stay out of conflict.

3. Methodology

The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data involved questionnaires administered to 111 respondents, of which 106 copies were returned. Seven in-depth interviews were also conducted with church leaders to get their perspectives on the key objectives of the paper. The study area was Kosefe LGA, where churches including 1 Pentecostal, 1 Apostolic and 1 celestial church were purposively selected for the interviews. Simple random sampling was used to select respondents for the questionnaires while purposive sampling was also used to select the church leaders for in-depth interviews. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, especially tables. Secondary data were obtained by consulting books, journals, daily newspapers, conference papers and internet materials.

4. Results, Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Understanding Frequency of Conflicts

How frequently do you and your spouse experience conflict in your marriage?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not very often	51	48.1	48.1	48.1
	Rarely	24	22.6	22.6	70.8
	Occasionally	24	22.6	22.6	93.4
	Frequently	4	3.8	3.8	97.2
	Very Frequently	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2024)

Responses to the frequency of conflict between spouses in Table 1 show that 46.1% (510 respondents did not very often experience conflicts in their marriages, 22.6% (24) rarely experienced conflicts, 22.6% (24) occasionally experienced conflicts, 3.8% (4) frequently experienced conflicts and 2.8% (3) respondents very frequently experienced conflicts in their marriages. This suggests that many of them experienced conflicts in their marriages.

Table 2: Major sources of conflict

What are the major sources of conflicts?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Finance	28	26.4	26.7	26.7
	Parenting	10	9.4	9.5	36.2
	Household Responsibility	33	31.1	31.4	67.6
	Intimacy	25	23.6	23.8	91.4
	Religion/Beliefs	9	8.5	8.6	100.0
	Total	105	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.9		
Total		106	100.0		

Source: Survey (2024)

Analysis of respondents' views on areas commonly associated with conflicts shows that 26.7% saw finance as the most commonly associated area, 9.5% attributed to parenting as the most commonly associated area, 31.4% identified household responsibilities as the most commonly associated area, 23.8% cited intimacy as the most commonly associated area

and 8.6% saw religion/beliefs as the most commonly associated area. These imply that the distribution of household responsibility between partners is considered the most commonly associated area with conflicts. Next on the line is finance, and intimacy was considered the third in the ranking of areas most commonly associated with conflicts in marriages among Christians in Lagos. The list of the factors considered was religious beliefs.

Table 3: Intensity of marital conflicts among Christian couples

How would you rate the intensity of conflicts in your marriage?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Low	41	38.7	38.7	38.7
	Low	35	33.0	33.0	71.7
	Moderate	18	17.0	17.0	88.7
	High	10	9.4	9.4	98.1
	Very High	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2024)

The analysis of respondents' views on the intensity of conflicts among Christian marriages revealed that 38.7% (41) respondents were of the view that conflicts in marriages among Christians in Lagos were very low, 33% (35) considered it as low, 17% (18) view it as moderate, 9.4% expressed that conflict among Christians in Lagos was high and 1.9% (2) respondents said it was very high. Generally, it was expressed that many respondents were of the view that marital conflicts among Christians in Lagos were low.

Table 4: What Triggers Conflicts in Marriage

What are the most common triggers for conflicts in your marriage?		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Money	25	23.6	24.5	24.5
	Jealousy	28	26.4	27.5	52.0
	Trust Issues	14	13.2	13.7	65.7
	Beliefs/Values	15	14.2	14.7	80.4
	Communication	20	18.8	19.6	100.0
	Total	102	96.2	100.0	
	Total	106	100.0		

Source: Survey (2024)

Results in Table 4 contain the expressed views on the factors that trigger conflicts in marriage among Christians. Money is considered to be the 24.5% most common trigger of marriage, jealousy to be the 27.5% common trigger, trust issues a 13.7% common trigger, beliefs/values a 14.7% common trigger, communication to be 19.6% common trigger of conflicts among Christians in Lagos state, Nigeria. These suggest that jealousy and money were the most common factors that triggered conflicts among Christians in Lagos state, Nigeria. The last factor considered as a trigger of conflict among Christians in the state was trust issues followed by beliefs/values.

Table 5: Conflict Resolution Strategies Being Used among Christian Couples

How would you rate the overall quality of your marital relationship?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Mediation	1	.9	1.0	1.0
	Counseling	3	2.8	2.9	3.8
	Arbitration	14	13.2	13.3	17.1
	Court System	17	16.0	16.2	33.3
		14	13.2	13.3	46.7
		26	24.5	24.8	71.4
		30	28.3	28.6	100.0
	Total	105	99.1	100.0	
		106	100.0		

Source: Survey (2024)

Table 5 presents the respondents' rating of the overall quality of marital relationships among Christians in Lagos Nigeria. The overall quality of marital relationships among Christians in Lagos Nigeria was rated excellent by 28.6% of respondents, rated good by 24.8% of respondents, rated as fair by 13.3% of respondents, 16.2% were indifferent, 13.3% rated it as moderately poor, 2.9% as poor and 1% as very poor. In summary, 66.7% of respondents rated the overall quality of marital relationships among Christians in Lagos Nigeria as positive and only 17.1% rated it as negative.

Table 6: Challenges in Conflict Resolution

How challenging do you find it to resolve conflicts with your spouse?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Easy	19	17.9	18.1	18.1
	Not Challenging	16	15.1	15.2	33.3
	Neutral	19	17.9	18.1	51.4
	Challenging	23	21.7	21.9	73.3
	Very Challenging	28	26.4	26.7	100.0
	Total	105	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.9		
Total		106	100.0		

Source: Survey (2024)

Statistics in Table 6 present the challenges respondents face in resolving marital conflicts with their spouses. Of these respondents, 18.1% considered it very easy to resolve conflicts with their spouses, 15.2% considered it not to be challenging, 16.1% expressed that they were neutral in their view on whether it is challenging or not, 21.9% expressed that it was challenging and 26.7% sees it has been very challenging. In all, 48.5% were of the view that it was challenging, only 33.3% were of the view that it was not challenging and 18.1% were neutral to the view. This implies that a higher number of Christians in Lagos Nigeria found it challenging to resolve marital conflict with their spouses.

Table 7: Factors that make Conflicts Resolution Difficult

Which of the following factors make conflict resolution difficult for you?				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Lack Of Communication Skills	23	21.7	21.7	21.7
Inability To Compromise	22	20.8	20.8	42.5
Belief/Values differences	14	13.2	13.2	55.7
Lack Of Time	26	24.5	24.5	80.2
Emotional Issues	21	19.8	19.8	100.0
Total	106	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2024)

Responses to the factors that make conflict resolution difficult presented in Table 7 show that lack of communication skills made a 21.7% contribution to factors that make conflict resolution difficult to Christians in Lagos Nigeria, inability to compromise had a 20.8 % contribution to the difficulty, belief/values' differences had 13.2% contribution to the difficulty in conflict resolution, lack of time gave 24.5% and emotional issues had 19.8% contribution to difficulty in conflict resolution among Christians in Lagos, Nigeria. the implication is that the inability to give sufficient time was found to be the highest factor that makes conflict resolution difficult among Christians in Lagos state, followed by communication failure and closely followed is the inability to compromise. Interestingly belief/values differences were considered the least factor that makes conflict resolution difficult among Christians in Lagos state and the second least factor was emotional issues.

Table 8: Length of Time Conflicts Remained Unresolved

How often do conflicts in your marriage remain unresolved?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	15	14.2	14.2	14.2
	Rarely	16	15.1	15.1	29.2
	Sometimes	26	24.5	24.5	53.8
	Frequently	31	29.2	29.2	83.0
	Almost Always	18	17.0	17.0	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2024)

Table 8 shows the responses to questions about the length of time conflict issues remain unresolved among Christians in Lagos Nigeria. Respondents that expressed that conflicts were never left for long before resolution were 14.2%, 15.1% claimed conflicts were rarely left unresolved for long before being resolved, 24.5% expressed that conflicts were sometimes left unresolved for a long time, 29.2% were of the view that conflicts were been frequently left unresolved and 17% thought that conflict was almost always been left unresolved among Christians in Lagos Nigeria. In summary, the study found that marital conflicts were left unresolved for a long time among Christians in Lagos Nigeria.

Table 9: Effect of Christian Beliefs and Values on Conflict Resolution

Do you believe that your Christian beliefs and practices pose any specific challenges to conflict resolution?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally False	49	46.2	46.2	46.2
	Somewhat False	17	16.0	16.0	62.3
	Indifferent	12	11.3	11.3	73.6
	Somewhat True	13	12.3	12.3	85.8
	True	10	9.4	9.4	95.3
	Totally True	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2024)

Responses to the effects of Christian's beliefs and values on conflict resolution as presented in Table 9 shows that 4.7% of respondents were of the view that it is true and 9.4% perceived that Christian beliefs and practices pose any specific challenges to conflict resolution among Christians in Lagos, Nigeria, 46.2% claimed that it was false and 16% held that it was somewhat true that Christian beliefs and practices pose any specific challenges to marital conflict resolution in Lagos Nigeria. Those respondents who were indifferent to this view were 11.6%. In summary, the majority (62.2%) of responses thought that it was not true that Christian beliefs and practices pose any specific challenges to conflict resolution among Christians in Lagos state, Nigeria. therefore, it is inferred that Christian beliefs and practices do not pose any specific challenges to conflict resolution among Christians in Lagos state, Nigeria.

Table 10: Overall Well-being and Satisfaction

On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with your overall well-being within your marriage?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Extremely Dissatisfied	1	.9	.9	.9
	Dissatisfied	2	1.9	1.9	2.8
	Moderately Dissatisfied	7	6.6	6.6	9.4
	Indifferent	13	12.3	12.3	21.7
	Moderately Satisfied	21	19.8	19.8	41.5
	Satisfied	24	22.6	22.6	64.2
	Extremely Satisfied	38	35.8	35.8	100.0
	Total	106	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey (2024)

Statistics in Table 10 shows that 35.8% of respondents were extremely satisfied with their overall well-being within their marriage, 22.6% were satisfied, 19.8% were moderately satisfied, 12.3% were indifferent, 6.6% were moderately dissatisfied, and 0.9% were extremely dissatisfied with their overall well-being within your marriage. In all, 78.2% of respondents were satisfied with overall well-being within their marriage, and only 3.7% were dissatisfied with overall well-being within their marriage. This implies that the majority of married Christians in Lagos Nigeria were satisfied with overall well-being within their marriage.

5. Conclusions

The paper concluded that many (51.9%) couples experienced conflicts in their marriages but the extent was considered low. These conflicts were triggered by several factors including issues with finance, parent responsibility, and children's care among others. The resolution strategies also included mediation, arbitration, counseling and the court system. Some of the challenges identified include a lack of communication skills, inability to compromise, beliefs/values differences, time constraints and emotional issues

6. Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are being suggested to enhance conflict resolution practices in the study area:

1. The Christian community and local institutions should provide counseling and support programs to help couples improve their dispute-resolution skills.
2. Couples should attend communication workshops to assist them resolve communication failures that contribute to disputes.
3. The Nigerian government, religious institutions, non-governmental organizations and community leaders should encourage cultural sensitivity in the bid to reduce disputes caused by cultural differences.
4. Financial literacy programs should be created to assist couples in better managing financial conflicts.
5. Conflicts should be handled as soon as soon as they occur. Delays may escalate them and have spillover effects.

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