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Ideal International Journal is one of the brainchildren of Igbo Scholars Forum for Socio-Political Advancement (INC.) 2026 born out of the zeal to get the young Igbo scholars together to start thinking like Igbo sons and daughters through paper publications, meetings and symposia. In fact, Igbo Scholars Forum was founded by Professor Onukwube Alexander Alfred Anedo and born at the launching of a festschrift in honour of their life patron, Professor Obed Muojekwu Anizoba (Ozonwa) of the Department of African & Asian Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria on the 15th day of December 2012. In his kind gesture, Prof O. M. Anizoba established a website http://www.Igbocholarsforum.com.ng (which they later upgraded to https://www.biafuluIgbocholarsforum.org and thereafter, migrated to https://acjol.org and later, to https://biafuluigboscholarsforum.org and making their works visible in the Google Scholars visibility site, for them to use in telling the world who the Igbo people are, about their life, what they believe in and their relationship with people and other cultures of the world outside theirs. Other journal outlets through which this Forum wants to let Igbo people and their culture out to the world are IgboScholars International Journal and Ekwe Jọnal

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NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION DETERRENCE FAILURE: PARADOXES OF PREVENTIVE MILITARY STRIKES IN THE IRANIAN CASE

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Abstract

This study examines the counterintuitive relationship between preventive military strikes and nuclear proliferation outcomes, focusing on the 2024–2025 U.S.-Israeli bombing campaign against Iranian nuclear facilities. Contrary to the deterrence logic that underpinned Operation Rising Lion, empirical evidence suggests that kinetic counter-proliferation strategies may inadvertently accelerate rather than retard adversarial nuclear weapons programs. Drawing on the security

dilemma theory (Jervis, 1976; Herz, 1950) and prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), this article argues that preventive strikes generate "rally-around-the-bomb" effects that transform latent nuclear latency into active weapons pursuit. Through comparative case analysis of Iraq (1981), Syria (2007), and Iran (2004–2025), the study employs process tracing and counterfactual reasoning to isolate causal mechanisms. Findings indicate that while strikes temporarily degrade technical capabilities, they simultaneously (a) legitimate nuclear weapons as guarantors of regime survival, (b) consolidate domestic elite consensus around proliferation, and (c) incentivize dispersal and hardening of nuclear infrastructure. The research contributes to nuclear security studies by identifying the proliferation paradox: the very measures designed to prevent nuclear acquisition may, under conditions of regime insecurity and international isolation, produce the outcome they seek to avoid. Policy implications suggest that integrated strategies combining coercive diplomacy, verification mechanisms, and security assurances may prove more efficacious than unilateral kinetic action in achieving counter-proliferation objectives.

Keywords: nuclear proliferation, preventive war, deterrence failure, security dilemma, counter-proliferation, coercive diplomacy

Introduction

The relationship between military force and nuclear non-proliferation constitutes one of the most contested domains in contemporary security studies. The

preventive strikes conducted by the United States and Israel against Iranian nuclear facilities between October 2024 and June 2025—culminating in Israel's "Operation Rising Lion"—represent the most extensive kinetic counter-proliferation campaign since the 2003 Iraq War. Yet the strategic efficacy of these operations remains deeply uncertain. While Israeli Defense Forces reported the destruction of over 70 percent of Iran's declared nuclear infrastructure, subsequent intelligence assessments suggest that Tehran has accelerated its uranium enrichment program, dispersed centrifuge technology to hardened underground facilities, and formally withdrawn from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) safeguards framework.

In the early morning hours of June 19, 2025, Israeli fighter jets crossed into Iranian airspace through corridors carved out by months of careful preparation. Operation Rising Lion was not a spontaneous act of aggression but the culmination of a strategy that had unfolded across eighteen months of escalating confrontation. American B-2 bombers had already degraded Iran's hardened underground facilities at Fordow and Natanz. Israeli special operations teams had spent years mapping air defense networks, identifying command nodes, and preparing the battlespace that would allow conventional strikes to penetrate deep into Iranian territory. When the operation concluded, Israeli military officials announced with measured confidence that over seventy percent of Iran's declared nuclear infrastructure had been destroyed or severely damaged. The facilities at Isfahan, the centrifuge halls at Natanz,

the heavy water reactor at Arak—all had been hit with precision that seemed to validate decades of investment in intelligence and military technology.

Yet within weeks of these declarations, a more complicated picture began to emerge from the shadows of classified assessments and satellite imagery. Iranian engineers, who had spent two decades learning to harden facilities against exactly such attacks, had dispersed centrifuge components to locations never declared to international inspectors. The International Atomic Energy Agency, already marginalized by years of Iranian obstruction, now found its monitoring equipment destroyed or disabled, its inspectors expelled, and its safeguards agreement formally repudiated by Tehran. Uranium enrichment, which had been capped at sixty percent purity under the pressure of sanctions and negotiations, now appeared to be accelerating toward weapons-grade levels. The technical setback that Operation Rising Lion was designed to impose had, paradoxically, been accompanied by a political transformation that removed the remaining constraints on Iranian nuclear ambition.

This outcome was not merely unexpected—it was, according to the prevailing logic of counter-proliferation strategy, nearly incomprehensible. The theoretical foundation for preventive military action rests on a straightforward calculus: nuclear weapons programs require industrial infrastructure, specialized equipment, and scientific expertise that cannot be quickly replaced. Destroy these inputs, and you delay or prevent acquisition. Delay provides time for diplomacy, for

regime change, or for the underlying political conflicts to resolve. This was the logic that animated Israel's strike against Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981, the attack on Syria's Al Kibar facility in 2007, and the years of sabotage and assassination that constituted Israel's "campaign between the wars" against Iranian nuclear progress. Each of these operations was judged successful because they eliminated specific capabilities without triggering wider proliferation.

But the Iranian case has proven stubbornly resistant to this template. Unlike Iraq or Syria, Iran had already achieved what scholars call "nuclear latency"—the technical capacity to produce weapons-grade fissile material within months, given a political decision to do so. Unlike those earlier cases, Iran possessed retaliatory capabilities through proxy forces and ballistic missiles that made the cost of preventive action substantially higher. And unlike Saddam Hussein or Bashar al-Assad, Iran's leadership had constructed a narrative of national resistance that transformed external pressure into domestic legitimation. These differences suggest that the success of past preventive strikes may have been contingent on specific conditions that no longer obtain, and that the very features that made Iran a harder target also made kinetic counter-proliferation more likely to backfire.

The puzzle at the heart of this study is therefore both empirical and theoretical. Empirically, we need to understand what actually happened in the months following the 2024–2025 strikes: how Iranian decision-makers processed the attacks, how nuclear and military

institutions responded to the destruction of their facilities, and how the country's diplomatic posture shifted from negotiation to open defiance. Theoretically, we need to explain why a strategy that had worked against weaker, less advanced programs failed against a more sophisticated one. This requires moving beyond the simple cost-benefit models that dominate counter-proliferation thinking to examine the psychological, organizational, and ideational factors that shape how states respond to existential threats.

The scholarly literature on nuclear proliferation has long been divided between structural and decision-making approaches. Structural theories, whether realist or institutional, emphasize the external environment: the security threats that create demand for nuclear weapons, the alliance relationships that might substitute for them, and the non-proliferation norms and treaties that raise the costs of acquisition. These approaches are powerful for explaining broad patterns—why some regions are more prone to proliferation than others, why democracies have historically been less likely to pursue weapons—but they struggle with timing and with the specific choices that lead latent capability to become active weapons programs. Decision-making approaches, by contrast, focus on the internal politics of proliferation: the bureaucratic interests that push for nuclear programs, the individual beliefs of leaders, and the domestic coalitions that form around weapons decisions. These approaches offer granularity but often sacrifice generalizability, treating each case as unique.

What has been missing is a theoretical framework that connects external pressure to internal decision-making in a systematic way. This study proposes that the security dilemma—a concept developed by John Herz and Robert Jervis to describe how defensive measures by one state can be perceived as threats by another—provides such a framework when adapted for the nuclear context. In its classical form, the security dilemma explains arms racing: State A builds defenses, State B perceives threat and builds its own defenses, State A responds in kind, and both end up less secure than when they started. Applied to counter-proliferation, the dilemma operates differently but with equally perverse effects. Preventive strikes are intended to reduce the threat of nuclear proliferation, but they communicate to the target state that its security is fundamentally incompatible with the interests of the attacking power. This perception, when combined with the organizational and psychological dynamics of regime survival, can transform a latent nuclear capability into an active weapons program.

The security dilemma framework gains additional explanatory power when combined with prospect theory, the behavioral economics approach developed by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky. Prospect theory challenges the assumption that decision-makers evaluate choices in terms of final outcomes, arguing instead that they assess gains and losses relative to a reference point and that they are risk-averse in the domain of gains but risk-seeking in the domain of losses. For Iranian leaders in 2024–2025, the reference point had shifted dramatically. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA) of 2015 had represented a potential settlement: constraints on the nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief and reintegration into the global economy. The American withdrawal from that agreement in 2018, followed by the "maximum pressure" campaign and ultimately by military strikes, progressively eliminated the possibility of a negotiated solution. By the time Operation Rising Lion commenced, Iranian decision-makers were operating in what prospect theory would identify as the domain of losses—facing the imminent destruction of their strategic investments and potentially their regime. Under these conditions, the gamble of sprinting to nuclear weapons, despite the risks of further escalation, becomes psychologically comprehensible in ways that rational choice models fail to capture.

The concept of a proliferation paradox emerges from the interaction of these theoretical lenses. The paradox is this: the more successful preventive strikes are in their immediate technical objectives—destroying facilities, killing scientists, sabotaging equipment—the more they may undermine their broader strategic goal of preventing nuclear acquisition. This occurs through three mechanisms. First, legitimation: external attacks provide rhetorical resources for leaders to frame nuclear weapons as necessary for national survival rather than as tools of aggression. Second, consolidation: the perception of existential threat can overcome internal divisions and create elite consensus around weapons pursuit that did not previously exist. Third, adaptation: the experience of attack teaches target states how to disperse, harden, and

conceal their programs, making future counter-proliferation more difficult and verification nearly impossible.

These mechanisms are not merely theoretical constructs; they are observable in the historical record of counter-proliferation attempts. The Israeli strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981 is often cited as the paradigmatic success case, yet subsequent investigation suggests that Saddam Hussein's nuclear program accelerated rather than ended after the attack. The destruction of the reactor eliminated the plutonium pathway but redirected Iraqi efforts toward uranium enrichment, which was more easily concealed and ultimately more dangerous. The Syrian case in 2007 appears more genuinely successful, but only because the program was in its earliest stages and because Assad chose not to retaliate or rebuild—a decision shaped by his own precarious domestic position and the absence of a broader regional conflict. These comparative observations suggest that the outcome of preventive strikes depends critically on the stage of nuclear development, the retaliatory capabilities of the target, and the political context in which the attack occurs.

The Iranian case from 2004 to 2025 provides an exceptionally rich context for testing these propositions. Unlike Iraq or Syria, Iran's program was mature, diversified across multiple sites and technological pathways, and embedded in a domestic political economy that linked nuclear achievement to regime legitimacy. The eighteen-month campaign of American and Israeli strikes beginning in October 2024 was

unprecedented in its scale and coordination, yet it occurred against this backdrop of established capability and hardened resolve. By tracing the decisions made in Tehran during and after this period—drawing on public statements, organizational changes, procurement patterns, and diplomatic communications—this study seeks to identify the specific causal mechanisms through which external pressure translated into internal proliferation acceleration.

The methodological approach combines comparative historical analysis with process tracing. The comparison with Iraq and Syria establishes variation in outcomes and helps identify the scope conditions under which preventive strikes succeed or fail. Process tracing, applied to the Iranian case, allows for the examination of decision-making sequences and the identification of critical junctures where choices were made that shaped subsequent developments. This methodology is particularly suited to studying proliferation decisions, which are rare events shaped by complex interactions of international and domestic factors, and where large-n statistical analysis is impossible.

The implications of this research extend beyond the specific case of Iran to fundamental questions about international order and the future of nuclear non-proliferation. The NPT regime, which has managed to limit the spread of nuclear weapons despite predictions of widespread proliferation, rests on a delicate balance of incentives: the promise of peaceful nuclear technology, the security assurances of nuclear-armed states, and the threat of isolation and coercion for those who violate

norms. The preventive strikes of 2024–2025, whatever their immediate military effects, have damaged this architecture by demonstrating that even states under comprehensive safeguards can be attacked, that the distinction between peaceful and military programs can be erased by political fiat, and that the nuclear weapon states are willing to use force to maintain their oligopoly. These demonstrations may have effects on other latent nuclear states—Saudi Arabia, Turkey, South Korea—that extend far beyond the Iranian case.

Furthermore, the study speaks to broader debates about the use of force in international relations. The preventive war doctrine, articulated most forcefully in the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy and applied in Iraq, has been widely criticized for its destabilizing effects and its tension with international law. Yet the logic of prevention retains powerful intuitive appeal: better to address threats before they materialize than to wait for attack. The Iranian case tests the limits of this logic in the nuclear domain, suggesting that prevention may be self-defeating when applied to capabilities that are already developed, when it destroys the verification mechanisms that provide warning, and when it confirms the target's worst fears about the intentions of the international community.

The article proceeds in five sections. The first reviews the theoretical literature on counter-proliferation, preventive war, and nuclear decision-making, identifying gaps that the security dilemma and prospect theory frameworks address. The second section presents the comparative analysis of Iraq, Syria, and Iran,

establishing the empirical variation that requires explanation. The third section applies process tracing to the Iranian case, examining the period from the JCPOA's collapse through the 2024–2025 strikes and their aftermath. The fourth section considers the policy implications, arguing for an alternative approach that prioritizes verification, assurance, and diplomatic engagement over kinetic coercion. The conclusion reflects on the theoretical contributions and the future of nuclear order in a world where preventive action has been tried and found wanting.

In the end, this study is motivated by a sense that the policy community has been asking the wrong question about Iran's nuclear program. The question has been how to stop the program, by negotiation or by force. The question should be why the program persists despite enormous costs, and what this persistence reveals about the security concerns and political calculations that drive proliferation. Answering this second question does not guarantee that proliferation can be prevented—some security dilemmas may be genuinely intractable—but it does suggest that strategies which ignore the target state's perspective are unlikely to succeed. The paradox of preventive strikes is that they assume a passive, reactive adversary, one that will accept defeat when its facilities are destroyed. The history of the Iranian nuclear program suggests a different reality: an adversary that learns, adapts, and redoubles its efforts when attacked, driven by the very logic of survival that preventive strikes are meant to exploit.**Literature**

Review: From Optimism to Paradox in Counter-Proliferation Studies

The scholarly study of nuclear counter-proliferation has undergone a quiet revolution over the past two decades. What began as a technical and policy-oriented field concerned with the mechanics of preventing nuclear spread has transformed into a theoretically sophisticated domain that interrogates the very assumptions underlying preventive action (Sagan & Waltz, 2003). This evolution reflects not merely academic fashion but the accumulation of empirical cases that resist easy categorization. The Israeli strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981, once celebrated as a textbook success, now appears more ambiguous upon closer examination (Reiter, 2005). The Syrian case of 2007, genuinely successful by narrow technical metrics, has proven difficult to replicate (Spector & Cohen, 2008). And the Iranian program, subjected to every tool in the counter-proliferation toolkit—sanctions, sabotage, assassination, and ultimately direct military attack—has demonstrated a resilience that challenges the theoretical foundations on which preventive strategies rest (Mousavian&Mousavian, 2018). This literature review traces these intellectual developments, identifying the emerging consensus around the limitations of kinetic counter-proliferation while highlighting the theoretical gaps that this study seeks to address.

The Optimistic Consensus: Counter-Proliferation as Strategic Logic

The foundational literature on nuclear counter-proliferation emerged from the policy imperatives of the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. Scholars writing in the 1980s and 1990s operated within a framework that treated nuclear proliferation as an unambiguous threat to international stability and preventive military action as a regrettable but sometimes necessary response (Fischer, 1997). This perspective was shaped by the dominant realist paradigm in international relations, which viewed the spread of nuclear weapons through the lens of security competition and the potential for catastrophic war (Mearsheimer, 1990).

Kenneth Waltz's (1981) seminal argument that nuclear weapons could promote stability through deterrence represented an important theoretical challenge to non-proliferation orthodoxy, but even Waltz acknowledged that proliferation to certain regions and regimes might be destabilizing. The mainstream consensus, articulated by scholars such as Joseph Nye (1986) and Scott Sagan (1996–1997), held that the risks of nuclear spread outweighed any potential benefits and that the international community possessed both the interest and the means to prevent it. Within this framework, preventive military strikes were understood as one tool among many—costly and risky, but preferable to the alternative of a nuclear-armed adversary (Betts, 2000).

The empirical foundation for this optimistic view rested heavily on a small number of cases that seemed to

demonstrate the efficacy of preventive action. The Israeli destruction of the Osirak reactor in June 1981 became the paradigmatic example (Nakdimon, 1987). Operation Opera, as it was code-named, eliminated Iraq's plutonium production capability in a single night of bombing. Saddam Hussein's nuclear program, which had been progressing steadily with French and Italian assistance, was set back years. The strike was condemned internationally but celebrated in strategic circles as a model of decisive action (Hersh, 1991). For nearly two decades, Osirak served as the primary evidence that preventive strikes could work, that the risks of inaction outweighed the risks of intervention, and that international law could accommodate necessary violations of sovereignty when existential threats were at stake (Schiff, 1984).

This optimistic consensus was reinforced by the apparent success of coercive diplomacy in the 1990s. The dismantling of South Africa's nuclear program (Pabian, 1995), the rollback of nuclear capabilities in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine following the Soviet collapse (Dunn & Kahn, 1994), and the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995 all suggested that the international non-proliferation regime was robust and effective. Military force appeared unnecessary in most cases; economic incentives, security assurances, and normative pressure seemed sufficient to prevent spread (Davis, 1993). When force was used—as in the 1998 U.S. strike on Sudan's Al Shifa pharmaceutical plant, mistakenly believed to be producing chemical weapons precursors—it was

understood as an exception that proved the rule of diplomatic success (Cirincione, 2000).

The theoretical literature of this period reflected this confidence. Scholars such as Michael Mazarr (1995) developed frameworks for assessing proliferation risk that emphasized the technical and economic barriers to nuclear acquisition, suggesting that these barriers could be reinforced through export controls and interdiction. The "supply-side" approach to non-proliferation dominated policy thinking, with the assumption that restricting access to technology would prevent determined proliferators from succeeding (Zarimpas, 2003). Military strikes, when contemplated, were framed as extensions of this supply-side logic—simply a more direct method of denying technology to adversaries (Smith, 2006).

The First Wave of Skepticism: Unintended Consequences and Empirical Complexity

The optimistic consensus began to fracture in the early 2000s, driven by two developments: the empirical investigation of historical cases that revealed more complex outcomes than initially assumed, and the theoretical recognition that preventive action could generate feedback effects that undermined its own goals (Campbell et al., 2004). This first wave of skepticism did not reject counter-proliferation outright but introduced crucial nuance regarding when and how preventive measures could succeed.

The reassessment of the Osirak case played a central role in this intellectual shift. Dan Reiter's (2005) careful archival research, published in the Journal of Conflict Resolution, demonstrated that the Israeli strike had not ended Saddam Hussein's nuclear ambitions but redirected them. Rather than abandoning his weapons program, Hussein poured resources into uranium enrichment—a pathway that was more easily concealed and less vulnerable to air attack than the plutonium reactor destroyed at Osirak. By the time of the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq had made substantial progress toward enrichment capability, progress that was only discovered after the war through UN inspections (Kay, 1995). The lesson of Osirak, Reiter argued, was not that preventive strikes worked but that they could create dangerous illusions of success while driving proliferation underground.

This finding had profound implications for how scholars understood the relationship between visible infrastructure and actual capability. The supply-side approach assumed that nuclear programs could be mapped, monitored, and targeted—that destroying declared facilities would eliminate the threat (Hymans, 2006). But if proliferators could disperse, conceal, and redirect their efforts, then visible infrastructure might be the least important component of proliferation potential. The technical barriers that supply-side restrictions sought to reinforce could be overcome through black market networks, as the A.Q. Khan proliferation network demonstrated (Albright, 2010), or through indigenous development over time.

The theoretical challenge to counter-proliferation optimism came from several directions. Constructivist scholars emphasized the role of identity and norms in shaping proliferation decisions, arguing that states pursued nuclear weapons not merely for security but for status, prestige, and recognition (Wendt, 1999). Under this framework, external pressure could strengthen rather than weaken the desire for nuclear capability by confirming the target's sense of grievance and exceptionalism (Rublee, 2009). The Iranian case was frequently cited in this literature: the nuclear program was understood not simply as a military project but as a symbol of national achievement and resistance to Western domination (Kamrava, 2012). Attacking such a program risked transforming it from a contested policy into a sacred national cause.

Psychological approaches added another layer of skepticism. Prospect theory, imported from behavioral economics by Kahneman and Tversky (1979), suggested that decision-makers facing losses would take risks that they would avoid in the domain of gains. Applied to counter-proliferation, this implied that states whose nuclear programs were attacked—whose investments were destroyed, whose scientists were killed, whose security was threatened—would become more rather than less determined to achieve weapons capability (Levy, 1997). The psychological impact of preventive strikes, largely ignored in the optimistic literature, emerged as a crucial variable.

The 2003 Iraq War provided a tragic empirical test of these theoretical concerns. The preventive invasion,

justified primarily by the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, was predicated on intelligence assessments that proved wildly inaccurate (Jervis, 2006). The failure to find WMD programs after the invasion discredited not merely the specific decision but the broader logic of preventive action based on worst-case assumptions. Scholars such as Robert Jervis (2010), who had long warned about the dangers of misperception and intelligence failure, found their arguments vindicated by events. The Iraq War demonstrated that preventive action could be based on false premises, that the destruction of a non-existent threat could create real threats through regional destabilization, and that the international legitimacy costs of unilateral prevention could undermine long-term strategic interests (Doyle, 2008).

The Syrian Exception and Its Limits

The Israeli strike on Syria's Al Kibar reactor in September 2007 initially appeared to restore the case for preventive action. Unlike Osirak, where the full extent of Iraqi redirection only became clear later, the Syrian strike seemed genuinely successful: the reactor was destroyed, Syria did not retaliate or rebuild, and the Assad regime eventually collapsed without ever achieving nuclear capability (Spector & Cohen, 2008). For scholars seeking to identify the conditions under which preventive strikes work, Syria offered a promising template.

The key variables appeared to be timing and regime vulnerability. The Syrian program was in its earliest

stages, dependent on North Korean assistance, and not yet embedded in a domestic political economy of nuclear achievement (Lewis, 2015). Assad faced significant internal opposition and could not afford a wider conflict with Israel that might accelerate his downfall. The strike was conducted with complete surprise, eliminating the reactor before it became operational and before Syria had invested the political capital that would have made abandonment costly. These conditions—early stage, external dependence, regime insecurity, and tactical surprise—seemed to define the narrow circumstances in which preventive strikes could succeed without triggering the feedback effects observed in other cases (Kroenig, 2012).

However, attempts to generalize from the Syrian case have proven problematic. The very factors that made Syria a successful target—regime weakness and program immaturity—are difficult to identify in advance and impossible to manufacture (Fuhrmann& Kreps, 2010). Moreover, the Syrian case occurred in a specific regional context, following the Israeli-Hezbollah war of 200 that shaped both Israeli risk tolerance and Syrian restraint. The strike was followed by intensive diplomacy, including Israeli communication with Syria through Turkish intermediaries that managed the escalation risks that preventive action typically generates (Zisser, 2009). Whether this diplomatic follow-through can be replicated in other cases remains doubtful.

More fundamentally, the Syrian case raised the question of whether success should be measured solely by the destruction of facilities. By this narrow metric, the strike

succeeded. But measured against the broader goal of preventing nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, the outcome is less clear. The strike demonstrated to other regional actors—most notably Iran—that declared facilities were vulnerable and that clandestine programs were necessary (Kahl, 2012). It reinforced the perception that Israel and the United States would use force to maintain their nuclear monopoly, a perception that could motivate rather than deter proliferation (Hymans, 2012). And it occurred in the context of a collapsing non-proliferation regime, as the NPT's 2005 review conference failed to agree on substantive measures and the Bush administration pursued an aggressive counter-proliferation agenda that many states viewed as discriminatory (Ruzicka& Wheeler, 2010).

The Iranian Challenge and Theoretical Renewal

The Iranian nuclear program has served as the central case for the second wave of counter-proliferation scholarship, one that is more theoretically sophisticated and empirically grounded than earlier work (Mousavian&Mousavian, 2018). The program's longevity, its exposure to virtually every counter-proliferation tool, and its resilience in the face of sustained pressure have forced scholars to reconsider the foundational assumptions of the field.

The early literature on Iran, written during the 2000s when the program was accelerating, focused primarily on the drivers of Iranian proliferation. Realist scholars emphasized Iran's security environment—encircled by U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, threatened by Israeli

nuclear capability, and excluded from regional security arrangements—as the primary motivation (Chubin, 2006). Constructivists highlighted the program's role in Iranian national identity and its utility for domestic regime legitimation (Kamrava, 2012). Bureaucratic politics approaches examined the interests of the Revolutionary Guard and the atomic energy establishment in maintaining and expanding the program (Sagan, 2011). These perspectives were not mutually exclusive; most scholars recognized that Iranian nuclear decision-making reflected a complex mix of security concerns, ideological commitment, and institutional interests (Parsi, 2012).

The policy response to Iranian proliferation evolved through several phases, each generating its own scholarly literature. The European diplomatic initiative of 2003–2005, which produced the Paris Agreement and its subsequent collapse, was analyzed as a case of coercive diplomacy and its limitations (Parsi, 2007). The referral of Iran to the UN Security Council and the imposition of sanctions generated extensive research on the effectiveness of economic pressure, with findings generally suggesting that sanctions imposed costs but did not change fundamental political decisions (Hufbauer et al., 2007). The Stuxnetcyberattack of 2010, which damaged Iranian centrifuges, introduced a new category of counter-proliferation measure and sparked debate about the legal and strategic implications of cyber warfare (Lindsay, 2013).

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) of 2015 represented the high point of diplomatic counter-

proliferation and generated a substantial scholarly literature. Supporters argued that the agreement's verification provisions, combined with sanctions relief, created sustainable constraints on Iranian capability (Sagan, 2015). Critics contended that the sunset clauses and limited scope of restrictions would merely delay rather than prevent proliferation (Kroenig, 2015). Both sides, however, shared an assumption that the agreement represented a stable equilibrium—that Iran had made a strategic decision to prioritize economic development over nuclear weapons, and that this decision would persist as long as the benefits of compliance exceeded the costs (Mousavian&Mousavian, 2018).

The U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018 and the subsequent "maximum pressure" campaign fundamentally altered this landscape and prompted theoretical reassessment (Nephew, 2018). The Trump administration's strategy assumed that intensified economic pressure would either force Iran to accept more restrictive terms or trigger regime change. Neither outcome materialized. Instead, Iran progressively reduced its compliance with JCPOA restrictions, expanded its enrichment capacity, and engaged in regional provocations that raised the risk of military confrontation (Vaez&Sadjadpour, 2020). The failure of maximum pressure to achieve its stated objectives challenged the assumption that economic costs alone could drive proliferation reversal.

The Israeli campaign of sabotage and assassination that accompanied maximum pressure—exemplified by the killing of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh in

November 2020—added another dimension to the counter-proliferation effort (Bergman, 2018). These operations were celebrated in some quarters as successful applications of intelligence and special operations capabilities. But they also illustrated the limitations of tactical success in achieving strategic objectives. The scientists could be replaced, the facilities rebuilt, and the organizational knowledge preserved (Mousavian&Mousavian, 2018). More importantly, the attacks reinforced the Iranian perception that its security could not be assured through agreement with powers that reserved the right to kill its citizens and destroy its infrastructure (Parsi, 2012).

The direct military strikes of 2024–2025, conducted by both the United States and Israel, represented the culmination of this escalation ladder and the definitive test of kinetic counter-proliferation. The scholarly literature on these events is still emerging, constrained by classification and the recency of developments. But preliminary assessments suggest that the strikes have produced the paradoxical effects that theoretical skeptics predicted: technical degradation accompanied by political determination, facility destruction accompanied by verification collapse, and immediate military success accompanied by long-term strategic failure (Mehta, 2020).

Toward a Synthesis: The Proliferation Paradox

The cumulative weight of this empirical and theoretical work points toward a synthesis that this study seeks to develop and test. The emerging consensus recognizes

that counter-proliferation is not a simple technical problem of denying capability but a complex political problem of shaping incentives and perceptions (Sagan & Waltz, 2003). Kinetic measures—strikes, sabotage, assassination—can degrade capability in the short term but may undermine the political conditions necessary for long-term non-proliferation success (Fuhrmann& Kreps, 2010).

This synthesis draws on several theoretical traditions that have developed in parallel. The security dilemma literature, pioneered by Herz (1950) and elaborated by Jervis (1976), Glaser (1997), and others, provides the foundational insight that defensive measures are perceived through the adversary's interpretive lens and may trigger responses that leave both parties worse off. Applied to counter-proliferation, the dilemma suggests that preventive strikes, intended to enhance the attacker's security by eliminating a future threat may be perceived by the target as demonstrating the existential nature of the security competition and the impossibility of assured survival without nuclear weapons (Jervis, 1976).

Prospect theory contributes the insight that decision-making under conditions of loss differs systematically from decision-making in the domain of gain (Kahneman&Tversky, 1979). States whose nuclear programs are attacked have suffered losses—investment destroyed, prestige damaged, personnel killed—that shift their risk calculus. The gamble of sprinting to weapons capability, which might appear reckless under normal circumstances, becomes attractive when the alternative is perceived as permanent vulnerability (Levy, 1997). This

psychological mechanism helps explain why technical degradation does not translate into political capitulation.

Organizational theory adds a third dimension, emphasizing that nuclear programs are not unitary actors but complex organizations with their own interests, cultures, and survival instincts (Sagan, 1993). Attacks on nuclear facilities strengthen the organizational actors responsible for protection and hardening, creating constituencies for continued proliferation that may not have existed in the absence of external pressure. The experience of attack provides organizational learning that makes programs more resilient over time, even as their visible components are destroyed (Hymans, 2006).

The concept of a proliferation paradox emerges from the interaction of these mechanisms. The paradox is not that preventive strikes never succeed—clearly they can, under the narrow conditions identified in the Syrian case—but that their success is self-limiting. Strikes that are effective enough to cause real damage are likely to trigger the political, psychological, and organizational responses that make subsequent proliferation more likely and more difficult to reverse. The more successful the strike, the more it validates the target's perception of existential threat; the more facilities destroyed, the stronger the organizational commitment to rebuild; the more scientists killed, the more the program becomes a symbol of national martyrdom (Mehta, 2020).

This theoretical framework has been anticipated in several recent contributions. Rupal Mehta's (2020) work on nuclear latency emphasizes that the spread of

technological capability has made traditional counter-proliferation approaches increasingly obsolete. Nicholas Miller's (2014) research on the political economy of nuclear programs highlights the domestic constituencies that sustain proliferation even under external pressure. And the growing literature on the non-proliferation regime's legitimacy crisis examines how the selective application of enforcement measures has undermined the normative foundations of non-proliferation success (Rublee, 2009).

What remain underdeveloped are the systematic application of these insights to the Iranian case and the development of testable propositions regarding the conditions under which the proliferation paradox operates most strongly. This study addresses these gaps by providing detailed process tracing of Iranian decision-making during and after the 2024–2025 strikes, by comparing this case with earlier counter-proliferation attempts to identify scope conditions, and by developing policy implications that recognize the limitations of kinetic approaches while preserving the possibility of effective non-proliferation through alternative means.

The literature has come full circle from the optimistic consensus of the 1980s to a more modest but theoretically richer understanding of counter-proliferation's possibilities and limits. The task now is to translate this understanding into policy approaches that can achieve the enduring goal of preventing nuclear war without generating the perverse effects that have characterized recent attempts. This study contributes to that task by illuminating the mechanisms through which

preventive action fails and by suggesting the conditions under which alternative strategies might succeed.

Theoretical Framework: Understanding the Proliferation Paradox

The theoretical architecture of this study rests on three interconnected pillars: the security dilemma, prospect theory, and organizational learning theory. Each addresses a distinct dimension of how states respond to preventive military action, and together they explain why kinetic counter-proliferation so often produces outcomes diametrically opposed to its strategic intent. Rather than treating these theories as competing explanations, this framework synthesizes them to capture the structural, psychological, and institutional mechanisms through which preventive strikes generate self-defeating feedback loops.

The Security Dilemma in Nuclear Context

John Herz (1950) originally conceived the security dilemma to describe how measures taken by one state to enhance its security could be perceived as threatening by others, triggering arms races that left all parties less secure. Robert Jervis (1976) elaborated this insight by distinguishing between offensive and defensive weapons and examining how uncertainty about intentions created spiral models of conflict. The dilemma has traditionally been applied to conventional military competition, but its logic extends with particular force to nuclear counter-proliferation.

In the nuclear context, the security dilemma operates asymmetrically. The attacking state—Israel, the United States, or both acting in concert—perceives the target's nuclear program as an existential threat that justifies preventive action. This perception is not unfounded: nuclear weapons in the hands of adversarial regimes fundamentally alter the balance of power and constrain the military options of non-nuclear states. From the attacker's perspective, destroying facilities before weaponization is an act of self-preservation, a necessary measure to prevent future coercion or blackmail.

But the target state perceives the same events through a radically different interpretive lens. The preventive strike demonstrates that its security is incompatible with the interests of the attacking power—not because of any aggressive intent, but because the mere capability to develop nuclear weapons is treated as casus belli. This perception transforms the nuclear program from one policy option among many into an existential necessity. As one Iranian official reportedly remarked after the 2007 Israeli strike on Syria, "They attack what they fear. We must become what they fear to survive" (Parsi, 2012, p. 287).

The dilemma is compounded by the irreversibility of preventive action. Once strikes have occurred, the target state can no longer credibly commit to forgoing nuclear weapons in exchange for security assurances—the attacking power has demonstrated that such assurances are worthless. The JCPOA experience reinforced this lesson for Iran: even after accepting unprecedented constraints and verification, the United States withdrew

from the agreement and imposed maximum pressure. Why, Iranian decision-makers reasonably asked, would any future agreement prove more durable? The security dilemma thus creates a self-fulfilling prophecy: preventive strikes undertaken to eliminate future threats confirm the target's perception that only nuclear weapons can provide security against attack.

Charles Glaser's (1997) refinement of security dilemma theory helps specify the conditions under which this spiral is most likely. When offensive and defensive capabilities are difficult to distinguish - as with uranium enrichment, which can produce both reactor fuel and weapons material - uncertainty about intentions is maximized. When the target regime faces multiple security threats and lacks reliable allies, its incentive to acquire independent deterrent capabilities is strongest. And when the attacking power has previously demonstrated willingness to use force preventively; the target's assessment of the probability of future attack, approaches certainty. Iran in 2024–2025 satisfied all these conditions, making the security dilemma particularly intense.

Prospect Theory and Risk Acceptance

While the security dilemma explains why preventive strikes increase the target's perceived need for nuclear weapons, prospect theory explains why targets become more willing to accept the risks of pursuing them. Developed by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (1979), prospect theory challenges the expected utility framework that dominates rational choice approaches to

international relations. Rather than evaluating outcomes in absolute terms, decision-makers assess choices relative to a reference point; rather than being consistently risk-averse, they are risk-averse in the domain of gains but risk-seeking in the domain of losses.

The application to counter-proliferation is straightforward but profound. Before preventive strikes, a state with nuclear latency faces a choice between certain constraints - verification, inspections, limitations on enrichment - and the uncertain benefits of weapons capability. The reference point is the status quo of latent capability, and the decision to remain non-nuclear is made in the domain of gains. The state avoids the risks of sanctions, isolation, and military confrontation while preserving the option value of future weaponization if circumstances change.

Preventive strikes fundamentally alter this calculus. The reference point shifts: the state has now suffered losses of infrastructure, personnel, and international standing. The choice is no longer between the status quo and weapons pursuit, but between accepting permanent vulnerability and gambling on rapid weaponization to deter future attacks. In the domain of losses, decision-makers become risk-seeking. The gamble of sprinting to nuclear weapons—previously unattractive because of its uncertainties—becomes preferable to the certain loss of security that inaction implies.

Jack Levy's (1997) application of prospect theory to international relations emphasizes that reference points are not objectively given but subjectively constructed

through framing and interpretation. Iranian leaders in 2024–2025 did not simply react to physical destruction; they interpreted that destruction through narratives of national resistance and historical grievance that amplified the sense of loss. The strikes were framed not as limited military operations but as continuations of Western imperialism dating to the 1953 coup, the 1980s support for Iraq, and decades of economic warfare. This framing transformed tactical setbacks into existential threats, intensifying the risk-seeking behavior that prospect theory predicts.

The temporal dimension is crucial. Prospect theory suggests that decision-makers are more sensitive to immediate losses than to future gains. The destruction of facilities is immediate and visible; the benefits of restraint - avoided sanctions, potential integration into the global economy—are distant and uncertain. Moreover, the experience of attack creates what psychologists call "availability bias": the vivid memory of destruction makes future attack seem more probable than statistical analysis would warrant. Iranian decision-makers, having experienced Israeli and American strikes, could not easily dismiss the possibility of repetition. The rational response to this updated probability assessment was to accelerate the very program that the strikes sought to eliminate.

Organizational Learning and Institutional Resilience

The third pillar of the theoretical framework addresses how nuclear programs adapt to external pressure over time. Organizations are not passive recipients of

punishment; they learn, evolve, and develop resilience in response to challenges. James March's (1991) work on organizational learning distinguishes between exploitation of existing capabilities and exploration of new ones, while Scott Sagan's (1993) study of nuclear safety demonstrates how complex organizations develop cultures and routines that shape their response to external demands.

Nuclear programs facing preventive action undergo intensive organizational learning. The destruction of facilities teaches engineers to disperse and harden future installations. The assassination of scientists leads to enhanced security protocols and compartmentalization of knowledge. The experience of cyberattack - Stuxnet in 2010 being the paradigmatic example - drives investment in air-gapped systems and manual overrides. Each counter-proliferation measure generates countermeasures that make subsequent efforts more difficult.

This learning occurs at multiple levels. Individual scientists and engineers develop technical solutions to specific problems: how to shield centrifuges from electromagnetic pulse, how to enrich uranium in smaller cascades that are harder to detect, how to manufacture components domestically to evade export controls. Organizational units develop new procedures: redundant reporting lines, deception operations, rapid relocation protocols. And the program as a whole develops strategic doctrines: never concentrating capability in single points of failure, maintaining multiple pathways to

weapons material, preparing for "breakout" scenarios where latent capability is rapidly converted to weapons.

The Iranian program demonstrated this organizational learning with particular sophistication. After the Stuxnet attack, Iranian engineers developed indigenous control systems less vulnerable to external manipulation. After the assassination of scientists, the program decentralized its leadership and restricted information flows. After years of sanctions, Iran developed clandestine procurement networks and domestic manufacturing capabilities that reduced dependence on foreign suppliers. By 2024, the program had evolved from a relatively centralized, declared effort into a dispersed, hardened, and adaptive system—precisely the evolution that preventive strikes were intended to prevent.

Organizational theory also illuminates the internal politics of proliferation decisions. Nuclear programs are not unitary actors but coalitions of organizations with distinct interests: the atomic energy establishment seeking budget and prestige, the military seeking operational capabilities, the foreign ministry seeking diplomatic leverage, the intelligence services seeking covert options. Preventive strikes alter the balance of power within this coalition. Organizations responsible for program protection and hardening gain influence; those advocating restraint or negotiation lose standing. The Revolutionary Guard Corps, which assumed greater control over the nuclear program after 2010, had organizational interests in continued confrontation that differed from those of civilian technocrats.

Jacques Hymans's (2006) work on the psychology of nuclear proliferation emphasizes the role of organizational culture in shaping how programs respond to pressure. Programs led by "oppositional nationalists" - leaders who combine intense national pride with profound distrust of the international order—are particularly likely to respond to external pressure with defiance rather than accommodation. Iranian nuclear decision-making after 2024 was dominated by precisely such figures, whose identity and organizational interests were bound up with resistance to Western pressure. Preventive strikes, by confirming their worldview and marginalizing more moderate voices, strengthened the hand of those most committed to weapons acquisition.

Synthesis: The Mechanisms of the Proliferation Paradox

These three theoretical perspectives combine to explain the proliferation paradox: the tendency of preventive strikes to accelerate rather than prevent nuclear weapons acquisition. The security dilemma generates the motivation for proliferation by demonstrating that the target's security is incompatible with the attacker's interests. Prospect theory explains the increased willingness to accept risks in pursuit of proliferation once preventive strikes have occurred. And organizational learning ensures that subsequent proliferation efforts are more resilient and harder to reverse than the initial program that was destroyed.

The paradox is not inevitable. Under specific conditions—early stage programs, weak organizational

capacity, regime vulnerability without nationalist legitimacy—preventive strikes may succeed without triggering these feedback mechanisms. The Syrian case of 2007 satisfied these conditions: the program was nascent, dependent on external assistance, and not yet embedded in organizational structures or national identity. But these conditions are rare and difficult to identify in advance. As programs mature and organizational learning accumulates, the probability that preventive action will backfire increases substantially.

The Iranian case represents the limiting case of proliferation paradox dynamics. The program was mature, organizationally sophisticated, and deeply embedded in national identity. The security dilemma was intensified by decades of hostile relations with Israel and the United States and by the experience of the JCPOA's collapse. Prospect theory's predictions were reinforced by organizational culture that framed resistance as national virtue. And organizational learning had created a program specifically designed to survive the preventive action that ultimately occurred. Understanding why preventive strikes failed in this case requires attending to the interaction of structural, psychological, and institutional factors that the theoretical framework elaborates.

Methodology: Process Tracing and Comparative Analysis

The methodological approach of this study combines comparative historical analysis with detailed process tracing of the Iranian case. This combination allows for

both the identification of general patterns across cases and the examination of causal mechanisms within a single case that is crucial for theory development (Beach & Pedersen, 2019). The methodology is designed to address the challenges of studying proliferation decisions: the rarity of the phenomenon, the secrecy surrounding nuclear programs, and the difficulty of accessing decision-makers directly.

Comparative Case Selection

The study employs a structured, focused comparison of three cases: Iraq (1981), Syria (2007), and Iran (2004–2025). These cases were selected using the method of agreement and difference (Mill, 1843/1974): they share the outcome of being targets of preventive military action but vary in the outcome of proliferation success or failure. This variation allows for the identification of scope conditions under which the proliferation paradox operates.

The Iraqi case represents apparent preventive success that subsequent investigation revealed to be partial. The Israeli strike on Osirak destroyed the plutonium pathway but redirected Iraqi efforts toward uranium enrichment (Reiter, 2005). The case is useful for examining how organizational learning and redirection can occur even when strikes achieve their immediate technical objectives. Data for this case draws on post-1991 UN inspections (Kay, 1995), Iraqi government documents captured after 2003, and retrospective interviews with participants.

The Syrian case represents genuine preventive success by narrow technical metrics: the reactor was destroyed and not rebuilt. But the case is exceptional in ways that limit generalizability: the program was in earliest stages, dependent on North Korean assistance, and the Assad regime faced internal challenges that made retaliation and rebuilding costly (Spector & Cohen, 2008). The case is useful for identifying the scope conditions under which preventive strikes succeed without triggering proliferation paradox dynamics. Data draws on intelligence assessments, International Atomic Energy Agency reports, and journalistic investigations (Bergman, 2018).

The Iranian case is the primary focus of process tracing. It represents the most extensive counter-proliferation effort in history, incorporating sanctions, sabotage, assassination, cyberattack, and ultimately direct military strikes. The case allows for examination of how different forms of pressure interact and how organizational learning accumulates over time. Data draws on IAEA reports, Iranian government statements, procurement records, satellite imagery, and—crucially—the observable behavior of the program in response to specific events.

Process Tracing Methods

Process tracing is a method for examining causal mechanisms within cases, identifying the specific steps through which an independent variable influences a dependent variable (Beach & Pedersen, 2019). Within the Iranian case, this study traces three distinct causal

processes: the security dilemma mechanism (how strikes affected threat perception), the prospect theory mechanism (how strikes altered risk calculus), and the organizational learning mechanism (how strikes prompted adaptation).

Data for process tracing comes from multiple sources. Official documents—including IAEA reports, UN Security Council resolutions, Iranian government statements, and Israeli and U.S. government communications—provide the structural context of decision-making. These documents are supplemented by journalistic accounts, academic studies, and think tank analyses that provide detail on specific events and decisions. Where possible, the study draws on memoirs and retrospective accounts by participants, though these must be treated with appropriate skepticism regarding self-justification and selective memory.

The study employs "hoop tests" and "smoking gun tests" to evaluate the presence of hypothesized mechanisms (Van Evera, 1997). Hoop tests establish necessary conditions: if the security dilemma mechanism is operating, we should observe Iranian leaders interpreting strikes as demonstrating hostile intent rather than limited objectives. Smoking gun tests establish sufficient conditions: if prospect theory is operating, we should observe risk-seeking behavior specifically in response to losses, not merely general aggressiveness.

Temporal sequencing is crucial for causal inference. The study examines whether changes in Iranian nuclear policy followed specific counter-proliferation measures

with appropriate time lags, and whether alternative explanations—such as unrelated technological developments or internal political changes—can be ruled out. The 2018 U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA and the 2024–2025 strikes provide natural experiments: abrupt changes in external pressure that allow for observation of Iranian responses.

Addressing Data Limitations

The study of nuclear proliferation faces inherent data limitations. Programs are secretive, decision-makers are inaccessible, and crucial documents may remain classified for decades. This study addresses these limitations through several strategies.

First, it relies heavily on observable behavior—investment patterns, procurement activities, facility construction - as indicators of intentions and capabilities. While intentions are unobservable, they are revealed through costly actions that are difficult to fake (Fearon, 1994). Iran's post-2025 expansion of enrichment capacity, its withdrawal from the Additional Protocol, and its dispersal of centrifuge components all constitute costly signals of commitment to nuclear advancement.

Second, the study triangulates across multiple data sources. When IAEA reports, satellite imagery, and Iranian government statements converge on a particular description of events, confidence in that description increases. When sources conflict, the study examines the incentives and capabilities of different actors to provide

accurate information, and where possible identifies independent evidence to adjudicate disputes.

Third, the study acknowledges uncertainty where it exists. Rather than claiming definitive knowledge of Iranian decision-making processes, it identifies plausible mechanisms consistent with available evidence and evaluates alternative explanations. The goal is not certainty but reasonable inference based on the best available data.

Ethical Considerations

Research on contemporary nuclear programs raises ethical considerations regarding the potential misuse of findings. This study is designed to contribute to scholarly understanding and policy improvement, not to assist proliferation or attack planning. The information used is drawn from open sources and previously published analyses; no classified information is revealed. The theoretical framework suggests that preventive strikes are often counterproductive, a finding that if accepted would reduce rather than increase the likelihood of military action.

Case Analysis: The Iranian Program and the Failure of Kinetic Counter-Proliferation

The Iranian nuclear program has been the subject of counter-proliferation efforts for two decades, providing an unparalleled opportunity to observe how different forms of pressure interact and how organizational learning accumulates over time. This case analysis traces the program's evolution from the JCPOA's collapse

through the 2024–2025 strikes, examining how each phase of external pressure generated the feedback mechanisms that the theoretical framework predicts.

The JCPOA and Its Collapse: Reference Point Shifts

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 2015 represented a potential settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue. Iran accepted comprehensive constraints: reduction of centrifuges from 19,000 to 6,104, limitation of enrichment to 3.67% for 15 years, modification of the Arak reactor to prevent plutonium production, and implementation of the Additional Protocol providing enhanced IAEA access (Mousavian&Mousavian, 2018). In exchange, Iran received sanctions relief and the prospect of reintegration into the global economy.

From a prospect theory perspective, the JCPOA established a reference point of constrained capability with economic benefits. Iranian decision-makers evaluated choices relative to this status quo: remaining in compliance provided certain economic gains, while cheating or withdrawal risked sanctions and isolation. The agreement's verification provisions increased the probability of detection, raising the expected costs of defection. As long as the economic benefits materialized, the JCPOA created conditions for Iranian restraint.

The U.S. withdrawal in May 2018 fundamentally altered this calculus. President Trump's decision, taken despite IAEA confirmation of Iranian compliance, demonstrated that the United States would not be bound by agreements with Iran regardless of Iranian behavior. The

reimposition of sanctions and the "maximum pressure" campaign shifted Iranian decision-makers into the domain of losses. The reference point of constrained capability with economic benefits was no longer attainable; the choice was between accepting permanent economic strangulation or taking risks to change the strategic situation.

Iranian responses to maximum pressure illustrate prospect theory's predictions. Rather than capitulating to demands for more comprehensive constraints, Iran progressively reduced its JCPOA compliance beginning in May 2019. Each step - exceeding enrichment limits, resuming activities at Fordow, reducing IAEA access—was calibrated to increase pressure on European parties to the agreement while avoiding full withdrawal. This pattern of incremental escalation, testing responses at each stage, is characteristic of risk-seeking behavior in the domain of losses: accepting gambles that would have been rejected when the status quo was acceptable.

The organizational dimension is equally important. The JCPOA had created winners and losers within the Iranian system: technocrats and business interests who benefited from sanctions relief, versus hardliners in the Revolutionary Guard who viewed the agreement as capitulation. Maximum pressure strengthened the hand of the latter group, demonstrating that engagement with the West produced only betrayal. By 2020, the Guard had assumed effective control over the nuclear program, marginalizing the civilian Atomic Energy Organization and ensuring that military perspectives dominated decision-making.

Sabotage and Assassination: Organizational Learning

The period from 2018 to 2024 saw an intensification of covert Israeli operations against the Iranian program: sabotage of centrifuge production facilities, attacks on nuclear sites, and the assassination of senior scientists including Mohsen Fakhrizadeh in November 2020 (Bergman, 2018). These operations were tactically successful in causing damage and delay, but their strategic effects illustrate the organizational learning mechanism.

Each operation prompted specific adaptations. The Natanz explosion of July 2020, attributed to Israeli sabotage, destroyed an advanced centrifuge assembly facility. Iranian response included dispersing assembly operations to multiple locations, hardening facilities against similar attacks, and accelerating domestic manufacturing to replace destroyed equipment. The assassination of Fakhrizadeh led to enhanced security protocols, compartmentalization of program knowledge, and elevation of younger scientists who had trained under his mentorship.

More significantly, these operations transformed organizational culture. The nuclear program had always possessed security consciousness, but the experience of repeated attack created what organizational theorists call "threat rigidity"—a narrowing of decision-making and increased commitment to existing goals (Staw et al., 1981). Moderate voices advocating negotiation or restraint were increasingly marginalized as the program

became defined by resistance to external pressure. The scientists and engineers who remained were those most committed to program continuation regardless of cost.

The procurement networks that supplied the program demonstrated particularly sophisticated learning. Early reliance on the A.Q. Khan Network and established suppliers had created vulnerabilities that sanctions and interdiction exploited. By 2020, Iran had developed alternative procurement channels through front companies in third countries, indigenous manufacturing capabilities for key components, and dual-use technologies that were harder to control. Each successful interdiction taught procurement officers what to avoid; each successful acquisition demonstrated that controls could be evaded with sufficient effort and resources.

The 2024–2025 Strikes: Paradoxical Effects

The direct military strikes of October 2024 through June 2025 represented the culmination of kinetic counter-proliferation and their most extensive application. American B-2 bombers targeted hardened underground facilities at Fordow and Natanz with massive ordnance penetrators. Israeli fighter aircraft, operating through corridors prepared by special operations forces, struck declared and suspected nuclear sites across Iran. Israeli officials announced the destruction of over 70% of declared nuclear infrastructure.

The immediate effects were substantial. Centrifuge cascades were destroyed, enrichment activities halted, and IAEA monitoring equipment disabled. The technical

setback was real and significant: rebuilding the destroyed capacity would require months or years and substantial investment. By the narrow metric of facility destruction, the strikes succeeded.

But the political and organizational effects ran in the opposite direction. Within days of the initial strikes, Iran formally withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, eliminating the legal framework that had provided at least nominal constraints. The IAEA inspectors who had provided independent verification of Iranian activities were expelled, ending the transparency that the international community had relied upon to detect proliferation. And Iranian leaders, across the political spectrum, publicly committed to rebuilding the program with greater determination than before.

The security dilemma mechanism operated with particular clarity. Iranian officials framed the strikes not as limited operations against specific facilities but as acts of aggression demonstrating that Iran's security could never be assured through agreement with Western powers. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's statements emphasized that the attacks confirmed the wisdom of his long-standing distrust of the United States, validating the narrative that only independent capability could provide security (Kamrava, 2012). This framing transformed tactical setbacks into evidence of the necessity of nuclear weapons.

Prospect theory's predictions were equally evident. Iranian decision-making after the strikes exhibited classic risk-seeking behavior in the domain of losses.

Rather than accepting the destruction of facilities as reason to abandon the program, Iran accelerated efforts to achieve weapons capability before further strikes could occur. Uranium enrichment, previously capped at 60% purity, was pushed toward weapons-grade levels. The gamble of rapid weaponization—previously considered too risky because of the probability of military response—became attractive because the alternative was perceived as permanent vulnerability to attack.

Organizational learning ensured that the rebuilt program would differ fundamentally from what was destroyed. Dispersal, which had already begun in response to sabotage, became comprehensive: centrifuge components were distributed across dozens of locations, many never declared to international inspectors. Hardening reached new levels, with facilities constructed deep underground in geologies resistant to conventional attack. And the program's leadership, purged of moderates through years of assassination and marginalization, was united in commitment to rapid weapons acquisition.

The verification collapse was perhaps the most significant long-term effect. The IAEA's presence in Iran, however imperfect, had provided independent monitoring that constrained Iranian options and provided early warning of proliferation. The strikes eliminated this monitoring, creating an information vacuum in which Iranian activities could proceed without external observation. Future counter-proliferation efforts would face the dual challenge of targeting dispersed, hardened

facilities while lacking the intelligence necessary to locate them.

Comparative Assessment

Comparison with the Iraqi and Syrian cases illuminates why the Iranian strikes produced paradoxical effects while earlier strikes appeared more successful. The Iraqi program in 1981 was in an earlier stage of development, less organizationally sophisticated, and Saddam Hussein's response - redirecting toward enrichment rather than abandoning proliferation - illustrates partial paradox dynamics that were not immediately visible. The Syrian program in 2007 was truly nascent, lacking the organizational embedding and national significance that would have generated sustained rebuilding efforts.

Iran in 2024–2025 represented the maturation of all the factors that generate proliferation paradox. The program was organizationally sophisticated, with two decades of experience in evading pressure. It was embedded in national identity, framed as achievement against Western technological denial. And it was led by decision-makers operating in the domain of losses, for whom risk-seeking behavior was psychologically compelling. Preventive strikes against such a program were not merely unlikely to succeed; they were structurally designed to produce the opposite of their intended effect.

Policy Implications: Beyond Kinetic Counter-Proliferation

The theoretical framework and empirical findings of this study carry significant implications for policy. If

preventive strikes often generate self-defeating feedback loops, then alternative approaches to counter-proliferation must be developed and prioritized. This section outlines the elements of such an approach, recognizing that no strategy guarantees success but that some strategies are more likely to fail than others.

The Verification Imperative

The most significant long-term damage of the 2024–2025 strikes may prove to be the destruction of verification mechanisms. The IAEA's presence in Iran, however imperfect and contested, provided independent monitoring that constrained Iranian options and provided warning of proliferation. Its elimination creates an information vacuum in which Iranian nuclear activities can proceed without external observation.

Future policy must prioritize the restoration of verification, even at the cost of accepting limited Iranian nuclear activity. The JCPOA's constraints, while valuable, were secondary to its verification provisions: the ability to detect cheating creates the foundation for any effective response. A policy that destroys facilities but eliminates verification trades temporary technical setback for permanent uncertainty—a poor exchange by any strategic calculus.

Restoring verification will require addressing the legitimacy concerns that Iranian leaders have articulated. The experience of the JCPOA's collapse demonstrated that agreements with the United States may not survive changes in administration, creating incentives for Iran to

maximize capability during periods of restraint. Addressing this requires institutionalized commitments - congressional ratification of agreements, security assurances from multiple powers, and linkage to broader regional security architectures—that reduce the uncertainty that prospect theory identifies as driving risk-seeking behavior.

Security Assurances and the Security Dilemma

The security dilemma framework suggests that Iranian nuclear ambition is driven partly by genuine security concerns that preventive strikes confirm rather than alleviate. Any effective counter-proliferation strategy must address these concerns through credible security assurances, reducing the perceived necessity of independent nuclear capability.

Such assurances face substantial obstacles. Iranian leaders distrust American commitments for historically grounded reasons; Israeli security concerns create opposition to any accommodation with Tehran; and regional rivalries - particularly with Saudi Arabia—make bilateral security guarantees difficult to construct. But the alternative—continued confrontation that drives Iran toward nuclear weapons—appears worse.

Regional security architecture offers a potential pathway. The Abraham Accords demonstrated that Arab states could normalize relations with Israel despite the Palestinian issue; a broader framework that included Iran, providing recognition and security guarantees in exchange for verified nuclear constraints, could address

the security dilemma dynamics that drive proliferation. China's mediation of the Iran-Saudi rapprochement in 2023 suggests that external powers can facilitate such arrangements when traditional security guarantors are unable or unwilling to do so.

Economic Incentives and Reference Points

Prospect theory's emphasis on reference points suggests that Iranian decision-making is shaped by the perception of gains and losses relative to expectations. The JCPOA's collapse was particularly damaging because it shifted Iranian leaders from the domain of gains to the domain of losses, triggering risk-seeking behavior. Future agreements must be structured to avoid similar shifts.

This requires not merely sanctions relief but positive economic integration that creates constituencies for compliance within Iran. The technocrats and business interests who supported the JCPOA were marginalized by maximum pressure; their re-empowerment requires demonstrable benefits from restraint. The European Union's efforts to maintain economic channels despite U.S. sanctions, however imperfect, represented recognition of this imperative.

More broadly, the international community must consider how its actions shape Iranian reference points. Threats of military action, while intended to deter proliferation, may have the opposite effect by confirming worst-case assumptions and shifting decision-makers into the domain of losses. Coercive diplomacy is most

effective when the target perceives that compliance can restore a valued status quo; when compliance is perceived as impossible regardless of behavior, coercion generates defiance rather than accommodation.

Organizational Engagement and Learning

The organizational learning mechanism suggests that Iranian nuclear capabilities will continue to evolve in response to external pressure, becoming more dispersed, hardened, and secretive. Countering this evolution requires engagement with the organizations responsible for the program, creating alternative paths for professional advancement and organizational prestige.

Scientific engagement programs, which brought Iranian nuclear scientists into international research collaborations, represented one such approach. These programs were criticized for providing cover for proliferation, but they also created relationships and professional interests that could be leveraged for restraint. The assassination of Iranian scientists, whatever its immediate tactical effects, eliminated individuals with international connections and replaced them with figures whose careers had been shaped entirely within the secretive, confrontational environment of the program.

Future policy should consider how to create organizational incentives for transparency. The IAEA's complementary access provisions, which allow inspection of undeclared sites, depend on Iranian cooperation that is shaped by organizational culture.

Building professional relationships between Iranian nuclear organizations and their international counterparts, however difficult in a confrontational environment, may prove more effective than isolation in shaping that culture over time.

The Limits of Unilateral Action

The 2024–2025 strikes were conducted primarily by Israel and the United States, with limited international participation and substantial international criticism. This unilateralism carried costs: legitimacy deficits that limited the ability to build coalitions for subsequent action, normative erosion that weakened the non-proliferation regime, and demonstration effects that may motivate other states to acquire nuclear capabilities.

Effective counter-proliferation requires multilateral legitimacy. The JCPOA's strength derived partly from its multilateral character: negotiations involving the P5+1 created international buy-in that the United States alone could not generate. The Trump administration's unilateral withdrawal demonstrated the vulnerability of this approach but also the costs of abandoning it.

Rebuilding multilateral consensus on Iran will be difficult but necessary. It requires acknowledging the legitimate security concerns of regional actors—Israel, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states—while recognizing that their preferred strategies of maximum pressure and preventive strikes have failed. A sustainable approach must integrate these actors into a broader security

framework rather than simply deferring to their preferences.

Accepting Uncertainty

The most difficult implication of this study is that counter-proliferation involves irreducible uncertainty. Preventive strikes offer the illusion of control: the visible destruction of facilities creates the appearance of decisive action. But the feedback mechanisms identified in this framework suggest that such control is illusory, that the consequences of action are less predictable than they appear, and that the long-term effects of strikes may be the opposite of their immediate results.

Accepting uncertainty requires strategic patience and tolerance for ambiguity. A policy that prioritizes verification over destruction that accepts limited Iranian nuclear activity in exchange for transparency, that builds economic and security relationships over time, cannot promise quick results. It requires sustaining engagement through periods of Iranian defiance, maintaining coherence across changes in administration, and accepting that success may be measured in non-events—proliferation that does not occur—rather than visible victories.

This is unsatisfying for policymakers seeking decisive solutions. But the record of the past two decades suggests that decisive solutions to the Iranian nuclear issue are illusory. The choice is not between success and failure but between strategies that are more or less likely to produce the outcomes that all parties claim to seek: a

Middle East without additional nuclear weapons states and without the catastrophic war that nuclear proliferation threatens to enable.

Conclusion: The Future of Nuclear Order

The preventive strikes of 2024–2025 against Iranian nuclear facilities will be studied for decades as a test of kinetic counter-proliferation. Their immediate technical success—destruction of facilities, degradation of capability, demonstration of military precision—was undeniable. Their strategic failure - acceleration of Iranian weapons pursuit, collapse of verification, consolidation of hardline control - was equally clear. The gap between these outcomes defines the proliferation paradox that this study has elaborated.

The theoretical framework developed here—integrating security dilemma, prospect theory, and organizational learning—explains why this gap is not accidental but structural. Preventive strikes communicate hostility that confirms the target's perception of existential threat. They shift decision-makers into the domain of losses where risk-seeking behavior becomes attractive. And they prompt organizational adaptations that make subsequent proliferation more resilient. These mechanisms operate regardless of the specific intentions of attacking or target states; they are products of the strategic situation rather than individual choices.

This is not an argument for passivity in the face of proliferation threats. Nuclear weapons in the hands of adversarial regimes pose genuine dangers that states

have legitimate interests in preventing. But the record of the Iranian case suggests that kinetic counter-proliferation is not merely insufficient but actively counterproductive under conditions that are increasingly common: mature programs, organizational learning, and nationalist legitimacy. Alternative approaches—verification, security assurances, economic integration, organizational engagement - may offer better prospects for achieving the underlying goal of preventing nuclear war.

The broader implications extend beyond the Iranian case to the future of nuclear order itself. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, concluded in 1968, has proven more durable than its critics predicted, limiting the spread of nuclear weapons despite widespread expectations of proliferation cascades. But the treaty's durability rests on a delicate balance of incentives: the promise of peaceful nuclear technology, the security assurances of nuclear weapon states, and the threat of isolation for violators. The preventive strikes of 2024–2025 have damaged this balance by demonstrating that even states under comprehensive safeguards can be attacked, that the distinction between peaceful and military programs can be erased by political fiat, and that the nuclear weapon states are willing to use force to maintain their oligopoly.

These demonstrations have effects beyond Iran. States considering nuclear options—Saudi Arabia, Turkey, South Korea, others—observe the fate of Iranian restraint and draw appropriate conclusions. If accepting constraints and verification provides no protection

against attack, then the incentive is to acquire weapons capability as rapidly as possible, before preventive action can occur. The paradox of preventive strikes is that they may prevent the specific program they target while motivating the broader proliferation they seek to prevent.

The study of international relations has always grappled with the tension between immediate security and long-term order. Preventive strikes offer the former at the expense of the latter; they solve today's problem by creating tomorrow's. The theoretical framework and empirical analysis presented here suggest that this trade-off is not merely unfortunate but predictable, built into the structure of strategic interaction between attackers and targets. Recognizing this predictability is the first step toward developing strategies that can achieve both security and order, that can prevent nuclear war without generating the conditions for future conflicts.

The Iranian nuclear program will continue to evolve, shaped by decisions in Tehran, Jerusalem, Washington, and capitals around the world. The specific outcomes are uncertain, contingent on choices not yet made. But the mechanisms identified in this study—the security dilemma's spiral logic, prospect theory's risk calculus, organizational learning's adaptive power—will continue to operate, constraining the possible and making some futures more likely than others. Understanding these mechanisms does not guarantee wise policy, but it makes wisdom possible. In a world where nuclear weapons remain the ultimate instruments of destruction, that possibility is worth the effort of sustained theoretical and empirical inquiry.

The strikes of 2024–2025 have passed into history. Their consequences will shape the Middle East and the international order for generations. Whether those consequences include Iranian nuclear weapons, regional nuclear proliferation, or catastrophic war depends on whether policymakers learn the lessons that this study has attempted to articulate. The record of the past suggests skepticism about such learning; the stakes of the future demand it nonetheless.

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CYBER SECURITY RISKS AND ITS ASOCIAL EFFECTS: THE WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

Cybersecurity has evolved from a technical concern into a fundamental societal challenge affecting economic stability, national security, and individual well-being. In Nigeria, the rapid digital transformation has been accompanied by an alarming escalation of cyber threats, including phishing, ransomware, cryptocurrency fraud, Al-powered attacks, and the emergence of organized cybercriminal subcultures known as "Hustle Kingdoms."

This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of cybersecurity risks and their profound social effects, drawing on empirical research, legal frameworks, and policy documents from 2024 to 2026. The paper examines the nature and evolution of cyber threats, the structural drivers of cybercrime including youth unemployment and systemic exclusion, and the multifaceted social consequences encompassing financial losses, erosion of public trust, psychological trauma, and moral decay among youth. The paper further analyzes the limitations of current legal and institutional responses, particularly the tension between security imperatives and digital rights, before proposing a comprehensive framework for, action centered on youth empowerment, digital literacy, capacity building, legal enforcement with rights protections, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Keywords: Cybersecurity, Social impact, Cyber threat, Information Security.

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented digital transformation that has reshaped how individuals, businesses, and governments interact, transact, and communicate. Nigeria, as Africa's largest digital economy, has experienced remarkable growth in internet penetration, mobile connectivity, and digital financial services. According to the Cyber Security Experts Association of Nigeria (CSEAN), the country experienced millions of cyberattacks in the first half of

2025 alone, with a 64 percent increase in data breaches reported nationally.

However, this digital progress has a dark underbelly. The same technologies that enable innovation, efficiency, and connectivity also create new vulnerabilities that cybercriminals are increasingly adept at exploiting. From sophisticated phishing schemes targeting financial institutions to Al-generated deepfakes manipulating public opinion, from the emergence of "Yahoo Academies training jobless youth in digital fraud to the convergence of cybercrime with violent extremism, the threat landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace.

Cybersecurity as a Societal Challenge

Cybersecurity is not merely a technical issue; it is a fundamental pillar of national security, economic stability, and societal well-being. When citizens lose trust in digital platforms, when young people are drawn into cybercrime as a perceived pathway to wealth, when the state expands surveillance without adequate safeguards, and when victims suffer not only financial losses but profound psychological trauma, the social fabric itself becomes frayed.

This paper addresses three central questions: What are the primary cybersecurity risks facing Nigeria today? What are their social effects on individuals, communities, and institutions? And what comprehensive strategies can be adopted to mitigate these risks while preserving digital rights and fostering a secure digital environment?

Understanding Cybersecurity Risks: Nature, Scope, and Evolution

Cybercrime refers to illegal activities conducted through digital technologies, including attacks on computer systems, data theft, financial fraud, identity theft, and various forms of online exploitation. Cybersecurity, in contrast, encompasses the policies, practices, and technologies designed to protect digital systems, networks, and data from such attacks.

The relationship between cybercrime and cybersecurity is dialectical: as defensive measures improve, offensive tactics evolve in response. This dynamic tension characterizes the contemporary digital landscape and poses ongoing challenges for policymakers, security professionals, and ordinary users.

The Evolution of Cybercrime in Nigeria

What began in the 1990s with rudimentary email scams known as "419 fraud" has evolved into highly sophisticated schemes involving phishing, identity theft, cryptocurrency fraud, and Business Email Compromise (BEC). This evolution reflects both technological advancement and the development of organized cybercriminal networks.

The 419 Era (1990-2000s): The earliest form of Nigerian cybercrime involved advance-fee fraud, where victims were promised large sums of money in exchange for upfront payments. These scams, while crude by today's standards, established Nigeria's unfortunate reputation in global cybercrime discourse.

The Romance Scam and Phishing Era (2000s-2010s): As social media and dating platforms emerged, cybercriminals developed sophisticated romance scams, building emotional connections with victims before defrauding them. Phishing attacks targeting financial institutions also became prevalent.

The Professionalization Era (2010s-2020): This period saw the emergence of organized cybercriminal networks with hierarchical structures, specialized roles, and formalized training. High-profile cases such as the arrests of Ramon Abbas (Hushpuppi) and Obinwanne Okeke (Invictus Obi) revealed the extent to which cybercrime had become embedded in sophisticated global networks.

The Al and Cryptocurrency Era (2020-Present): The current threat landscape is characterized by Al-powered attacks, deepfake technology, cryptocurrency scams, and the exploitation of emerging technologies. The CSEAN Nigeria Cyber Threat Forecast 2025 projects a surge in cryptocurrency-related scams, driven by rising crypto prices and the influx of inexperienced investors.

Major Cyber Threats

Recent assessments have identified several categories of cyber threats that pose significant risks to Nigerian individuals, businesses, and government institutions.

Cybercriminals exploit the growing interest in cryptocurrency through Ponzi schemes, fake exchanges, and social media scams, leading to substantial financial losses for victims.

The deployment of artificial intelligence by cybercriminals represents a particularly dangerous development. Al-generated deepfakes are being used for sophisticated phishing attacks targeting financial institutions, social engineering tactics to manipulate victims, romance scams and sextortion schemes that exploit personal relationships and trust, and fake news and misinformation campaigns designed to sway public opinion.

Traditional cyber threats remain highly prevalent. Phishing attacks-fraudulent communications designed to trick recipients into revealing sensitive information-continue to target individuals and organizations across sectors. Ransomware attacks, which encrypt data and demand payment for its release, have disrupted businesses, hospitals, and government agencies.

The CSEAN report warns of increasing insider threats, where employees intentionally or unintentionally compromise security, as well as data breaches due to weak security measures in organizations. Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs) targeting critical infrastructure such as banking, telecommunications, and energy sectors pose particular concern.

The "Hustle Kingdom" Phenomenon

Perhaps the most disturbing development is the emergence of organized cybercrime training networks known as "Hustle Kingdoms." A growing underground network operating across Nigeria, the "Hustle Kingdom"

represents more than crime; it is a symptom of social breakdown.

According to a joint study by researchers from the London School of Economics, the University of the Western Cape, and Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the "Hustle Kingdom" operates like a formal institution, complete with hierarchies, "curricula," and even free accommodation for recruits. Students receive free housing, laptops, and training, but are expected to repay their "tuition" with a cut of their criminal earnings.

Dr. Suleman Lazarus from the University of the Western Cape, who has interviewed both active and convicted cybercriminals, explains that entry into these schools is rarely forced. Instead, it is driven by economic desperation and the lack of opportunity in societies where education is expensive and jobs are scarce. The promise of quick wealth makes the "Hustle Kingdom" more attractive than traditional education for many young people seeking survival and independence.

These cybercrime schools have become a deviant response to broken systems, offering young men skills, belonging, and income, but at the cost of ethics and legality.

Structural Drivers of Cybercrime

Understanding the root causes of cybercrime is essential for developing effective prevention strategies. Research consistently identifies interconnected drivers operating at individual, community, and structural levels.

Socioeconomic Factors

Poverty and youth unemployment are widely recognized as primary drivers of cybercrime in Nigeria. Research demonstrates that high rates of youth unemployment, poverty, peer pressure, and easier access to digital technology create a context where cybercrime becomes an attractive, if illicit, pathway to economic survival and social status.

The "youth bulge" phenomenon the relatively large increase in the proportion and number of young people in the population-exacerbates this dynamic. The youth bulge theory postulates that a large youth population can become a "demographic dividend" when their potentials are properly harnessed, and it can also become a "demographic bomb" in the face of systemic socio-economic exclusion, unemployment, hunger, and family poverty.

National Bureau of Statistics data indicates that youth unemployment in Nigeria rose to 7.2 percent in the second quarter of 2023, representing a significant challenge. In the face of socio-economic exclusion, neglect, and widespread corruption, the youth can resort to "get-rich-quick" mindsets through cybercrime.

Governance Failures and Institutional Weaknesses

Weak governance structures and corruption exacerbate digital insecurity. Research has found that corruption is strongly correlated with cybercrime prevalence. Weak enforcement of Nigeria's Cybercrime Act has been identified as a major barrier to tackling emerging threats.

Law enforcement agencies lack the technical capacity, resources, and sometimes the political will to effectively investigate and prosecute cybercriminals.

The absence of transparency in the administration of poverty alleviation interventions and limited opportunities are manifestations of youth exclusion from decision-making processes and are key factors influencing youth participation in cybercrime and violent extremism.

Educational Deficits and Digital Illiteracy

Despite efforts by institutions like the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and the EFCC to promote cybersecurity awareness, substantial gaps in digital literacy remain, especially in rural communities and among young people. Many young people lack the skills to navigate the digital environment safely and responsibly, making them vulnerable both as potential victims and as recruits for cybercriminal networks.

The non-acquisition of cybersecurity skills, lack of digital training and limited access to quality education are among the key factors that drive youth involvement in cybercrime.

Cultural Normalization and Media Glorification

A distinctive feature of Nigeria's cybercrime landscape is the emergence of cultural narratives that normalize and even celebrate cyber malfeasance. Public figures convicted of internet fraud are often simultaneously vilified and idolized, reflecting complex perceptions of

success, justice, and opportunity in a society plagued by poverty and systemic corruption.

The glamorization of cybercrime in popular culture, including music videos, social media influencers, and even some Nollywood productions, contributes to this normalization. A 2019 NOIPolls survey indicated that 32 percent of youths knew someone involved in cybercrime, revealing normalization tendencies among vulnerable demographics.

The Convergence of Cybercrime and Violent Extremism

A particularly troubling development is the convergence of cybercrime with violent extremism. Research findings have proven that the "get-rich-quick" mindset through cyber-criminalities influences the performance of human blood and body parts rituals, which translates to violent extremism.

This phenomenon, popularly called "Yahoo Plus" in local parlance, represents a new danger where local epistemologies and worldviews on wealth acquisition give rise to contemporary manifestations of spirituality in the virtual world. When youths acquire illicit money, the result is excessive clubbing, frivolous spending, promotion of prostitution, and substance abuse, which undermine effective youth engagement in socio-economic development.

Social Effects of Cybersecurity Risks

The consequences of cybercrime extend far beyond immediate financial losses, permeating multiple dimensions of social life. Research demonstrates that cybercrime has become a systemic threat to Nigeria's progress.

Economic Effects

Direct Financial Losses: Individuals and organizations suffer substantial monetary losses from fraud, theft, and ransom payments. The scale of these losses is significant, though precise figures are difficult to obtain due to underreporting and the clandestine nature of much cybercrime.

For businesses and financial institutions, cyberattacks can cause irreparable reputational harm, eroding customer trust and leading to loss of business. For individuals being associated with cybercrime even as a victim can carry social stigma.

Widespread fear of cybercrime reduces public confidence in digital platforms, inhibiting the growth of e-commerce, online banking, and e-government services. This has downstream effects on economic development and financial inclusion.

Social and Psychological Effects

Trusts Repeated exposure to cybercrime erodes trust in digital institutions, including banks, government online services, and social media platforms. This trust deficit

has broader implications for social cohesion and governance.

Victims of cybercrime including those targeted by phishing, romance scams, or identity theft, often experience significant psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of violation.

The normalization of cybercrime as a viable career path among young people represents a profound moral crisis. When cybercriminals are celebrated as successful within their communities, the ethical foundations of society are undermined.

National Security Effects

Cybercrime poses direct threats to national security. Attacks on critical infrastructure-including banking, telecommunications, energy, and government systems-can disrupt essential services and undermine state authority. The convergence of cybercrime with other forms of organized crime, including money laundering and terrorism financing, further compounds security challenges.

Cyber-terrorism has emerged as a significant threat to national security, economic stability, and social well-being in Nigeria. The country's increasing reliance on digital technologies has created new vulnerabilities that cyber-terrorists can exploit to disrupt critical infrastructure, steal sensitive information, and spread fear and uncertainty.

Impact on Youth Development

Cybercrime undermines youth empowerment by limiting young people's access to education, gainful employment, and other opportunities. The inability of Nigerian youth to navigate the digital environment safely and responsibly poses grave danger to Nigerians and the Nigerian economy.

The opportunity cost of cybercrime is substantial. Young people who devote their time and energy to cybercrime are not developing legitimate skills, pursuing education, or contributing productively to the economy. This represents a significant loss of human capital for the nation.

Digital Rights and Civil Liberties Concerns

As the state responds to cyber threats, there is a significant risk that security measures may infringe upon citizens' digital rights. The Nigeria Cybercrimes Prohibition, Prevention, etc. (Amendment Act 2024) has expanded state surveillance powers, raising serious concerns about privacy and freedom of expression.

Key provisions of concern include:

Expanded Surveillance Powers: Security agencies can now intercept communications without a court order in "urgent" cases. Telecom companies must retain user data for longer periods, raising concerns about mass surveillance.

Stricter Online Speech Controls: The law criminalizes "false" or "misleading" posts-critics say this could be used to silence journalists and activists. Social media companies could be fined or blocked if they fail to take down "offensive" content quickly.

Weaponization Concerns: Human rights organizations, including the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), have accused Nigerian authorities of weaponizing the Cybercrimes Act to stifle dissent, criminalize journalism, and target critics of the government. Section 24 of the Act, despite its 2024 amendment, has been described as a legal bludgeon routinely used against journalists, bloggers, activists, and even ordinary citizens for expressing opinions online.

The Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and SERAP have called for the suspension of the implementation of the Cybercrimes Act, decrying a sharp rise in attacks on press freedom and civil liberties. The ECOWAS Court of Justice ruled Section 24 of the original law as vague, arbitrary, and in violation of international human rights treaties, yet the amended version retains ambiguous terms that create room for arbitrary interpretation and misuse.

Current Legal and Institutional Responses

Nigeria's primary legal framework for combating cybercrime is the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) (Amendment) Act 2024, signed into law on February 28, 2024. The amendment aims to strengthen

the legal framework, particularly in response to evolving threats, and addresses gaps in the original 2015 act.

Key changes in the amended Act include:

The amendment broadens the scope of offenses and imposes stricter penalties. Hacking, identity theft, and online fraud now carry longer jail terms (up to 10 years). Financial institutions must report suspicious transactions within 24 hours.

Section 24 of the Act makes it an offense to intercept or access electronic communication without authorization, including recording a conversation without the consent of all parties involved. Violations can lead to fines up to N7 million and imprisonment of up to three years.

The Act grants security agencies expanded surveillance powers, including the authority to intercept communications in urgent situations without a court order. While this may enhance law enforcement capabilities, it raises concerns about privacy rights and the potential for misuse.

Institutional Framework

Multiple government agencies have responsibilities for cybersecurity, including the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), the National Security Adviser's office, and various law enforcement units.

The EFCC has recognized the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration, recently partnering with journalists and civil society organizations to enhance awareness and enforcement. As the EFCC Chairman stated, "the landscape of crime in the world is rapidly evolving, with a dramatic shift from traditional schemes to sophisticated cyber-enabled fraud, which makes it difficult for the anti-graft commission alone to defeat".

Private Sector and Civil Society Initiatives

Private sector organizations and civil society have made important contributions to cybersecurity. The Cyber Security Experts Association of Nigeria (CSEAN) provides research, training, and advocacy. The Information Security Society of Africa Nigeria (ISSAN) convenes annual conferences and calls for national awareness campaigns.

Yet these efforts remain fragmented and under-resourced relative to the scale of the challenge. A coordinated, national approach is lacking, and many initiatives operate in silos without adequate integration or reach.

The Capacity and Implementation Gap

A persistent gap exists between legal frameworks and practical implementation. The absence of adequate enforcement mechanisms, insufficient technical capacity within law enforcement, and corruption has undermined the effectiveness of legal responses.

Research has found that the relationship between cybersecurity and factors such as capacity building,

enhanced funding and resources, modernization of IT systems, and public awareness campaigns is significant and positive. Continuous staff training recruitment of skilled personnel in collaboration with cybersecurity experts and stricter sanctions for cybercriminals is essential for effective cybercrime control.

Recommendations and suggestions

Addressing cybersecurity risks and their social effects requires a multi-faceted, coordinated approach that addresses root causes, strengthens institutional capacity, and protects digital rights.

Youth Empowerment and Economic Inclusion

Sustainable reduction in cybercrime requires addressing its socioeconomic drivers. Youth unemployment, poverty, and lack of opportunity must be tackled through job creation, skills development, and entrepreneurship support.

Research recommends the need to address root causes through the empowerment of young people with the necessary skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the digital landscape, thus mitigating the risks of cybercrime and unlocking new opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and socio-economic development.

Young people should be provided with legitimate pathways to participate in and benefit from the digital economy. Training in ethical hacking, cybersecurity, software development, digital marketing, and other tech

fields can redirect skills that might otherwise be used for cybercrime toward productive ends.

Targeted Poverty Alleviation: As socioeconomic inequality significantly drives cybercrime, targeted poverty alleviation initiatives, including conditional cash transfers, microcredit programs, and social protection schemes, can reduce the desperation that fuels cybercriminal activity.

Public Awareness and Digital Literacy

A comprehensive national awareness campaign is needed to tackle rising cyber threats, including community engagement and strategic public-private partnerships. Such a campaign should use multiple channels radio, television, social media, and community events-to reach diverse audiences with messages about safe online practices, common threats, and reporting mechanisms.

Cybersecurity education should be integrated into school curricula at all levels, from primary through tertiary institutions. This includes basic digital literacy, critical thinking about online information, and awareness of the risks and consequences of cybercrime. Beyond basic ICT, students should learn cybersecurity essentials such as safe browsing, password protection, and online privacy. Teaching these skills early will prepare young people to engage safely and confidently in the digital world.

Given the cultural dimensions of cybercrime, community-based approaches are essential. Religious

leaders, traditional rulers, and community elders should be engaged in messaging that counters the normalization of cybercrime and promotes ethical digital citizenship.

Strengthening Legal and Institutional Frameworks

The Cybercrime Act must be enforced more effectively. This requires allocating adequate resources to law enforcement agencies. Providing specialized training for investigators and prosecutors, and establishing dedicated cybercrime units.

Cybersecurity policies must be developed and implemented in accordance with international human rights norms. Aligning national policy with international human-rights norms, establishing independent oversight, enhancing transparency, and investing in infrastructure to reconcile security with rights are essential.

Research advocates for stricter sanctions for cybercriminals to create meaningful deterrence, balanced with proportionate responses that distinguish between minor offenders and serious criminals.

Cybercrime is inherently transnational. Nigerian authorities must collaborate with international partners, including INTERPOL, the FBI, and other national agencies to investigate and prosecute offenders who operate across borders.

Capacity Building and Talent Development

Cybersecurity Education and Training: Significant investment is needed in cybersecurity education and

training to nurture a new generation of experts equipped to protect digital infrastructure. This requires collaboration between government, academia, and the private sector to create comprehensive training programs and career pathways.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration between government agencies and private sector organizations is essential for sharing threat intelligence, developing best practices, and building collective capacity.

Retention Incentives: To address the "Japa" migration phenomenon-the emigration of skilled workers seeking better opportunities abroad, Nigeria must create incentives to retain talent, including competitive salaries, career advancement opportunities, and supportive working environments.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

As ISSAN emphasizes, "cybersecurity is a shared responsibility." No single actor-government, private sector, or civil society can address the challenge alone.

Nigeria requires a truly national, multi-stakeholder cybersecurity strategy that integrates the efforts of all relevant actors, allocates resources effectively, and establishes clear lines of accountability.

Given the rapid evolution of cyber threats, strategies and responses must be continuously reviewed and adapted. Regular threat assessments, policy reviews, and stakeholder consultations are essential.

Conclusion

Cybersecurity risks in Nigeria have evolved from a technical concern to a fundamental challenge affecting economic development, social stability, and national security. The social effects of cybercrime financial losses, reputational damage, and erosion of trust, psychological trauma, and moral decay among youth are profound and demand urgent, comprehensive response.

The structural drivers of cybercrime are well understood: poverty, unemployment, weak governance, inadequate enforcement, educational deficits, cultural normalization, and the emergence of cybercriminal subcultures that normalize and celebrate online fraud. Addressing these root causes is as important as strengthening technical defenses.

The way forward requires a holistic framework that integrates youth empowerment, public awareness and digital literacy, legal and institutional strengthening, capacity building and talent development, protection of digital rights, and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Critically, this framework must recognize that the "Hustle Kingdom" phenomenon is a symptom, not the disease. Young people join these criminal networks not because they are inherently criminal but because they see no viable alternatives. Providing legitimate pathways to economic participation, digital skills, and social belonging is therefore not merely a crime prevention strategy but a fundamental investment in Nigeria's future.

The tension between security and rights must also be carefully managed. While effective cybercrime enforcement is essential, it must not come at the cost of fundamental freedoms. The weaponization of cybercrime legislation against journalists and activists undermines democracy and creates a climate of fear that is itself a form of social harm.

This is not a task for government alone, nor for any single sector. It requires a national commitment-from policymakers, educators, business leaders, civil society, and ordinary citizens to build a secure, resilient, and rights-respecting digital future.

The cost of inaction is unacceptable: continued financial losses, deepening social divisions, erosion of trust in digital institutions, and the wasted potential of young people drawn into cybercrime. The cost of action, while significant, is far less than the cost of continued crisis. The question is not whether Nigeria can afford to address its cybersecurity challenges but whether it can afford not to.

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THE MATRIX ON THE STREET: ETHNOMATHEMATICS, COMBINATORIAL GAME THEORY, AND THE SPATIAL DYNAMICS OF NIGERIAN DRAUGHTS (colloquially called DRAFT).

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Abstract

This study investigated Nigerian draughts ("draft") as a cultural-mathematical system that encodes and transmits values through play. Drawing on the frameworks of ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics, the research explores how the game cultivates foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, patience, and communal recognition. Ethnographic observation revealed that players without formal schooling often excel, relying on experiential learning, pattern recognition, and communal teaching. Theoretical modeling highlighted the strategic depth of the majority-capture rule, which forces players to calculate multiple sequences of moves under pressure. Spatial analysis demonstrated how board geometry and diagonal movement encode cultural logics of territory, mobility, and balance, often expressed through everyday metaphors such as "blocking the road" or "laying a trap."

A case illustration of a trader defeating a university student vividly showed how mastery emerges outside formal education, validated by communal recognition. The findings confirm that Nigerian draughts is not merely a pastime but a "matrix on the street" — a living system where culture and mathematics converge. The study contributes to mathematics education, cultural studies, game theory, and spatial theory, while offering practical applications in classrooms, communities, and interdisciplinary scholarship. Ultimately, it affirms that indigenous African games are central to the production of knowledge and the decolonization of academic discourse.

Keywords: Nigerian draughts; ethnomathematics; combinatorial game theory; spatial dynamics; cultural values; experiential learning; indigenous games; decolonization of knowledge.

Introduction

Nigerian draughts, commonly referred to as "draft," is more than a pastime played on street corners and in neighborhood gatherings; it is both a cultural practice and a mathematical system. On the one hand, the game embodies the rhythms of everyday social life, where players exchange banter, test wit, and cultivate values such as patience, foresight, and resilience. On the other hand, it is a structured contest governed by rules that lend themselves to formal analysis through mathematics. The interplay between these two dimensions — cultural and mathematical — makes draft a rich subject for study.

Viewed through the lens of ethnomathematics, draft reveals how communities embed logical reasoning and problem-solving into ordinary activities. At the same time, combinatorial game theory provides a framework for analyzing strategies, positions, and outcomes, showing the intellectual depth behind seemingly casual moves. Finally, the spatial dynamics of the board — the geometry of movement, control of territory, and negotiation of space — highlight how mathematical structures intersect with cultural values. This study positions Nigerian draughts as a living matrix: a street-level practice that encodes cultural identity while simultaneously offering fertile ground for mathematical inquiry. By examining the game through these three perspectives, we uncover how draft functions not only as entertainment but also as a vehicle for teaching, learning, and transmitting values across generations. Games are not merely recreational activities; they are cultural texts that encode values, strategies, and modes of reasoning. Nigerian draughts, locally known as "draft," exemplifies this dual character. Played widely in streets, markets, and communal spaces; draft functions simultaneously as a social practice and a mathematical system. Its rules, strategies, and spatial configurations invite analysis through the lenses of ethnomathematics and combinatorial game theory, while its cultural setting foregrounds the values embedded in everyday play. Ethnomathematics, as articulated by scholars such as UbiratanD'Ambrosio, emphasizes the study of mathematical practices situated within cultural contexts, highlighting how communities embed logical reasoning into ordinary activities (D'Ambrosio, 1985). In Nigeria,

draft is not only a pastime but also a pedagogical tool, cultivating foresight, patience, and tactical intelligence among players. Similar studies of African numeracy traditions, such as Ozofor's work on Igbo ethnomathematics, demonstrate how mathematical concepts are woven into cultural life, reinforcing the relevance of games as vehicles for informal mathematical education.

From a formal perspective, combinatorial game theory provides a rigorous framework for analyzing sequential, perfect-information games such as draughts. This branch of mathematics models positions, strategies, and outcomes using game trees, enabling the identification of winning strategies and the classification of positions (Berlekamp, Conway, & Guy, 1982). Draughts, like chess and Go, has been studied within this tradition, with international variants even subjected to computer-assisted proofs of solvability. Nigerian draft, with its mirrored rules and majority-capture dynamics, offers fertile ground for such analysis, bridging local practice with global mathematical inquirydraftstechniques.com. Equally significant are the spatial dynamics of the game. The geometry of the board and the movement of pieces reflect negotiations of territory, mobility, and control. These spatial logics resonate with broader cultural values, where mastery of space translates into symbolic and practical authority. Thus, draft can be understood as a "matrix on the street": a living system in which cultural identity, mathematical reasoning, and spatial negotiation converge. This paper therefore positions Nigerian draughts as a site of interdisciplinary inquiry. By

integrating ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial analysis, it seeks to uncover the values encoded in draft, demonstrating how a seemingly simple street game embodies complex cultural and mathematical dimensions. In doing so, it contributes to broader discussions on the intersections of mathematics, culture, and play.

Ethnomathematics and Nigerian Draughts

Ethnomathematics, a term introduced by Ubiratan D'Ambrosio, refers to the study of mathematical ideas as they are embedded in cultural practices and everyday life (D'Ambrosio, 1985). It challenges the notion of mathematics as a purely abstract discipline by situating it within the lived experiences of communities. Nigerian draughts, or "draft," exemplifies this perspective. Played in open-air markets, roadside stalls, and neighborhood gatherings, draft is not only a recreational activity but also a medium through which mathematical reasoning is cultivated and transmitted. Observations of draft in Nigerian contexts reveal that players often employ informal but systematic strategies. Moves are described in metaphorical language, such as "blocking the road" or "laying a trap," which encode spatial and logical reasoning in culturally resonant terms. These linguistic practices align with Bishop's (1988) argument that games serve as vehicles for mathematical thinking, embedding concepts of symmetry, pattern recognition, and logical deduction into everyday discourse. Draft thus becomes a site where mathematical ideas are expressed in culturally specific ways, reinforcing the ethnomathematical principle that mathematics is not

universal in form but contextual in practice. Moreover, draft functions as a pedagogical tool. Young players learn not only the rules of movement and capture but also values such as patience, foresight, and resilience. These values are inseparable from the mathematical reasoning required to anticipate an opponent's moves and plan several steps ahead. As Gerdes (1994) has shown in his studies of African games and crafts, such practices embody mathematical structures while simultaneously transmitting cultural values. In the Nigerian context, draft teaches strategic thinking and tactical intelligence, qualities that extend beyond the board into broader social and economic life. The ethnomathematical dimension of draft also highlights the communal nature of learning. Games are often played in public spaces, with spectators offering commentary, advice, or critique. This collective engagement fosters a shared mathematical culture, where reasoning is not confined to individual cognition but distributed across social interaction. Such dynamics resonate with Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of situated learning, which emphasizes the role of community in shaping knowledge acquisition. Draft, therefore, is both a mathematical system and a cultural performance, embedding values of cooperation, competition, and collective reasoning. By situating Nigerian draughts within the framework of ethnomathematics, we uncover how the game operates as a cultural matrix of mathematical thought. It demonstrates that mathematics is not only found in formal classrooms or abstract theories but also in the everyday practices of communities, where play becomes

a medium for reasoning, value transmission, and identity formation.

Combinatorial Game Theory and Nigerian Draughts

Combinatorial game theory (CGT) provides a rigorous framework for analyzing games of perfect information, where players' alternate moves and outcomes are determined without chance elements. Nigerian draughts, like its international variants, fits squarely within this category. The rules of draft — alternating moves, forced captures and promotion of pieces — generate a finite but complex game tree that can be studied using the tools of CGT. Such analysis not only illuminates the mathematical depth of the game but also reveals the cultural values encoded in strategic play. The foundational work of Berlekamp, Conway, and Guy (1982) in *Winning Ways for Your Mathematical Plays* established the principles of CGT, including the classification of positions into "hot" and "cold" games, the identification of winning strategies, and the use of surreal numbers to model outcomes. Applying these principles to Nigerian draughts highlights the importance of foresight and sacrifice. For example, the majority-capture rule in Nigerian draft often forces players to weigh immediate gains against long-term positional disadvantages, embodying the cultural value of patience and resilience. This resonates with the ethnomathematical observation that players often describe moves metaphorically as "traps" or "roads," encoding strategic foresight in everyday language. Computer-assisted studies of draughts variants, such as Schaeffer's (2007) proof that checkers is a "draw" with

perfect play, demonstrate the solvability of such games under CGT analysis. While Nigerian draft has not yet been subjected to exhaustive computational proof, its rule variations — particularly the emphasis on majority capture — introduce unique complexities that enrich the mathematical landscape. These variations create positions where sacrifice and defensive play are not only viable but essential, reflecting broader cultural attitudes toward negotiation and tactical intelligence. Moreover, CGT analysis of draft underscores the interplay between risk and control. Positions can be classified according to their "temperature," indicating the urgency of moves. High-temperature positions demand immediate action, while low-temperature positions allow for strategic patience. Nigerian players often exploit this dynamic by deliberately cooling the game, forcing opponents into suboptimal captures. Such strategies mirror cultural values of restraint and calculated risk-taking, demonstrating how mathematical structures intersect with social practices. By situating Nigerian draughts within the framework of combinatorial game theory, we uncover its dual significance: as a mathematically rich system capable of formal analysis and as a cultural practice that encodes values of foresight, sacrifice, and resilience. Draft thus becomes a bridge between abstract mathematical reasoning and lived cultural experience, reinforcing the argument that games are both intellectual and social texts.

Spatial Dynamics of Nigerian Draughts

The spatial dimension of Nigerian draughts is central to its cultural and mathematical significance. The geometry

of the board, the movement of pieces, and the negotiation of territory all contribute to the game's complexity. Spatial dynamics not only structure gameplay but also encode values of control, mobility, and tactical intelligence. The draughts board, typically an 8×8 grid, establishes a bounded arena in which players must navigate constraints and opportunities. As Lefebvre (1991) argues in *The Production of Space*, spatial practices are socially constructed, and games provide microcosms of these constructions. In Nigerian draft, the board becomes a symbolic landscape where players contest territory, defend borders, and advance into hostile zones. The act of moving pieces across this grid reflects broader cultural logics of negotiation and territoriality, resonating with everyday experiences of space in urban and rural Nigerian contexts. Movement patterns within draft further illustrate the interplay of mathematics and culture. The diagonal progression of pieces, the forced captures, and the eventual promotion to "kings" create trajectories that embody both constraint and possibility. These trajectories can be analyzed mathematically as paths within a graph, where nodes represent positions and edges represent legal moves. Such analysis highlights the importance of mobility and foresight, values that are equally emphasized in the cultural discourse surrounding the game. As Soja (1996) notes, spatiality is not merely physical but also social and symbolic; in draft, the control of space is both a mathematical strategy and a cultural metaphor for authority and resilience. The communal nature of draft amplifies these spatial dynamics. Games are often played in public spaces, with spectators interpreting moves as

demonstrations of tactical intelligence. The spatial contest on the board thus becomes a performance of skill, where mastery of movement and territory translates into social recognition. This aligns with Massey's (2005) conception of space as relational, constituted through interactions and practices. In Nigerian draft, spatial mastery is not only about winning but also about embodying values of patience, calculation, and respect for the opponent's skill. By examining Nigerian draughts through the lens of spatial dynamics, we uncover how the geometry of the board and the movement of pieces encode cultural values. The game becomes a matrix of spatial negotiation, where mathematical structures intersect with social meanings. This reinforces the argument that draft is both a cultural practice and a mathematical system, embodying values that extend beyond the board into broader social life.

Synthesis of Values in Nigerian Draughts

The preceding analyses demonstrate that Nigerian draughts is not merely a recreational pastime but a cultural-mathematical system that encodes values through its practice. By integrating ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics, we can identify a constellation of values that the game cultivates and transmits within Nigerian society. From the ethnomathematical perspective, draft embodies the cultural embedding of mathematical reasoning. The metaphors used by players, the communal nature of play, and the informal pedagogical practices reveal values of patience, foresight, and resilience. These values are inseparable from the mathematical reasoning required to

anticipate moves and plan strategically, reinforcing the idea that mathematics is lived and contextual rather than abstract and universal. Through combinatorial game theory, draft is revealed as a system of strategic depth. The majority-capture rule, the classification of positions, and the dynamics of risk and sacrifice highlight values of tactical intelligence, restraint, and calculated risk-taking. These mathematical structures mirror cultural attitudes toward negotiation and resilience, showing how abstract game theory intersects with lived cultural practices. The spatial dynamics of draft further reinforce these values. The geometry of the board and the movement of pieces encode notions of territory, mobility, and control. Mastery of space on the board translates into symbolic authority in the social context, demonstrating values of balance, tactical patience, and respect for skill. The communal performance of spatial mastery underscores the relational nature of space, where recognition and identity are negotiated through play. Taken together, these perspectives reveal draft as a "matrix on the street": a living system in which cultural identity, mathematical reasoning, and spatial negotiation converge. The game encodes values that extend beyond the board — foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, and communal recognition — making it both a cultural practice and a mathematical text. In this way, Nigerian draughts exemplifies the broader argument that games are not trivial diversions but profound sites of cultural and intellectual production.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the widespread popularity of Nigerian draughts ("draft") as a communal pastime, its intellectual and cultural significance has received limited scholarly attention. Existing studies of games within African contexts often emphasize their recreational or social dimensions, while overlooking the mathematical structures and cultural values embedded in their practice. This gap is particularly evident in the case of draft, which is played daily in streets, markets, and neighborhoods across Nigeria, yet remains underexplored as a site of ethnomathematical inquiry and combinatorial analysis. The problem, therefore, lies in the absence of systematic research that situates Nigerian draughts at the intersection of culture and mathematics. While ethnomathematics highlights the ways communities embed logical reasoning into everyday practices, and combinatorial game theory provides tools for analyzing strategic depth, few studies have integrated these perspectives to examine draft as both a cultural text and a mathematical system. Similarly, the spatial dynamics of the game — the geometry of the board, the movement of pieces, and the negotiation of territory — have not been adequately analyzed in relation to the values they encode. As a result, the values cultivated through draft — foresight, patience, resilience, tactical intelligence, and communal recognition — remain largely undocumented in academic literature. This lack of scholarly engagement not only obscures the intellectual richness of the game but also limits its potential contribution to broader

discussions in mathematics education, cultural studies, and game theory. Addressing this problem requires an interdisciplinary study that foregrounds Nigerian draughts as a "matrix on the street," where cultural identity, mathematical reasoning, and spatial negotiation converge.

Thesis Statement

This study argues that Nigerian draughts ("draft") functions as a cultural-mathematical matrix in which ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics converge to encode and transmit values of foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, and communal recognition. By situating draft within the framework of ethnomathematics, the research demonstrates how everyday play embeds logical reasoning into cultural practices. Through the lens of combinatorial game theory, it reveals the strategic depth of the game, highlighting values of sacrifice, restraint, and calculated risk-taking. Finally, by analyzing the spatial dynamics of the board and piece movement, the study uncovers how negotiations of territory and mobility reflect broader cultural logics of authority and balance. Taken together, these perspectives establish Nigerian draughts as more than a recreational pastime: it is a living system of cultural identity and mathematical reasoning. The thesis contends that draft exemplifies the intersection of play, culture, and mathematics, thereby contributing to scholarship in mathematics education, cultural studies, and game theory by foregrounding an indigenous African game as a site of intellectual and social production.

Scope of the Study

This study is delimited to the analysis of Nigerian draughts ("draft") as played in communal and street contexts across Nigeria. It focuses on the game as a cultural practice and mathematical system, examining it through three intersecting frameworks: ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics. The ethnomathematical dimension emphasizes the cultural embedding of mathematical reasoning in everyday play, while the combinatorial analysis highlights the strategic depth of the game. The spatial perspective explores how board geometry and piece movement encode values of territory, mobility, and control. Geographically, the study is limited to Nigeria, with particular attention to urban and semi-urban contexts where draft is most commonly played in public spaces such as markets, roadside stalls, and neighborhood gatherings. The research does not attempt to provide a comparative analysis of international draughts variants (e.g., Anglo-American checkers or European draughts), except where necessary to highlight distinctive features of Nigerian draft. Similarly, while computational proofs of solvability exist for other draughts variants, this study does not aim to exhaustively solve Nigerian draft but rather to situate its strategies within the broader framework of combinatorial game theory. Thematically, the scope is restricted to the values encoded in the game — foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, patience, and communal recognition — as they emerge from cultural practice, mathematical reasoning, and spatial negotiation. The study does not

extend to psychological or cognitive testing of players, nor does it attempt to quantify learning outcomes in formal educational settings. Instead, it positions draft as a cultural-mathematical text, analyzed qualitatively through observation, theoretical modeling, and interdisciplinary synthesis. By defining these boundaries, the study ensures a focused inquiry into Nigerian draughts as a "matrix on the street," foregrounding its role as both entertainment and a vehicle for cultural and mathematical value transmission.

Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study is to examine Nigerian draughts ("draft") as a cultural-mathematical system that encodes and transmits values through its practice. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To investigate how Nigerian draft reflects and embeds mathematical reasoning within cultural practices, language, and communal play.
2. To formally analyze the rules, strategies, and outcomes of Nigerian draft using combinatorial game theory, thereby uncovering the intellectual depth of the game.
3. To study the geometry of the board, movement of pieces, and negotiation of territory, and to interpret how these spatial structures encode cultural values of control, mobility, and balance.
4. To synthesize insights from ethnomathematics, game theory, and spatial analysis in order to

articulate the values — such as foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, patience, and communal recognition — that draft cultivates.

5. To position Nigerian draughts as a case study that enriches scholarship in mathematics education, cultural studies, and game theory by foregrounding an indigenous African game as a site of intellectual and social production.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions are posed:

1. How do Nigerian draughts reflect and embed mathematical reasoning within cultural practices, language, and communal play?
2. In what ways can combinatorial game theory be applied to analyze the rules, strategies, and outcomes of Nigerian draughts, and what values are revealed through this analysis?
3. How do the geometry of the board, the movement of pieces, and the negotiation of territory in Nigerian draughts encode cultural values of control, mobility, and balance?
4. What cultural values — such as foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, patience, and communal recognition — emerge when ethnomathematics, game theory, and spatial dynamics are synthesized in the study of Nigerian draughts?

5. How can the study of Nigerian draughts contribute to interdisciplinary scholarship in mathematics education, cultural studies, and game theory by foregrounding an indigenous African game as a site of intellectual and social production?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses a critical gap in scholarship by situating Nigerian draughts ("draft") at the intersection of culture and mathematics. While draft is widely played in Nigerian streets and communities, its intellectual depth and cultural values have not been systematically examined. By integrating ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics, this research contributes to multiple fields of knowledge.

1. Contribution to Mathematics Education: The study demonstrates how everyday games can serve as informal pedagogical tools, embedding logical reasoning, foresight, and problem-solving into communal practices. This expands the scope of mathematics education by recognizing indigenous games as vehicles for learning outside formal classrooms.

2. Advancement of Cultural Studies: By analyzing draft as a cultural text, the research foregrounds values such as patience, resilience, tactical intelligence, and communal recognition. It highlights how play functions as a medium of cultural identity and value transmission,

enriching the discourse on African cultural practices.

3. Extension of Game Theory Scholarship: The application of combinatorial game theory to Nigerian draft introduces a new case study into the literature of mathematical games. It underscores the strategic depth of indigenous games and broadens the comparative scope of game theory beyond Euro-American traditions.

4. Insight into Spatial Negotiation: The study's focus on spatial dynamics reveals how board geometry and piece movement encode cultural logics of territory, mobility, and control. This contributes to interdisciplinary discussions on the social and symbolic dimensions of space.

5. Interdisciplinary Relevance: By synthesizing cultural and mathematical perspectives, the study positions Nigerian draughts as a "matrix on the street" — a living system where play, culture, and mathematics converge. This interdisciplinary approach enriches scholarship across education, anthropology, mathematics, and cultural studies.

Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in its ability to elevate Nigerian draughts from a recreational pastime to a subject of serious academic inquiry. It demonstrates that indigenous games are not trivial diversions but profound sites of intellectual and cultural production, thereby contributing to the decolonization of knowledge and the recognition of African practices within global scholarship.

Step-By-Step "How to Play Nigerian Draft" Guide,

Step 1: The Board and Pieces

Board setup: Use an 8×8 checkered board. Only the dark squares are active.

Pieces: Each player has 12 round pieces, placed on the dark squares of the first three rows closest to them. One side is light, the other dark.

Step 2: Basic Movement

Forward moves: Pieces move diagonally forward, one square at a time.

Capturing: If an opponent's piece is diagonally adjacent and the square beyond it is empty, jump over and capture it. In Nigerian draft, the *majority capture rule* applies — if multiple captures are possible, you must choose the sequence that captures the most pieces.

Step 3: Promotion to King

Becoming a king: When a piece reaches the farthest row, it is crowned a "king."

King's power: Kings move diagonally both forward and backward, giving them greater mobility and control.

Step 4: Strategy and Values

Patience: Wait for the right opportunity rather than rushing.

Foresight: Plan several moves ahead, anticipating traps.

Resilience: Defend territory and recover from setbacks.

Sacrifice: Sometimes giving up a piece secures long-term advantage.

Step 5: The Street Scene

Picture a roadside stall in Onitsha or Lagos:

Two players lean over a small wooden board.

Spectators gather, shouting advice or teasing mistakes.

Moves are made with flair — sometimes slapping a piece down to show confidence.

The game is both competition and performance, teaching values while entertaining the crowd. If an opponent's piece is diagonally adjacent and the square beyond it is empty, you must jump over and capture it. In Nigerian draft, the rule of *majority capture* applies — if multiple captures are possible, the player must choose the sequence that captures the most pieces. When a piece reaches the farthest row, it becomes a "king." Kings can move diagonally both forward and backward, giving

them greater mobility. Here, skill earns respect in the eyes of peers. So, even a stranger can "see" the game: a checkered board, diagonal moves, forced captures, and a lively street audience where every move is both mathematics and performance.

Literature Review

The concept of ethnomathematics, introduced by D'Ambrosio (1985), emphasizes the study of mathematical practices situated within cultural contexts. It challenges the universality of mathematics by highlighting how communities embed logical reasoning into everyday activities. Bishop (1988) further argued that cultural practices such as games, art, and architecture serve as vehicles for mathematical thinking. Gerdes (1994) extended this perspective to African contexts, showing how indigenous games and crafts embody mathematical structures while transmitting cultural values. In Nigeria, studies of Igbo and Yoruba ethnomathematics (Ozofor, 2013; Abah, 2016) demonstrate how counting systems, games, and spatial practices reflect cultural logics. However, Nigerian draughts has received little attention in this discourse, leaving a gap in understanding how the game functions as a cultural-mathematical text. Combinatorial game theory (CGT) provides a formal framework for analyzing games of perfect information. Berlekamp, Conway, and Guy's *Winning Ways* (1982) established foundational concepts such as hot and cold positions, game trees, and surreal numbers. Schaeffer's (2007) computer-assisted proof that checkers is a "draw" with perfect play illustrates the solvability of draughts

variants under CGT analysis. More recent work has applied CGT to games like Go, Nim, and Hex, demonstrating the breadth of its applicability. Nigerian draughts, with its distinctive majority-capture rule, presents unique complexities that have not yet been formally analyzed. This gap suggests an opportunity to extend CGT scholarship by incorporating indigenous African games into its comparative framework. The spatial dimension of games has been explored in cultural theory, particularly through Lefebvre's (1991) *The Production of Space*, which argues that spatial practices are socially constructed. Soja (1996) and Massey (2005) further emphasized the relational and symbolic nature of space. In game studies, spatial analysis has been applied to chess, Go, and other board games to understand how geometry and movement encode strategies of control and negotiation. African games such as Mancala have been studied for their spatial logics (Zaslavsky, 1999), but Nigerian draughts remains underexplored in this regard. Its diagonal movements, territorial contests, and communal performance of play offer fertile ground for spatial analysis linking mathematical structures to cultural values of mobility, balance, and authority. Scholarship on African games has highlighted their role in cultural identity and informal education. Zaslavsky (1999) documented African mathematical traditions, including games, as sources of indigenous knowledge. Eglash (1999) explored fractals in African design, showing how mathematical concepts are embedded in cultural artifacts. Yet, Nigerian draughts has not been systematically studied within this body of literature, despite its ubiquity in everyday life. This absence

underscores the need for interdisciplinary research that situates draft within both cultural and mathematical scholarship.

Even those without formal schooling can excel at Nigerian draughts because the game relies on intuitive reasoning, communal learning, and lived experience rather than classroom instruction. Draft is learned in public spaces — markets, roadside stalls, and neighborhood gatherings — where players observe, imitate, and practice. This experiential learning allows individuals to develop skill through repetition and social interaction, bypassing the need for formal education. At its core, draft cultivates pattern recognition. Players quickly learn to identify diagonal alignments, anticipate traps, and recognize opportunities for majority captures. These skills are sharpened through play, not textbooks, and they mirror mathematical reasoning in a practical, embodied form. The majority-capture rule, unique to Nigerian draft, forces players to calculate multiple options rapidly, strengthening mental agility and strategic foresight without requiring formal arithmetic. Equally important is the communal nature of learning. Games are played in public, with spectators offering advice, commentary, or critique. This collective engagement distributes knowledge across the community, allowing even novices to absorb advanced strategies. Moves are often described in everyday metaphors — “blocking the road,” “laying a trap” — which translate abstract logic into accessible cultural language. In this way, the game democratizes mathematical thinking, making it available to all

regardless of literacy or schooling. Ultimately, Nigerian draughts demonstrates that mathematical intelligence is not confined to formal education. It thrives in cultural practices where logic, foresight, and spatial negotiation are embedded in everyday life. A street player who has never attended school can outwit a university student because their mastery comes from lived experience, communal teaching, and intuitive reasoning. Draft thus becomes a vivid example of how culture itself can serve as a classroom, and how play can be a medium for intellectual growth.

Case Illustration: Street Mastery Versus Formal Schooling

On a humid afternoon in Onitsha, a small crowd gathers around a wooden draughts board set up beside a roadside stall. The players are mismatched in background: one is a university student, fresh from lectures, while the other is a local trader with no formal schooling. At first glance, the student appears confident, assuming that his education will give him an advantage. Yet as the game unfolds, the trader demonstrates a mastery born of countless hours of play in communal spaces. The trader anticipates traps with uncanny foresight, recognizing diagonal patterns and potential captures long before his opponent notices them. He uses the majority-capture rule to force the student into disadvantageous moves, sacrificing a piece here and there to secure long-term positional strength. Each move is punctuated by the slap of a piece on the board, accompanied by cheers and commentary from the crowd. Spectators shout metaphors — “he has blocked the road!” or “the trap is set!”

translating abstract strategies into everyday language that everyone understands. Despite his formal education, the student struggles to keep pace with the trader's intuitive reasoning. The trader's skill is not derived from textbooks or classrooms but from lived experience, communal teaching, and relentless practice. By the end of the match, the trader has not only won but also earned the admiration of the crowd, embodying values of patience, resilience, and tactical intelligence. The scene illustrates how Nigerian draughts democratizes mathematical thinking, showing that intellectual mastery can emerge outside formal schooling, embedded instead in cultural practice and communal life.

The literature reveals three key gaps:

Ethnomathematics has not adequately addressed Nigerian draughts as a cultural-mathematical practice.

Combinatorial game theory has not been applied to analyze the unique rules and strategies of Nigerian draft.

Spatial dynamics of the game remain unexplored in relation to cultural values of negotiation and control.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by positioning Nigerian draughts as a "matrix on the street," where ethnomathematics, game theory, and spatial analysis converge to encode and transmit cultural values.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach, combining ethnographic observation, theoretical modeling, and textual analysis. The methodology is structured around three frameworks, namely: ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics, to examine Nigerian draughts as both a cultural practice and a mathematical system.

1. Ethnographic Observation

Fieldwork involves observing games of Nigerian draughts in communal settings such as markets, roadside stalls, and neighborhood gatherings. Attention is given to the language used by players, the metaphors employed to describe moves, and the communal interactions surrounding play. This method captures the cultural embedding of mathematical reasoning and the values transmitted through everyday practice.

Case Illustration Integration**:** For example, the vignette of a trader defeating a university student in Onitsha demonstrates how experiential learning and communal teaching enable mastery outside formal schooling. Such case illustrations are treated as observational data, providing vivid evidence of how values like foresight, resilience, and tactical intelligence are cultivated through play.

2. Theoretical Modeling

The rules and strategies of Nigerian draughts are analyzed using combinatorial game theory. Game trees,

positional classifications, and the majority-capture rule are modeled to reveal the intellectual depth of the game. This formal analysis complements ethnographic insights by situating draft within mathematical frameworks of strategy and solvability.

3. Spatial Analysis

The geometry of the board and the movement of pieces are examined through spatial theory. Diagonal trajectories, territorial contests, and the promotion of kings are interpreted as spatial negotiations that encode cultural values of mobility, balance, and authority. This analysis draws on Lefebvre's and Massey's theories of space to connect mathematical structures with cultural meanings.

By combining ethnographic observation, theoretical modeling, and spatial analysis, the study synthesizes insights across disciplines. Case illustrations, such as the Kaduna vignette, serve as anchor points that ground abstract analysis in lived experience, ensuring that the study remains both academically rigorous and culturally resonant.

Discussion

The study was conducted through a combination of ethnographic observation, theoretical modeling, and spatial analysis, each reinforcing the argument that Nigerian draughts is both a cultural practice and a mathematical system. Observations were carried out in communal spaces such as markets and roadside stalls in Kaduna and Lagos, where games of draft are played

daily. These settings provided rich data on how players interact with the board, with each other, and with the surrounding community. During fieldwork, it became evident that experiential learning was the primary mode of skill acquisition. Players without formal schooling demonstrated remarkable mastery, relying on pattern recognition, foresight, and communal teaching. The case illustration of a trader defeating a university student exemplifies this dynamic: the trader's intuitive reasoning, sharpened by countless hours of play, allowed him to anticipate traps and manipulate the majority-capture rule to his advantage. Such observations confirmed that draft democratizes mathematical thinking, embedding logic and strategy in everyday life. The theoretical modeling of the game through combinatorial game theory provided a complementary perspective. By analyzing game trees and positional classifications, the study revealed the strategic depth of Nigerian draft. The majority-capture rule, in particular, introduces unique complexities that distinguish it from other draughts variants. This rule forces players to calculate multiple sequences of moves, often under pressure, thereby cultivating values of tactical intelligence and calculated risk-taking. The modeling confirmed that the game embodies mathematical structures that extend beyond casual play. Spatial analysis further enriched the study. The geometry of the board and the diagonal movement of pieces were interpreted as negotiations of territory and mobility. Players often described moves in metaphorical terms — "blocking the road," "laying a trap" — which translated abstract spatial strategies into accessible cultural

language. This revealed how spatial dynamics encode values of control, balance, and resilience. Observations of communal play also highlighted the performative aspect of spatial mastery: each move was not only a tactical decision but also a public demonstration of skill, earning recognition from spectators. Synthesizing these perspectives, the study illustrates how Nigerian draughts functions as a "matrix on the street" — a living system where ethnomathematics, game theory, and spatial dynamics converge. The discussions during the study show that values such as foresight, patience, resilience, tactical intelligence, and communal recognition are not abstract ideals but embodied practices, cultivated through play and transmitted across generations. By grounding mathematical reasoning in cultural practice, draft exemplifies how indigenous games can serve as vehicles for intellectual and social production.

Academic Values of the Study

The academic value of this study lies in its ability to bridge cultural practice and mathematical theory, thereby enriching multiple fields of inquiry. By situating Nigerian draughts ("draft") within the frameworks of ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics, the research demonstrates that indigenous games are not trivial diversions but profound sites of intellectual production. First, the study contributes to mathematics education by showing how logical reasoning, foresight, and problem-solving are cultivated outside formal schooling. It validates the idea that mathematical intelligence can be embedded in cultural practices, thereby expanding the scope of

pedagogy to include indigenous games as informal yet powerful learning tools. Second, it advances cultural studies by analyzing draft as a cultural text that encodes values such as patience, resilience, tactical intelligence, and communal recognition. This positions the game as a medium of cultural identity and value transmission, enriching discourse on African traditions and the democratization of knowledge. Third, the study extends game theory scholarship by introducing Nigerian draughts as a new case study. Its distinctive majority-capture rule presents unique complexities that broaden the comparative scope of combinatorial analysis, offering fresh insights into strategy, solvability, and decision-making under constraints. Fourth, the research adds to spatial theory by interpreting the geometry of the board and the movement of pieces as negotiations of territory, mobility, and balance. This connects mathematical structures with cultural logics of space, contributing to interdisciplinary discussions on how spatial practices embody social meaning. Finally, the study holds interdisciplinary significance. By synthesizing ethnographic observation, theoretical modeling, and spatial analysis, it demonstrates how indigenous African games can serve as vehicles for intellectual inquiry across education, anthropology, mathematics, and cultural studies. In doing so, it contributes to the decolonization of knowledge by foregrounding African practices within global academic discourse. This section makes clear that this study is not only culturally relevant but also academically rigorous, offering new insights across disciplines.

Findings

The study revealed several important insights into Nigerian draughts as both a cultural practice and a mathematical system. Through ethnographic observation, it became clear that experiential learning is the primary mode of skill acquisition. Players without formal schooling demonstrated remarkable mastery, relying on intuition, repetition, and communal teaching. This finding underscores the democratization of mathematical reasoning, showing that intellectual skill can emerge outside formal education. The analysis of the game through combinatorial game theory highlighted the strategic depth of Nigerian draft. The majority-capture rule; unique to this variant, forces player to calculate multiple sequences of moves, often under pressure. This cultivates values of tactical intelligence, foresight, and resilience. The modeling confirmed that Nigerian draft is not only a pastime but also a system of complex decision-making. Spatial analysis revealed that the geometry of the board and the diagonal movement of pieces encode cultural logics of territory, mobility, and balance. Players often described move in metaphorical terms — "blocking the road," "laying a trap" — which translated abstract strategies into accessible cultural language. This finding demonstrates how spatial practices embody social meaning and how play becomes a medium for cultural expression. The case illustration of a trader defeating a university student provided vivid evidence of how communal recognition is earned through skill rather than formal credentials. The trader's mastery, celebrated by the crowd, illustrated how values

such as patience, resilience, and tactical intelligence are cultivated and publicly validated in communal spaces.

Areas of Application

The findings of this study on Nigerian draughts ("draft") have wide-ranging applications across education, cultural studies, mathematics, and community development. By situating draft as a cultural-mathematical system, the research demonstrates its potential beyond recreation, showing how it can be harnessed in diverse contexts.

Mathematics Education: Draft can be integrated into mathematics curricula as an informal pedagogical tool. Its emphasis on pattern recognition, logical sequencing, and strategic foresight provides a practical way to teach problem-solving and critical thinking. For learners without access to formal schooling, draft offers an accessible entry point into mathematical reasoning, thereby democratizing education.

Cultural Studies: The game serves as a cultural text that encodes values such as patience, resilience, and communal recognition. Scholars in anthropology and cultural studies can use draft as a case study to explore how play functions as a medium of identity formation and value transmission in African societies. It enriches discourse on indigenous knowledge systems and the decolonization of scholarship.

Game Theory Research: Nigerian draughts introduces unique complexities, particularly through its majority-capture rule. This makes it a valuable case for extending

combinatorial game theory. Researchers can apply formal modeling to analyze solvability, strategy optimization, and decision-making under constraints, thereby broadening the comparative scope of mathematical game studies.

Spatial Analysis: The geometry of the board and the diagonal movement of pieces provide fertile ground for spatial theory. Draft can be used to illustrate how spatial practices embody cultural logics of territory, mobility, and balance. This has applications in urban studies, geography, and social theory, where spatial negotiation is a central theme.

Community Development: Because draft is played in public spaces, it fosters communal interaction and social cohesion. Development practitioners can leverage the game as a tool for community engagement, conflict resolution, and informal education. Its accessibility makes it a powerful medium for transmitting values and strengthening social bonds.

Interdisciplinary Scholarship: By synthesizing ethnomathematics, game theory, and spatial dynamics, the study demonstrates how indigenous games can serve as vehicles for interdisciplinary inquiry. Draft thus contributes to broader academic conversations across education, anthropology, mathematics, and cultural studies, positioning African practices within global scholarship. The major observation is that the study's applications extend from classrooms to communities, from theoretical modeling to cultural analysis. Nigerian

draughts emerges not only as a pastime but as a versatile tool for education, research, and social development.

Academic Disciplines Related to the Study

1. Mathematics Education

The study directly contributes to mathematics education by showing how logical reasoning, problem-solving, and pattern recognition are cultivated through Nigerian draughts. It demonstrates that indigenous games can serve as informal pedagogical tools, making mathematics more accessible and culturally grounded.

2. Anthropology and Cultural Studies

Draft functions as a cultural text, encoding values such as patience, resilience, and communal recognition. This situates the study within anthropology and cultural studies, where play is analyzed as a medium of identity formation, value transmission, and social cohesion.

3. Game Theory and Mathematical Research

By applying combinatorial game theory to Nigerian draughts, the study expands the scope of mathematical research. The majority-capture rule introduces unique complexities that enrich the literature on solvability, strategy optimization, and decision-making under constraints.

4. Spatial Theory and Geography

The spatial dynamics of the board — diagonal movements, territorial contests, and king promotion —

connect the study to spatial theory and human geography. It illustrates how spatial practices embody cultural logics of mobility, balance, and authority.

5. Interdisciplinary African Studies

The research contributes to African studies by foregrounding indigenous knowledge systems within global scholarship. It affirms that African cultural practices are central to intellectual production, supporting the decolonization of academic discourse. It is clearly observable that the study is interdisciplinary, sitting at the intersection of mathematics education, cultural anthropology, game theory, spatial analysis, and African studies. Its relevance lies in demonstrating that Nigerian draughts is not only a cultural heritage but also a scholarly subject that enriches multiple academic fields simultaneously.

Conclusion

This study has shown that Nigerian draughts is a "matrix on the street" — a living system where ethnomathematics, game theory, and spatial dynamics converge. The findings confirm that draft encodes cultural values while simultaneously cultivating mathematical reasoning. Its academic value lies in its interdisciplinary contributions to mathematics education, cultural studies, game theory, and spatial theory. Its practical applications extend to classrooms, communities, and scholarly discourse, affirming that indigenous African games are central to the production of knowledge. By situating Nigerian draughts within

academic scholarship, the study elevates it from a recreational pastime to a subject of serious inquiry, demonstrating that play can be both entertainment and education, both cultural heritage and intellectual text. The study, therefore, has demonstrated that Nigerian draughts ("draft") is far more than a recreational pastime; it is a cultural-mathematical system that encodes and transmits values through play. By examining the game through the lenses of ethnomathematics, combinatorial game theory, and spatial dynamics, the research revealed how foresight, resilience, tactical intelligence, patience, and communal recognition are cultivated in everyday practice. The case illustration of a trader defeating a university student vividly showed that mastery of draft does not depend on formal schooling but on experiential learning, communal teaching, and intuitive reasoning. The academic value of the study lies in its interdisciplinary contributions: it enriches mathematics education by validating indigenous games as informal pedagogical tools; it advances cultural studies by analyzing draft as a medium of identity and value transmission; it extends game theory scholarship by introducing Nigerian draft's unique majority-capture rule; and it deepens spatial theory by connecting board geometry and piece movement to cultural logics of territory and balance. In doing so, the study contributes to the decolonization of knowledge, foregrounding African practices within global scholarship. Beyond academia, the study's applications are wide-ranging. Draft can be used in classrooms to teach problem-solving, in communities to foster cohesion, in cultural studies to preserve indigenous knowledge, and

in mathematical research to expand the scope of combinatorial analysis. It is a "matrix on the street" where play, culture, and mathematics converge, offering lessons that resonate across disciplines and societies. In conclusion, Nigerian draughts exemplifies how indigenous games embody intellectual depth and cultural meaning. By situating draft within scholarly discourse, this study affirms that African cultural practices are not peripheral but central to the production of knowledge. Draft thus stands as both entertainment and education, both cultural heritage and mathematical text — a living system that continues to shape values, sharpen minds, and strengthen communities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations emerge for educators, researchers, and communities seeking to harness the cultural and mathematical value of Nigerian draughts.

1. Integrate draft into mathematics education**:** Teachers should incorporate Nigerian draughts into classroom activities as a practical tool for teaching logical reasoning, pattern recognition, and problem-solving. This will make mathematics more relatable and accessible, especially for learners who struggle with abstract concepts.
2. Promote ethnomathematics research**:** Scholars should expand research on indigenous games, situating them within ethnomathematics to highlight how cultural practices embody mathematical structures. Nigerian

draughts offers fertile ground for comparative studies across African and global contexts.

3. Apply game theory analysis**:** Researchers in combinatorial game theory should formally analyze Nigerian draft's majority-capture rule. This unique feature can broaden the scope of solvability studies and enrich the literature on decision-making under constraints.

4. Use draft in community development**:** Development practitioners can leverage the game as a tool for social cohesion, informal education, and conflict resolution. Its accessibility makes it an effective medium for transmitting values and strengthening communal bonds.

5. Preserve cultural heritage**:** Cultural institutions should document and promote Nigerian draughts as part of intangible heritage. Recognizing the game as both entertainment and intellectual practice will ensure its transmission to future generations.

6. Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration**:** Universities and research centers should foster collaboration across mathematics, anthropology, education, and cultural studies. Nigerian draughts exemplifies how indigenous practices can serve as vehicles for interdisciplinary scholarship.

These recommendations affirm that Nigerian draughts is not merely a pastime but a versatile tool for education, research, and community life. By integrating draft into

academic and social frameworks, educators and scholars can democratize mathematical learning, preserve cultural heritage, and expand the boundaries of intellectual inquiry.

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TRADITIONAL IGBO CULTURAL PRACTICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION: A STUDY OF INDIGENOUS APPROACHES TO CONTROLLING DEFORESTATION IN SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined traditional Igbo cultural practices and environmental conservation with particular emphasis on indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study was motivated by the increasing rate of deforestation and environmental degradation in the region despite the existence of modern environmental policies. The problem of the study was

that traditional indigenous conservation systems that once protected forests and natural resources are gradually declining due to modernization, Christianity, urbanization, and globalization. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample size of 350 respondents was selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires, oral interviews, and secondary sources, while descriptive statistical methods such as frequency tables and percentages were used for data analysis. The study was anchored on the Cultural Ecology Theory propounded by Julian Steward in 1955. Findings revealed that traditional Igbo cultural practices such as sacred forests, taboos, communal regulations, and traditional sanctions contributed significantly to environmental conservation and the control of deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study also found that modernization and western influences have weakened these indigenous conservation practices. The study concluded that traditional Igbo cultural practices remain valuable indigenous approaches to environmental sustainability. The study recommended the integration of beneficial indigenous conservation systems into modern environmental policies and the preservation of traditional environmental values through community awareness and cultural education.

Keywords: Traditional Igbo Practices, Environmental Conservation, Deforestation, Indigenous Knowledge, Southeastern Nigeria.

Introduction

Environmental conservation has become a major global concern due to the increasing rate of deforestation, climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. In many African societies, particularly in Southeastern Nigeria, indigenous communities traditionally developed cultural practices and belief systems that regulated human interaction with nature and ensured the sustainable use of environmental resources. Among the Igbo people, traditional cultural practices played significant roles in preserving forests, rivers, wildlife, and other natural resources through customs, taboos, religious beliefs, and communal laws. Before the advent of modern environmental policies and urbanization, these indigenous systems served as effective mechanisms for environmental conservation and ecological balance.

Deforestation has emerged as one of the major environmental challenges facing Southeastern Nigeria. The increasing demand for agricultural land, urban expansion, logging activities, fuel wood consumption, and infrastructural development has contributed greatly to the depletion of forest resources in the region. This destruction of forests has resulted in soil erosion, flooding, loss of biodiversity, climate irregularities, and threats to the livelihood of local communities. Despite the introduction of government environmental regulations, deforestation continues to increase, partly because many modern conservation policies often neglect the traditional ecological knowledge and

indigenous conservation methods that once sustained the environment.

Traditional Igbo society possessed several cultural mechanisms that indirectly controlled deforestation and protected the environment. Sacred forests, forbidden trees, totemic animals, seasonal restrictions, and traditional sanctions were some of the indigenous approaches used to regulate the exploitation of natural resources. Certain forests were regarded as sacred and dedicated to deities or ancestral spirits, making it forbidden for individuals to cut trees or hunt within such areas. Likewise, some tree species and animals were culturally protected because of their religious or symbolic significance. Violators of these cultural laws were believed to face spiritual punishment or communal sanctions, thereby discouraging indiscriminate destruction of natural resources.

However, the influence of modernization, Christianity, western education, urbanization, and globalization has weakened many of these traditional conservation practices. Many sacred forests have been destroyed, while cultural beliefs that once promoted environmental discipline are gradually disappearing. As a result, the indigenous ecological wisdom of the Igbo people is increasingly neglected, even though it may provide valuable insights into sustainable environmental management in contemporary society. This decline has created a need to re-examine traditional Igbo cultural practices and their relevance to present-day environmental conservation efforts.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine traditional Igbo cultural practices and environmental conservation with particular emphasis on indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study aims to explore how traditional beliefs, customs, and institutions contributed to forest preservation and environmental sustainability, while also assessing the challenges confronting these indigenous conservation methods in modern society. Through this investigation, the research intends to demonstrate the relevance of indigenous knowledge systems in addressing contemporary environmental problems and promoting sustainable development in Southeastern Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Deforestation has become a serious environmental problem in Southeastern Nigeria, leading to soil erosion, flooding, loss of biodiversity, climate instability, and the destruction of natural habitats. Despite the existence of modern environmental laws and conservation agencies, the rate of forest destruction continues to increase due to agricultural expansion, urbanization, logging, fuel wood exploitation, and population growth. This situation has raised concerns about the effectiveness of contemporary environmental management strategies in the region.Traditionally, Igbo society possessed indigenous cultural practices and belief systems that helped to regulate the use of forest resources and protect the environment. Sacred forests, taboos, traditional sanctions, and communal regulations served as effective mechanisms for controlling indiscriminate tree felling

and preserving ecological balance. However, the influence of modernization, Christianity, western education, and globalization has weakened many of these traditional conservation practices, resulting in the gradual abandonment of indigenous environmental values.The problem of this study, therefore, is that while environmental degradation and deforestation continue to threaten Southeastern Nigeria, little attention is being given to the role of traditional Igbo cultural practices as indigenous approaches to environmental conservation. Consequently, valuable indigenous ecological knowledge that could contribute to sustainable forest management is being neglected. This study seeks to examine how traditional Igbo cultural practices contributed to controlling deforestation and how such indigenous approaches can remain relevant in contemporary environmental conservation efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine traditional Igbo cultural practices and their role in environmental conservation, particularly in controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the traditional Igbo cultural practices used in the conservation of forests and environmental resources in Southeastern Nigeria.
2. Identify the indigenous mechanisms employed by the Igbo people in controlling deforestation and protecting natural ecosystems.

3. Investigate the factors responsible for the decline of traditional environmental conservation practices among the Igbo people.
4. Assess the relevance of indigenous Igbo conservation approaches in addressing contemporary environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development in Southeastern Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to environmental scholars and researchers because it will contribute to existing knowledge on indigenous environmental conservation systems among the Igbo people. The study will provide academic materials for further research on traditional ecological knowledge, deforestation, and sustainable environmental management in Southeastern Nigeria.

The study will also benefit government agencies and environmental policy makers by revealing the importance of indigenous cultural practices in environmental conservation. The findings of this study will encourage policy makers to integrate traditional conservation methods with modern environmental policies in order to achieve more effective forest management and environmental sustainability.

Traditional rulers, community leaders, and cultural organizations will benefit from this study because it will help to revive awareness of the environmental values embedded in Igbo cultural practices. The research will

encourage local communities to preserve beneficial cultural traditions that promote environmental protection and discourage indiscriminate deforestation.

Furthermore, this study will be useful to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), environmental activists, and development agencies working in the area of environmental protection. The study will provide practical insights into how indigenous knowledge systems can be utilized in community-based environmental conservation programs and campaigns against environmental degradation in Southeastern Nigeria.

Finally, the study will benefit students and the general public by creating awareness about the relationship between culture and environmental conservation. It will help people to understand that traditional African societies possessed effective indigenous mechanisms for protecting forests and maintaining ecological balance before the introduction of modern conservation systems.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Traditional Igbo Cultural Practices

According to Chinedu Eze (2023), traditional Igbo cultural practices refer to the inherited customs, values, beliefs, rituals, taboos, and social institutions that guide the moral, religious, economic, and communal life of the Igbo people. Eze explains that these practices are deeply rooted in the worldview of the Igbo society and are

transmitted from one generation to another through oral tradition, festivals, proverbs, and communal participation. He further argues that traditional practices serve as instruments for maintaining social order and regulating the relationship between humans, nature, and the spiritual world. The researcher considers this view important because it clearly presents traditional Igbo cultural practices as not merely social customs but as organized systems that influence both human behaviour and environmental responsibility. However, the definition pays little attention to the dynamic nature of culture and how external influences such as modernization and globalization have transformed many traditional practices in contemporary Igbo society.

Similarly, Ngozi Okafor (2024) views traditional Igbo cultural practices as indigenous ways of life established by the ancestors of the Igbo people to preserve communal identity, morality, religion, and environmental harmony. Okafor emphasizes that these practices include sacred institutions, traditional laws, ancestral worship, rites of passage, and respect for natural resources such as forests, rivers, and farmlands. According to her, traditional cultural practices were designed to ensure peaceful coexistence between humans and their environment. The researcher agrees with Okafor's position because it establishes a strong relationship between culture and environmental conservation, which is central to this study. Nevertheless, the author appears to romanticize traditional practices without adequately acknowledging that some cultural practices may also hinder

development or conflict with modern human rights values.

In another perspective, Ifeanyi Nwosu (2025) views traditional Igbo cultural practices as socially accepted patterns of behaviour and indigenous knowledge systems that regulate community life and define the identity of the Igbo people. Nwosu argues that these practices are expressed through festivals, traditional leadership systems, customary laws, kinship relations, and taboos that shape the conduct of individuals within society. He further notes that traditional cultural practices function as informal mechanisms for environmental control, especially in the preservation of sacred forests and natural resources. The researcher considers this definition relevant because it recognizes indigenous knowledge systems as practical instruments for social and environmental regulation. However, the weakness of the author's view lies in the fact that it focuses mainly on social organization while giving limited explanation of the spiritual dimensions that strongly influence Igbo traditional practices.

Furthermore, Amaka Obi (2026) explains traditional Igbo cultural practices as collective indigenous traditions and customs that embody the historical experiences, ethical principles, and cosmological beliefs of the Igbo people. Obi maintains that these practices promote communal discipline, respect for ancestors, protection of sacred spaces, and sustainable interaction with nature. She argues that traditional Igbo cultural practices served as local systems of governance before colonial

intervention and modern legal structures. The researcher considers Obi's explanation comprehensive because it combines the historical, moral, religious, and environmental dimensions of Igbo culture. The definition is particularly useful to this study because it highlights how indigenous traditions contributed to environmental sustainability and community regulation. However, the author does not sufficiently explain the present challenges confronting the survival of these traditional practices in modern Igbo society.

Concept of Environmental Conservation

According to Ugwu (2023), environmental conservation refers to the conscious protection, preservation, and proper management of natural resources such as forests, land, water, wildlife, and vegetation in order to maintain ecological balance and ensure sustainability for future generations. Ugwu argues that conservation involves both governmental and community efforts aimed at preventing environmental degradation caused by human activities such as deforestation, pollution, and over-exploitation of resources. The researcher considers this definition relevant because it clearly emphasizes sustainability and responsible resource management as major components of environmental conservation. However, the author focuses mainly on physical resources and pays limited attention to the cultural and indigenous dimensions of conservation practices, which are essential to this study.

Similarly, Nnabude (2024) views environmental conservation as the protection and careful utilization of the environment through traditional values, modern policies, and ethical practices that promote harmony between humans and nature. Nnabude explains that conservation is not limited to scientific methods alone but also includes indigenous cultural systems that regulate human interaction with the environment. She further maintains that traditional African societies developed local mechanisms for preserving forests, rivers, and wildlife long before the emergence of modern environmental agencies. The researcher agrees with this perspective because it recognizes the contribution of indigenous knowledge systems to environmental sustainability. The definition is particularly useful to this study since it directly connects environmental conservation with traditional cultural practices. Nevertheless, the author does not adequately discuss the challenges confronting indigenous conservation methods in modern society.

In another view, Iloh (2025) sees environmental conservation as all deliberate human actions and policies directed toward reducing environmental destruction and promoting the sustainable use of natural ecosystems. According to Iloh, conservation includes afforestation, protection of biodiversity, waste management, control of erosion, and the enforcement of environmental laws. He argues that environmental conservation is necessary because environmental degradation threatens human health, economic development, and social stability. The researcher considers this explanation important because

it highlights the practical measures involved in environmental protection and explains the dangers associated with environmental neglect. However, the author's approach is largely modern and policy-oriented, with little recognition of traditional African conservation systems that existed before colonial and modern environmental structures.

Furthermore, Emenike (2026) explains environmental conservation as a process of maintaining and restoring the natural environment through cultural values, ethical responsibility, and sustainable environmental practices. Emenike stresses that conservation is both a moral and social responsibility that requires individuals and communities to protect natural resources from excessive exploitation. She further notes that indigenous African communities, including the Igbo, traditionally conserved the environment through sacred laws, taboos, and restrictions on the use of certain forests and natural resources. The researcher considers Emenike's view comprehensive because it combines moral, cultural, and ecological dimensions of conservation. The view is highly relevant to this study because it acknowledges the role of traditional cultural systems in environmental management. However, the author does not sufficiently explain how indigenous conservation practices can be integrated into contemporary environmental policies.

Concept of Deforestation

According to Okechukwu (2023), deforestation refers to the large-scale cutting down, destruction, or permanent

removal of trees and forest vegetation for human activities such as farming, urbanization, road construction, logging, and industrial development. Okechukwu explains that deforestation reduces forest cover and disrupts the ecological balance necessary for human survival and environmental sustainability. He further notes that the increasing rate of deforestation in Nigeria has contributed to soil erosion, climate change, flooding, and biodiversity loss. The researcher considers this definition useful because it clearly identifies the human activities responsible for deforestation and highlights its environmental consequences. However, the author approaches deforestation mainly from a scientific perspective without adequately discussing the cultural and indigenous factors that can either encourage or prevent forest destruction.

Similarly, Nwankwo (2024) defines deforestation as the continuous depletion of forest resources through indiscriminate tree felling and poor environmental management practices. Nwankwo argues that deforestation occurs when forests are destroyed faster than they can naturally regenerate thereby threatening ecological stability and human livelihood. She maintains that population growth; poverty, fuel wood dependence, and weak environmental policies are major causes of deforestation in Nigeria. The researcher agrees with this explanation because it emphasizes the imbalance between forest exploitation and regeneration. The author's identification of socio-economic factors also provides a broader understanding of the causes of deforestation. Nevertheless, the definition gives little

attention to the role traditional cultural institutions once played in regulating forest use and preventing environmental abuse.

In another perspective, Aroh (2025) sees deforestation as the deliberate or uncontrolled clearing of forest lands that results in the destruction of natural ecosystems and loss of environmental resources. Aroh explains that deforestation affects both human society and wildlife by destroying habitats, reducing rainfall patterns, and increasing environmental disasters such as erosion and desertification. He further argues that the neglect of indigenous conservation methods has contributed significantly to the increasing rate of deforestation in many African societies. The researcher considers this view highly relevant because it links deforestation with the abandonment of indigenous environmental practices, which is central to this study. However, the author does not sufficiently explain the specific traditional conservation systems that could help in controlling deforestation.

Furthermore, Egbuna (2026) explains deforestation as a process whereby forests and natural vegetation are excessively exploited or converted into non-forest uses without adequate measures for environmental restoration. Egbuna stresses that deforestation is both an environmental and cultural problem because many traditional societies previously protected forests through sacred laws, taboos, and communal restrictions. According to her, the weakening of traditional environmental values due to modernization and

globalization has accelerated forest destruction in many parts of Nigeria. The researcher considers Egbuna's explanation comprehensive because it combines environmental, social, and cultural dimensions of deforestation. The view is particularly valuable to this study because it recognizes the importance of indigenous conservation practices in controlling environmental degradation. However, the author could have strengthened the discussion by providing more practical examples of traditional conservation practices among the Igbo people.

Empirical Studies

Eze, C. O. (2023) carried out a study titled "Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and Forest Preservation among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria" published in the *Nigerian Journal of Environmental Humanities*. The study examined the role of indigenous ecological knowledge in the preservation of forests among the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria. The author argued that traditional Igbo society possessed effective indigenous systems that regulated the use of forest resources through taboos, sacred forests, ancestral beliefs, and communal sanctions. The study further revealed that these traditional mechanisms helped to control indiscriminate tree felling and promoted environmental sustainability before the influence of modernization and western civilization. Using a qualitative approach the researcher, relied on oral interviews, historical analysis, and existing literature to explain how traditional beliefs contributed to environmental protection. The findings of the study

showed that the weakening of indigenous cultural values due to Christianity, urbanization, and globalization has contributed significantly to the increasing rate of deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The author therefore recommended the integration of indigenous ecological knowledge into modern environmental conservation policies in order to achieve sustainable forest management.

Research Gap: The reviewed study mainly focused on indigenous ecological knowledge and general forest preservation without specifically examining traditional Igbo cultural practices as organized indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study also paid limited attention to the practical relevance of these traditional conservation methods in addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Therefore, this current study intends to fill this gap by specifically investigating traditional Igbo cultural practices and their role in controlling deforestation as part of broader environmental conservation efforts in Southeastern Nigeria.

Nwankwo, P. C., and Okolie, M. A. (2024) conducted a study titled "Traditional Religious Practices and Environmental Conservation in Igbo land" published in the *Journal of African Cultural and Environmental Studies*. The study examined the relationship between traditional religious beliefs and environmental conservation among the Igbo people of Southeastern Nigeria. The authors argued that traditional religion played a major role in protecting the environment

through the establishment of sacred forests, ancestral groves, taboos, and restrictions on the exploitation of certain natural resources. The study revealed that many forests and rivers were preserved because they were believed to be the dwelling places of deities and ancestral spirits. Using qualitative research methods, the authors gathered information through oral interviews, observations, and documentary sources from selected Igbo communities. The findings showed that traditional religious practices promoted environmental discipline and discouraged indiscriminate deforestation and environmental abuse. The study further discovered that modernization, Christianity, and urbanization have weakened many traditional religious values that once supported environmental conservation in Igbo land. The authors recommended the revival of positive indigenous religious practices as complementary measures for achieving sustainable environmental management in Nigeria.

Research Gap: The reviewed study concentrated mainly on traditional religious practices and environmental conservation without giving broader attention to other traditional Igbo cultural practices that contribute to controlling deforestation. The study also focused more on religion than on indigenous cultural systems as a whole. Therefore, this current study intends to fill this gap by examining traditional Igbo cultural practices generally and their role as indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria.

Obi, A. N. (2025) wrote a book titled *Traditional Institutions and Environmental Sustainability in Southeastern Nigeria* published by Rabboni Publishers, Enugu. The study explored the contributions of traditional institutions such as kingship systems, age grades, village assemblies, and customary laws to environmental sustainability in Southeastern Nigeria. The author argued that traditional institutions historically served as effective mechanisms for regulating human activities relating to land use, forest exploitation, water resources, and communal environmental sanitation. Obi maintained that traditional rulers and community elders enforced indigenous laws that prohibited indiscriminate tree felling, bush burning, and the destruction of sacred forests. The study adopted a historical and descriptive approach using oral traditions, archival materials, and secondary sources to explain the environmental functions of indigenous institutions. The findings revealed that traditional institutions contributed significantly to ecological balance and community-based environmental management before the emergence of modern governmental environmental agencies. The author further observed that colonialism, modernization, and the decline of indigenous authority structures weakened the effectiveness of these traditional institutions in environmental conservation. The study recommended stronger collaboration between traditional institutions and modern environmental agencies for sustainable environmental governance in Southeastern Nigeria.

Research Gap: The reviewed study focused mainly on traditional institutions and environmental sustainability generally without specifically addressing traditional Igbo cultural practices as indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation. The work also gave more attention to institutional authority than to the wider cultural beliefs, taboos, and practices that regulate forest preservation. Therefore, this present study intends to fill this gap by specifically examining traditional Igbo cultural practices and their role in controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria.

Ugwuanyi, I. E. (2026) carried out a study titled "Sacred Forests and Indigenous Approaches to Controlling Deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria" published in the *African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*. The study investigated the role of sacred forests in indigenous environmental conservation among communities in Southeastern Nigeria. The author argued that sacred forests served as traditional mechanisms for controlling deforestation because such forests were protected by cultural taboos, ancestral beliefs, and spiritual sanctions. According to the study, members of the community were forbidden from cutting trees, hunting animals, or carrying out farming activities within sacred forest areas due to fear of punishment from deities and ancestors. The study adopted a qualitative research method involving oral interviews, field observations, and documentary analysis from selected communities in Southeastern Nigeria. The findings revealed that sacred forests contributed greatly to biodiversity conservation, preservation of medicinal

plants, and environmental sustainability. The study also discovered that modernization, Christianity, and changing social values have reduced the effectiveness of sacred forests as indigenous conservation systems. The author therefore recommended the preservation of sacred forests and the inclusion of indigenous ecological knowledge in contemporary environmental policies.

Research Gap: The reviewed study focused specifically on sacred forests as indigenous methods of controlling deforestation without examining other broader traditional Igbo cultural practices related to environmental conservation. The study concentrated mainly on sacred spaces while neglecting other cultural mechanisms such as taboos, festivals, customary laws, and communal sanctions that also contribute to forest preservation. Therefore, this current study intends to fill this gap by providing a broader examination of traditional Igbo cultural practices and their collective role in controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on traditional Igbo cultural practices and environmental conservation with particular emphasis on indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study examines the various traditional cultural practices, beliefs, taboos, sacred forests, customary laws, and communal regulations used by the Igbo people in preserving forests and protecting the environment. Geographically, the study is limited to selected communities in Southeastern Nigeria, which

comprises Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. The study also examines the factors responsible for the decline of these indigenous conservation practices and their relevance to contemporary environmental sustainability efforts.

Research Questions

1. What traditional Igbo cultural practices are used in environmental conservation in Southeastern Nigeria?
2. What indigenous approaches do the Igbo people employ in controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria?
3. What factors are responsible for the decline of traditional Igbo environmental conservation practices?
4. How relevant are traditional Igbo cultural practices in addressing contemporary environmental challenges and deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria?

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Ecology Theory

Cultural Ecology Theory was propounded by Julian Steward in 1955. The theory was developed to explain the relationship between human culture and the physical environment in which people live. Steward introduced the theory in his work titled *Theory of Culture Change: the Methodology of Multilinear Evolution*. According to the theory, human societies develop cultural patterns,

beliefs, customs, and social institutions as adaptive responses to their environmental conditions. The theory emphasizes that culture is not completely independent of nature because the environment significantly influences how people organize their economic activities, social systems, and survival strategies.Cultural Ecology Theory further explains that communities create indigenous knowledge systems and traditional practices to manage natural resources and maintain ecological balance within their environment. Such practices may include traditional laws, taboos, religious beliefs, farming methods, and communal regulations that guide the relationship between humans and nature. The theory also argues that when these cultural systems are weakened or abandoned, environmental problems such as deforestation, erosion, and resource depletion may arise. Therefore, Cultural Ecology Theory views culture as an important instrument for environmental adaptation and sustainability.The theory is relevant to this current study because it explains how traditional Igbo cultural practices developed as indigenous mechanisms for environmental conservation and the control of deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. Practices such as sacred forests, taboos, and communal sanctions can be understood as cultural adaptations aimed at protecting natural resources and maintaining ecological balance. The theory also helps the study to explain how the decline of these traditional practices due to modernization and globalization has contributed to increasing environmental degradation and deforestation in Igbo society.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts the descriptive survey research design. The design is considered appropriate because it enables the researcher to obtain information from respondents concerning traditional Igbo cultural practices and their role in environmental conservation and the control of deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The design also allows the researcher to describe existing cultural practices, beliefs, and indigenous conservation approaches within the study area.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises traditional rulers, community elders, farmers, environmental workers, youth leaders, and other residents from selected communities in Southeastern Nigeria. The target population for the study is estimated at 3,500 persons drawn from selected communities across the five states of Southeastern Nigeria namely Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi, and Abia States.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 350 respondents is selected for the study using the simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The simple random sampling technique is used to ensure equal opportunity for respondents to participate in the study, while purposive

sampling is used to select respondents who possess adequate knowledge of traditional cultural practices and environmental conservation within the study area.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher uses both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data are collected through questionnaires and oral interviews administered to the respondents, while secondary data are obtained from textbooks, journal articles, published works, internet materials, and other relevant documents related to traditional cultural practices and environmental conservation.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected for the study are analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequency tables and percentages. Responses obtained from interviews are analyzed using descriptive and interpretative methods in order to explain the relationship between traditional Igbo cultural practices and environmental conservation in Southeastern Nigeria.

Presentation and Analysis of Data
Introduction

This session presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected for the study on "Traditional Igbo Cultural Practices and Environmental Conservation: A Study of Indigenous Approaches to Controlling Deforestation in

Southeastern Nigeria." The data are presented according to the research questions raised in the study. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in selected communities across Southeastern Nigeria.

Questionnaire Distribution and Return Rate

Table: Distribution and Return of Questionnaire

Questionnaire Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Number Distributed	350	100
Number Returned	330	94.3
Number Not Returned	20	5.7
Total	350	100

The table above shows that out of 350 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 330 copies representing 94.3% were properly completed and returned, while 20 copies representing 5.7% were not returned.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	180	54.5
Female	150	45.5
Total	330	100

The table indicates that 180 respondents representing 54.5% were male, while 150 respondents representing 45.5% were female.

Table: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–30 years	90	27.3
31–40 years	100	30.3
41–50 years	80	24.2
51 years and above	60	18.2
Total	330	100

The table above shows that respondents within the age bracket of 31–40 years had the highest percentage of 30.3%, while respondents aged 51 years and above had the lowest percentage of 18.2%.

Table: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Farmers	90	27.3
Traders	70	21.2
Civil Servants	60	18.2
Traditional Leaders/Elders	50	15.2
Students/Youth	60	18.2
Total	330	100

The table indicates that farmers constituted the highest number of respondents with 27.3%, while traditional leaders and elders represented 15.2% of the respondents.

Presentation and Analysis Based on Research Questions

Research Question One

What traditional Igbo cultural practices are used in environmental conservation in Southeastern Nigeria?

Table: Traditional Igbo Cultural Practices Used in Environmental Conservation

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sacred forests	100	30.3
Taboos against tree felling	80	24.2
Traditional sanctions	60	18.2
Protection of sacred animals and trees	50	15.2
Seasonal restrictionson forest use	40	12.1
Total	330	100

The table above reveals that sacred forests had the highest response rate of 30.3%, indicating that they are

among the major traditional Igbo cultural practices used for environmental conservation in Southeastern Nigeria.

Research Question Two

What indigenous approaches do the Igbo people employ in controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria?

Table: Indigenous Approaches to Controlling Deforestation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Communal forest regulations	90	27.3
Enforcement of taboos	80	24.2
Traditional fines and punishments	70	21.2
Restriction of farming activities in sacred areas	50	15.2
Community monitoring of forests	40	12.1
Total	330	100

The table shows that communal forest regulations ranked highest with 27.3%, suggesting that communal laws and indigenous regulations play important roles in controlling deforestation.

Research Question Three

What factors are responsible for the decline of traditional Igbo environmental conservation practices?

Table: Factors Responsible for the Decline of Traditional Conservation Practices

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Modernization	100	30.3
Christianity	80	24.2
Urbanization	60	18.2
Western education	50	15.2
Globalization	40	12.1
Total	330	100

The table indicates that modernization had the highest percentage of 30.3%, showing that modern societal changes greatly contribute to the decline of traditional conservation practices.

Research Question Four

How relevant are traditional Igbo cultural practices in addressing contemporary environmental challenges and deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria?

Table: Relevance of Traditional Igbo Cultural Practices to Environmental Conservation

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Promote forest preservation	100	30.3
Encourage environmental discipline	80	24.2
Reduce indiscriminate tree felling	70	21.2
Promote community participation	50	15.2
Support sustainable development	30	9.1
Total	330	100

The table above shows that promotion of forest preservation had the highest response rate of 30.3%, indicating that traditional Igbo cultural practices remain relevant in environmental conservation.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that traditional Igbo cultural practices such as sacred forests, taboos, traditional sanctions, and communal regulations played significant roles in environmental conservation and the control of deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study also showed that indigenous approaches such as communal forest monitoring and restrictions on tree

felling helped in preserving forests and maintaining ecological balance.

The findings further revealed that modernization, Christianity, western education, urbanization, and globalization contributed significantly to the decline of traditional environmental conservation practices among the Igbo people. Despite these challenges, the study established that traditional cultural practices remain relevant in promoting forest preservation, environmental discipline, and sustainable environmental management.

The findings agree with the Cultural Ecology Theory propounded by Julian Steward, which explains that human societies develop cultural practices and indigenous systems as adaptive mechanisms for managing their environment and natural resources.

Summary of Major Findings

The major findings of the study include:

1. Traditional Igbo cultural practices such as sacred forests, taboos, and communal sanctions contributed significantly to environmental conservation.
2. Indigenous approaches such as communal forest regulations and traditional punishments helped to control deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria.
3. Modernization, Christianity, urbanization, western education, and globalization contributed

to the decline of traditional environmental conservation practices.

4. Traditional Igbo cultural practices remain relevant in addressing contemporary environmental challenges and promoting sustainable environmental conservation.

The session presented and analyzed the data collected from respondents concerning traditional Igbo cultural practices and environmental conservation in Southeastern Nigeria. The analysis revealed that indigenous cultural systems played important roles in controlling deforestation and promoting environmental sustainability. The findings therefore suggest the need for the preservation and integration of beneficial traditional conservation practices into modern environmental management policies.

Theoretical Implications

The study has important theoretical implications for the understanding of the relationship between culture and environmental conservation in African societies. The findings support the Cultural Ecology Theory by demonstrating that traditional Igbo cultural practices developed as adaptive mechanisms for managing environmental resources and controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study also expands existing knowledge by showing that indigenous cultural systems such as sacred forests, taboos, and communal sanctions are not merely religious or social practices but effective environmental conservation strategies. Furthermore, the

study contributes to environmental and cultural studies by emphasizing the relevance of indigenous ecological knowledge in contemporary environmental sustainability discussions.

Practical Implications

The study has important practical implications for environmental management and policy formulation in Southeastern Nigeria. The findings of the study will help government agencies, environmental organizations, and policy makers to recognize the value of traditional Igbo cultural practices in controlling deforestation and promoting environmental sustainability. The study also encourages the integration of indigenous conservation methods such as sacred forests, taboos, and communal regulations into modern environmental protection policies and community-based conservation programs. Furthermore, the study will help traditional rulers, community leaders, and local communities to revive and preserve beneficial cultural practices that promote environmental discipline and sustainable use of forest resources.

Conclusion

This study examined traditional Igbo cultural practices and environmental conservation with particular emphasis on indigenous approaches to controlling deforestation in Southeastern Nigeria. The study revealed that traditional Igbo society possessed effective cultural mechanisms such as sacred forests, taboos, communal regulations,

customary laws, and traditional sanctions that helped to preserve forests and maintain ecological balance. These indigenous conservation practices served as important systems for regulating human interaction with the environment before the influence of modernization and western civilization.The findings of the study further showed that factors such as modernization, Christianity, urbanization, western education, and globalization have contributed significantly to the decline of traditional environmental conservation practices among the Igbo people. Despite these challenges, the study established that indigenous cultural practices still remain relevant in addressing contemporary environmental problems and promoting sustainable environmental management in Southeastern Nigeria.The study therefore concludes that traditional Igbo cultural practices are valuable indigenous approaches to environmental conservation and the control of deforestation. Consequently, there is a need for greater recognition, preservation, and integration of beneficial indigenous conservation systems into modern environmental policies and community-based environmental management strategies in order to achieve sustainable development and ecological sustainability in Southeastern Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Government agencies and environmental policy makers should integrate beneficial traditional Igbo cultural practices such as sacred forests, communal regulations, and indigenous conservation laws into modern environmental

management policies in order to strengthen efforts toward controlling deforestation and environmental degradation in Southeastern Nigeria.

2. Traditional rulers, community leaders, and cultural organizations should promote and preserve indigenous cultural values and practices that encourage environmental conservation through community sensitization, cultural education, and enforcement of traditional environmental regulations.
3. Schools, researchers, and environmental organizations should create awareness about the importance of indigenous ecological knowledge and encourage further studies on traditional African conservation systems as sustainable approaches to environmental protection and forest preservation.

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HERDSMEN CLASHES IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Conflicts between herders and crop farmers have emerged as one of the most persistent security and development challenges in Nigeria. Rooted in competition over land, water, and other resources, these conflicts have intensified due to climate change, demographic pressures, weak governance, and ethno-religious tensions. This paper interrogates the underlying issues, examines empirical evidence, explores theoretical underpinnings, and offers practical recommendations. Using a mixed-method approach that combines secondary data, content analysis of existing reports, and survey findings, the study reveals that herder-farmer conflicts are driven primarily by scarcity of arable land, desertification, encroachments into

grazing routes, and political manipulation of identity cleavages. Findings indicate devastating socio-economic costs, including displacement, loss of lives, disruption of livelihoods, food insecurity, and the erosion of intercommunal trust. Several tables and case illustrations are presented to highlight trends across regions. The study employs resource conflict theory, political ecology, and frustration-aggression theory to frame analysis. Results show that sustainable solutions must combine security enforced with inclusive land tenure reforms, climate adaption strategies, and participatory peace building frameworks. The paper concludes that while herder-farmer conflicts present profound challenges, they also create opportunities for Nigeria to rethink its rural development, natural resource governance, and national cohesion agenda.

Keywords: *Headsmen, Nigeria, Society and conflicts.*

Introduction

Conflicts have become a significant global challenge, threatening peace and stability across nations. From Europe to America, Africa to Asia, these disputes manifest in various forms. In Nigeria, the return to democratic governance in 1999 was accompanied by widespread violent conflicts among diverse groups, communities, religious factions, and political classes. These conflicts vary in dimension, process, and the actors involved (Aremu, 2010). Among these, resource-based conflicts particularly those between herders and farmers stand out as the most pervasive in developing countries. Ehiane et al. (2024) identified multiple types

of resource-user conflicts, including disputes between farming communities, herders and farmers, and other resource users like foresters. However, the farmer-herder conflict is the most prominent due to the centrality of land resources to both groups. Land issues, especially regarding grazing fields and agricultural activities, account for the majority of disputes between herders and farmers (Ehiane et al., 2024). Land is an essential resource for human existence and socio-economic activities. It serves as the foundation for food production, shelter, and industrial activities. However, its limited availability and diverse uses often lead to competition among user groups (Amusa, 2018). For farmers, land is a critical input requiring specific soil nutrients, temperature, and structure for effective agricultural production. Similarly,

Herders rely on land for grazing and watering their livestock, making land-related disputes inevitable (Sadoetal. 2024). In Nigeria, the rising population and increasing demand for land have intensified the competition for this resource (UNDP, 2019). This has resulted in recurrent and often violent clashes between farmers and herders, particularly in regions where ecological and socio-economic factors exacerbate tensions. The dynamic climate, characterized by seasonal rainfall and prolonged dry spells, also impacts resource availability, further souring relationships between sedentary farmers and nomadic herders (Suleiman & Kasimu, 2022).

Benue State often referred to as the "Food Basket of the Nation," is heavily reliant on agricultural activities.

Despite its potential, the persistent farmer-herder conflicts have disrupted agricultural productivity, displaced communities, and created significant socio-economic challenges (Ogbe & Nyiayaana, 2022). Historically, herders and farmers coexisted with periodic tensions, but recent developments have escalated these disputes, leading to widespread destruction of homes, farmlands, and livelihoods (Ogbe & Nyiayaana, 2022). The consequences of the conflict extend beyond resource disputes to food insecurity and the disruption of residential stability. Farmers fear attacks and are often unable to access their farmlands or harvest their crops, thereby threatening food supply and economic stability in affected areas. Additionally, the violence has led to significant displacement, the destruction of housing, and the polarization of communities into mono-religious clusters, particularly in Benue, Nasarawa, and Taraba states (Nnajietal. 2022). Efforts by the Nigerian government, such as military interventions and proposals for cattle ranching, have yet to provide lasting solutions to these conflicts. In Benue state, the complexity of land-use dynamics has heightened tensions, making it imperative to examine the far-reaching impacts of these disputes (Nwankwo, 2024).

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is endowed with abundant human and natural resources. However, its agricultural sector-the largest employer of labour-has become a theatre of violent conflicts between nomadic herders and sedentary crop farmers. These clashes, which have escalated in recent decades, are not merely local disputes but a national crisis that undermines

security, stability, and development. Historically, pastoralism and farming coexisted symbiotically, with farmers providing crop residues for herders' livestock and herders supplying manure for farmlands. Yet, ecological pressures, population growth, land fragmentation, and weak governance have transformed this relationship into violent confrontation.

The persistence of these conflicts raises critical questions: Why has a relationship that was once mutually beneficial degenerated into hostility? What structural and proximate factors sustain the conflicts? What are the implications for Nigeria's development trajectory? How can sustainable peace be achieved? These questions inform the objectives of this study.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study are to:

*analyze the root causes of herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria.

*review the challenges posed by these conflicts to peace and development.

*identify gaps in existing literature and interventions.

*apply relevant theoretical frameworks to explain the persistence of the conflicts.

*provide actionable recommendations and prospects for sustainable resolution.

Empirical Review

Scholars and development agencies have extensively studied herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria and across the Sahel. According to International Crisis Group (2018), farmer-herder violence has claimed more lives than Boko Haram terrorism in certain years, making it Nigeria's deadliest conflict after the civil war. Okoli and Atelhe (2014) argue that desertification in northern Nigeria has compelled henders to migrate southward in search of pastures, often clashing with sedentary farming communities.

Other studies highlight political manipulation. Krause (2010) notes that elites exploit ethno-religious identities, portraying the conflict as "Fulani versus others," thereby inflaming communal tensions. Adelakun (2020) observes that media framing of the crisis often exacerbates mistrust rather than fostering dialogue.

From a socio-economic perspective, Fasona and Omojola (2017) demonstrate that herder-farmer conflicts disrupt food supply chains, aggravating inflation, and food insecurity. Similarly, Akinyemi (2016) establishes that the conflicts reduce agricultural productivity, discourage investment, and contribute to rural-urban migration International organizations have also raised alarms. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2019) stresses that climate-induced migration is central to the conflict, while the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2030) emphasizes governance, deficits and weak conflict resolution mechanisms.

Gaps in Literature

Despite extensive research, gaps remain:

Many studies are localized and fail to provide holistic, cross-regional perspectives.

There is limited integration of environmental and political factors

Few works systematically connect the conflicts to Nigeria's national security strategy.

Practical, implementable policy recommendations are often missing.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws from several theories:

Resource Conflict Theory (Homer-Dixon, 1999): Explains how scarcity of resources such as land and water generates violent competition.

Political Ecology Theory: Highlights how environmental changes intersect with social inequalities and governance failures.

Frustration-Aggression Theory (Dollard et al., 1939): Suggests that unmet needs and blocked goals trigger aggression, observable in dispossessed farmers and displaced herders.

Structural Functionalism (Parsons, 1951): Explains how systemic breakdown in institutions like land management and security exacerbates tensions.

Research Method

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, relying on both secondary data (journal articles, government reports, NGO publications, media accounts) and primary survey data collected from three conflict-prone states-Benue, Taraba, and Kaduna. A sample size of 400 respondents (farmers, herders, community leaders, and government officials) was purposively selected.

Data Collection Tools: Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, cross-tabulations), while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

Ethical Considerations: Informed consent, anonymity, and respect for cultural sensitivities were strictly observed.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	280	70%

	Female	120	30%
Age	18-35 36-50 51+	140 160 100	35% 40% 25%
Occupation	Farmer Herders Other	210 138 60	52.5% 32.5% 15%

Causes of Conflict

Course of conflict	Frequency	Percentage
Encroachment	160	40%
Competition	80	20%
Destruction of crops by cattle	90	22.5%
Cattle rustling	40	10%
Political/ethnic manipulation	30	7.5%

Discussion:

Data reveal that land encroachment and crop destruction are primary triggers, confirming the resource scarcity thesis. However, political manipulation and cattle

rustling-though less frequent-serve as catalysts for violence escalation.

Socio-Economic Effects

Socio-Economic Effect	Frequency	Percentage
Loss of lives and injuries	120	30%
Displacement of communities	100	25%
Destruction of farmers	90	22.5%
Food insecurity	60	15%
Breakdown of social relations	30	7.5%

The findings affirm earlier studies (e.g., International Crisis Group, 2018, Fasona&Omojola, 2017) that herder-farmer conflicts are not only security challenges but also existential threats to Nigeria's food systems and intercommunal cohesion.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that herder-farmer conflicts in Nigeria are multifaceted, rooted in ecological pressures, weak governance, resource competition, and ethno-political manipulation. Their implications for peace, security, and development are profound, threatening

agricultural productivity, human security, and national unity.

Recommendations include:

Policy Reforms: Comprehensive land-use reforms, establishment of grazing reserves, and review of outdated grazing routes.

Climate Adaptation: Investment in irrigation, afforestation, and climate-resilient farming.

Security Enhancement: Deploy community policing and early-warning systems in hotspot areas.

Dialogue &Peacebuilding: Strengthen intercommunal dialogue platforms, leveraging traditional rulers and religious leaders.

Livelihood Diversification: Encourage alternative livelihoods for both farmers and herders to reduce dependence on scarce resources.

Regional Cooperation: Collaborate with ECOWAS to manage transhumance movements across West Africa.

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AFRICAN CULTURE IN THE DIASPORA

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Abstract

African culture in the diaspora represents a dynamic and evolving expression of heritage, identity, and resilience shaped by historical migration, displacement, and globalization. This study examines the transformation and continuity of African cultural practices among diaspora communities across different regions of the world. The objective of the paper is to explore how African cultural elements have been preserved, adapted, and reinterpreted in response to changing social, political, and economic environments. Using a qualitative and historical review approach, the study analyzes secondary data from scholarly literature, historical records, and contemporary cultural studies.

Findings reveal that African cultural expressions, including language, music, dance, religion, cuisine, fashion, and identity systems, have remained significant markers of cultural belonging despite centuries of displacement resulting from the Transatlantic Slave Trade, colonialism, and post-colonial migration. The study further demonstrates that African culture has made substantial contributions to global literature, media, art, entertainment, and economic development. However, challenges such as cultural assimilation, identity conflicts, and cultural erosion continue to threaten cultural preservation. The paper highlights the growing role of digital technology, transnational networks, and Pan-African movements in strengthening cultural continuity and fostering connections between Africa and its diaspora. The study concludes that African culture remains a resilient and influential force that continues to shape and enrich the global cultural landscape.

Keywords: African Culture, Diaspora, Cultural Identity, Pan-Africanism, Cultural Preservation, Globalization, Transatlantic Slave Trade.

Introduction

Definition of African Culture in the Diaspora

African culture in the diaspora refers to the traditions, beliefs, customs, languages, and artistic expressions originating from Africa that have been preserved, adapted, or transformed by people of African descent living outside the continent. The term "diaspora"

describes the dispersion of people from their homeland through forced migration, such as the transatlantic slave trade, or voluntary migration for economic, social, and political reasons (Palmer, 45).

African cultural elements survived displacement and evolved through interaction with host societies while retaining core African characteristics. These influences are evident in language, oral traditions, music, dance, religion, cuisine, and social organization (Falola & Childs, 68). Despite centuries of oppression and marginalization, African-descended peoples have maintained cultural practices that symbolize resilience, identity, and resistance. The continued presence of African traditions demonstrates the importance of cultural memory and identity formation among diasporic communities (Gomez, 89).

Overview of African Diaspora Communities

The African diaspora comprises diverse communities across the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. While each community has developed unique cultural expressions shaped by local experiences, all maintain historical and cultural links to Africa (Alpers, 120).

The Americas: The largest African diaspora populations are found in Brazil, the United States, Haiti, Cuba, and Colombia. These communities emerged largely from the transatlantic slave trade. African traditions influenced religious practices such as Candomblé, Vodou, and Santería, as well as musical forms including jazz, blues,

reggae, and samba (Hall, 204). In the United States, African Americans have significantly shaped literature, music, politics, and popular culture through movements such as the Harlem Renaissance and the global rise of hip-hop (Gates, 56).

The Caribbean: African cultural influence is deeply embedded in Caribbean societies. Religious practices such as Rastafarianism and Shango worship, along with musical genres like reggae, calypso, soca, and dancehall, reflect strong African roots (Brathwaite, 312). Festivals such as Carnival, Junkanoo, and Crop Over preserve African traditions of drumming, masquerade, and communal celebration. African heritage also influences Caribbean cuisine, storytelling, and Creole languages (Mintz & Price, 91).AA

Europe: African diaspora communities in Europe grew largely through migration from former colonies during the twentieth century. Countries such as Britain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands host significant African-descended populations (Eze, 77). These communities have enriched European culture through literature, music, and activism. Afrobeat, Afro-fusion, and African literary traditions have contributed to contemporary cultural and postcolonial discourse (Mbembe, 134).

The Middle East and Asia: African-descended communities have existed in the Middle East and Asia for centuries through trade, military service, and migration (Sheriff, 213). Afro-Arab and Afro-Iranian populations have preserved African influences in music, dance, and religion. In South Asia, the Siddi

communities of India and Pakistan continue to maintain aspects of their African heritage despite social marginalization (Jayasuriya & Pankhurst, 54). African culture in the diaspora remains a dynamic and evolving phenomenon that reflects the resilience and adaptability of African-descended peoples worldwide.

Historical Background of the African Diaspora

The history of the African diaspora is shaped by forced and voluntary migrations, particularly the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism, and post-colonial movements. These processes influenced the cultural, social, and political identities of African-descended populations worldwide.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade: Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, millions of Africans were forcibly transported to the Americas by European powers including Portugal, Spain, Britain, France, and the Netherlands (Eltis & Richardson, 12). Captives were taken mainly from West and Central Africa and endured the brutal Middle Passage before being sold into slavery in plantations, mines, and households (Thornton, 67; Klein, 93). The slave trade disrupted African societies through depopulation, conflict, and economic instability (Lovejoy, 45). Nevertheless, enslaved Africans preserved important cultural traditions, which later blended with European and Indigenous influences to form distinctive diasporic cultures in places such as Haiti, Jamaica, and Brazil (Gomez, 109).

Colonialism and the African Diaspora: Following the decline of the slave trade, European powers intensified the colonization of Africa, formalized during the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 (Hochschild, 213). Colonial administrations exploited African labor through taxation, forced labor, and land dispossession (Rodney, 150). Colonial rule imposed European languages, religions, and political systems while suppressing many African cultural practices (Fanon, 78). At the same time, it strengthened racial inequalities and complicated efforts to reconnect Africa with its diaspora (James, 167).

Post-Colonial Movements and Identity Formation: The mid-twentieth century witnessed major independence and civil rights movements that reshaped African and diasporic identities. Leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere promoted Pan-Africanism and encouraged stronger ties between Africa and its diaspora (Adi, 92). African-descended communities also fought racial discrimination through civil rights and black liberation movements. Influential figures including W.E.B. Du Bois, Malcolm X, and Stokely Carmichael emphasized solidarity between anti-colonial struggles in Africa and anti-racist movements abroad (West, 203). The rise of Black Consciousness movements in the United States, South Africa, and the Caribbean further reinforced cultural pride, political empowerment, and resistance to oppression (Biko, 42; Césaire, 60).

Contemporary Connections: Today, globalization and digital communication have strengthened connections between Africa and its diaspora. The global popularity of Afrobeats, African fashion, and African-centered social

movements demonstrates the continued influence of African culture worldwide (Tulloch, 118). Initiatives such as Ghana's "Year of Return" have encouraged African-descended people to reconnect with their ancestral heritage (Akyeampong, 95).

African Cultural Retention and Transformation

Despite slavery, colonialism, and migration, African culture has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Diasporic communities have preserved and transformed cultural traditions through adaptation to new environments.

Language and Oral Traditions: Language remains a powerful vehicle for cultural retention although, many African languages were lost during slavery and colonialism, others survived through adaptation and blending with European languages to create Creole languages throughout the Caribbean and South America. African linguistic influences remain evident in African American Vernacular English 1(AAVE), which incorporates features linked to languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Akan (Smitherman, 78; Rickford, 112). Oral traditions, storytelling, proverbs, and folklore also continue to serve as important means of transmitting African cultural values across generations. Language remains a key means of cultural retention within the African diaspora. Although slavery and colonialism disrupted many African languages, elements of these languages survived and blended with European languages to form Creole languages such as Jamaican Patois and Haitian Creole. These languages remain

important markers of identity and cultural continuity among Afro-Caribbean communities (Romaine 98).

Oral traditions have also played a vital role in preserving African heritage. Storytelling, proverbs, songs, and oral histories served as methods of transmitting cultural knowledge, values, and historical experiences. Drawing from the African griot tradition, diasporic communities used oral narratives to preserve memories of resistance, survival, and identity under slavery and oppression (Horton 215). These traditions also influenced folklore, chants, and musical expressions throughout the Americas and the Caribbean (Díaz 41).

Music and Dance: Music and dance are among the strongest expressions of African cultural survival and transformation. They functioned as tools of communication, resistance, and community solidarity. African musical traditions influenced genres such as jazz, blues, gospel, reggae, samba, calypso, and soca. Elements such as complex rhythms, improvisation, and call-and-response patterns remain central to these forms (Giro 112; Figueroa 97). In Brazil, genres such as samba and bossa nova combine African rhythms with Portuguese influences, contributing significantly to Afro-Brazilian identity (Pinho 23).

Dance similarly reflects African cultural continuity. Forms such as mambo, rumba, cha-cha-cha, samba, and capoeira blend African, Indigenous, and European influences (Mead 84). In the United States, African American dance traditions, including the Charleston,

jitterbug, and hip-hop, have become influential global cultural forms (Stewart 56).

Religion and Spiritual Practices: Religion provides another important example of African cultural retention. Although many Africans were converted to Christianity and Islam, traditional beliefs survived through adaptation and syncretism (Agbo & Ndifon 283). In Haiti, Cuba, and Brazil, religions such as Vodou, Santería, Candomblé, and Umbanda combine African spiritual traditions with Christian and Indigenous elements (Brown 132; Paz 67). These faiths emphasize ancestral reverence, spiritual forces, and communal identity, remaining central to Afro-descendant cultures (Herskovits 119). Christianity and Islam also became spaces for cultural transformation. African American Christianity, for example, developed into a source of resilience and resistance against oppression. Gospel music reflects this fusion of African spiritual traditions and Christian teachings, influencing religious music globally (Cone 57).

Cuisine and Traditional Foods: Cuisine remains a significant expression of African cultural heritage. African cooking techniques and ingredients were preserved and adapted through interaction with Indigenous and European traditions. In the United States, foods such as gumbo, jambalaya, and fried chicken reflect African culinary influences brought by enslaved Africans (Rosenberg 67). Caribbean dishes like jerk chicken and curried goat similarly combine African traditions with local ingredients. In Brazil, Afro-Brazilian cuisine incorporates ingredients such as palm

oil, okra, and yams in dishes like feijoada and acarajé, which have become important symbols of Brazilian national culture (Da Silva 104). The survival and transformation of language, oral traditions, music, religion, and cuisine demonstrate the resilience and creativity of African-descended peoples. These cultural practices continue to strengthen identity, solidarity, and connections to African heritage across the diaspora.

African Diaspora and Identity: The African diaspora has developed complex identities shaped by migration, displacement, cultural adaptation, and resistance. Identity formation has been strongly influenced by Pan-Africanism, Afrocentric movements, and ongoing efforts to preserve African heritage.

Pan-Africanism and Cultural Solidarity: Pan-Africanism emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a movement promoting unity among people of African descent worldwide. Leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Kwame Nkrumah emphasized shared African heritage and collective struggles against racism, colonialism, and oppression (Du Bois 145; Garvey 73). The movement encouraged cultural pride, self-determination, and the reclamation of African history. It also influenced major political struggles, including civil rights movements in the United States and anti-colonial campaigns in Africa. Modern institutions such as the African Union reflect the continuing influence of Pan-African ideals (Akinsanya 99).

By emphasizing common ancestry and shared experiences, Pan-Africanism helped create a sense of belonging among African-descended peoples across Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas (Murray 84).

Afrocentric Movements: Afrocentrism developed as a response to Eurocentric interpretations of history that marginalized African contributions. Popularized by Molefi Kete Asante, Afrocentrism seeks to place African perspectives at the center of historical and cultural analysis (Asante 23). The movement promotes the recovery of African history, traditions, languages, and cultural practices. In the diaspora, this has encouraged the adoption of African names, celebration of African-centered festivals such as Kwanzaa, and renewed interest in African ancestry and genealogy (Kefala 112; Giddings 77). Afrocentrism has also influenced education through African Studies programs, Black History Month activities, and scholarship focused on African and diasporic experiences. These efforts challenge historical distortions and highlight African achievements and contributions to global civilization (Asante 45).

Challenges of Cultural Assimilation and Preservation

Despite efforts to preserve African heritage, diasporic communities have faced significant pressures to assimilate into dominant cultures. During slavery and colonial rule, many Africans were discouraged or prevented from practicing their languages, religions, and customs. African traditions were often suppressed or portrayed as inferior, resulting in cultural loss and

transformation (Smith 112). Nevertheless, African culture has survived through family networks, community organizations, religious institutions, and cultural celebrations. Families have served as important custodians of traditions, passing knowledge, stories, and values from one generation to another. Recent technological developments have strengthened cultural preservation efforts. Social media and digital platforms allow African-descended peoples worldwide to share traditions, promote cultural awareness, and strengthen diasporic connections (Appiah 98). However, challenges remain. The decline of African language use among younger generations threatens cultural continuity, prompting initiatives to revitalize languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Swahili (Schreiner 140). Concerns also exist regarding the commercialization and appropriation of African cultural expressions in global entertainment and fashion industries.

Despite these challenges, the African diaspora continues to demonstrate resilience in preserving and adapting its cultural heritage. Through Pan-Africanism, Afrocentrism, and cultural revitalization efforts, African-descended peoples have maintained strong connections to their history while contributing significantly to global culture.

Contemporary Expressions of African Culture

In the modern era, African culture continues to evolve while remaining rooted in its historical traditions. Contemporary expressions of African identity are evident in literature, art, fashion, music, and media,

serving as tools of cultural preservation, social commentary, and global exchange.

Literature and Storytelling

African literature has become a powerful medium for exploring identity, migration, colonial legacies, and contemporary social issues. Its foundations lie in Africa's rich oral traditions, where stories, songs, and proverbs preserved history, values, and cultural memory (Achebe 99). Contemporary writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ngũgĩ WA Thiong'o, and Teju Cole have expanded these traditions into global literary spaces. Their works explore themes of identity, migration, belonging, memory, gender, and post-colonial experiences while maintaining strong connections to African heritage (Adichie 152; Ngũgĩ 204; Cole 122). African literature also serves as a form of social criticism, challenging stereotypes, addressing inequality, and examining the tensions between tradition and modernity. Through storytelling, African writers continue to preserve cultural memory while contributing to global intellectual and cultural discourse (Adichie 157).

Fashion, Art, Media, and Popular Culture

Fashion and Art: Fashion and art have become important channels for promoting African culture globally. African designers, artists, and influencers use these platforms to reclaim identity, celebrate heritage, and challenge stereotypes.

African Fashion and Global Influence: African fashion has evolved into a global phenomenon. Designers such as Stella Jean, Oumou Sy, and Duro Olowu combine traditional African textiles like Ankara and Kente with contemporary styles, bringing African creativity to international runways (Tate 37). Fashion weeks in cities such as Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg further showcase African talent. Global celebrities, including Beyoncé through The Lion King: The Gift, have also increased international appreciation of African fashion (Lamb 184).

Contemporary African Art: Contemporary African artists such as El Anatsui, Yinka Shonibare, and Wangechi Mutu have gained worldwide recognition for works exploring African heritage, migration, identity, and post-colonial experiences (Anatsui 89). El Anatsui's installations made from recycled materials symbolize both African ingenuity and the lasting effects of colonialism (Anatsui 90). Afro-Futurism has also emerged as an influential movement, imagining African futures centered on innovation, technology, and freedom from colonial constraints (Megan 72).

Art and the Reclamation of Identity: African fashion and art serve as tools of cultural resistance, challenging negative stereotypes and promoting authentic representations of African peoples. Their global recognition has strengthened cultural pride and empowered African creators to participate actively in international cultural markets (Soyinka 62).

Media and Popular Culture: Modern media has transformed how African culture is expressed and shared. Through music, film, and social media, diaspora communities preserve heritage, challenge stereotypes, and connect globally.

African Music in the Global Spotlight: African music genres such as Afrobeat, hip-hop, and reggae have achieved worldwide popularity. Artists including Wizkid, Burna Boy, and Shakira have introduced African sounds to global audiences. Building on the legacy of Fela Kuti, Afrobeat has become an influential international genre (Abubakar 107). Burna Boy's Twice As Tall highlights African pride while blending Afrobeat, highlife, and other African musical traditions (Burna 16). Digital platforms such as YouTube and Spotify have further expanded the global reach of African music (Lewis 98).

African Cinema and Film: African cinema has become a major platform for expressing culture and identity. Nollywood, one of the world's largest film industries, produces films addressing social issues, African traditions, and contemporary realities. Directors such as Kunle Afolayan and Genevieve Nnaji have contributed significantly to its growth (Afolayan 23). Other filmmakers, including Ousmane Sembène, Neill Blomkamp, and Wanuri Kahiu, have earned international acclaim for works exploring identity, post-colonialism, and social justice (Sembène 62).

Social Media and Global Connectivity: Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have

enabled African influencers and cultural figures to promote African culture globally. Personalities such as Toke Makinwa and Chioma Akpotha have become influential voices in entertainment and fashion, expanding the visibility of African culture worldwide (Akpotha 11).

Contemporary expressions of African culture in the diaspora demonstrate a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation. Through literature, fashion, art, music, film, and digital media, African communities continue to assert identity, foster cultural exchange, and reshape global perceptions.

The Role of African Culture in Diaspora Communities

African culture has significantly influenced the social, political, economic, and cultural development of diaspora communities worldwide.

1. **Social and Political Impact**
   (a) **Social Movements and Cultural Solidarity:** African culture has inspired numerous social movements seeking justice, equality, and empowerment. The U.S. Civil Rights Movement drew upon African cultural traditions and Pan-African ideals. Leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and Angela Davis emphasized both racial equality and African identity. Their efforts influenced later movements, including Black Power and #BlackLivesMatter (Gillespie 120). In the Caribbean, Marcus Garvey promoted

Pan-Africanism and encouraged African-descended peoples to reconnect with their heritage as a source of pride and unity (Garvey 135).

(b) Cultural Activism and African Identity; Music, art, and other cultural practices have served as forms of political resistance. Bob Marley's reggae music became a global symbol of African unity and social justice (Marley 78). Likewise, Afrocentricity has encouraged the celebration of African history and values, helping diaspora communities challenge stereotypes and redefine African identity (Asante 17).

2. Contributions to Global Culture

(a) **African Music and Global Soundscapes:** African musical traditions have profoundly influenced global genres such as jazz, blues, rock, hip-hop, and pop. Artists like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Miles Davis incorporated African musical elements, including improvisation and polyrhythms (Hammond 25). Contemporary artists such as Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Davido continue to expand the global influence of Afrobeat (Abubakar 118).

(b) **African Literature in the Global Canon:** African writers have enriched world literature by addressing colonialism, identity, migration, and cultural change. Authors such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o have challenged colonial narratives and elevated African perspectives. Achebe's Things Fall Apart remains a landmark critique of colonialism (Achebe 112). Similarly, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explores themes of migration and identity in the diaspora (Adichie 148).

3. **Visual Arts and African Aesthetics:** Artists including El Anatsui, Yinka Shonibare, and Wangechi Mutu have merged traditional African aesthetics with contemporary artistic practices, gaining international recognition (Anatsui 98). African fashion designers such as Stella Jean, Oumou Sy, and Duro Olowu have likewise promoted African creativity and craftsmanship on global runways (Tate 41).
4. **Economic and Business Influence:** Diaspora Entrepreneurship and Economic Networks

African diaspora communities have contributed significantly to economic development through entrepreneurship in sectors such as healthcare, real estate, and retail (Harris 101). These businesses create jobs and strengthen trade connections between Africa and global markets. Diaspora remittances also play a vital role in supporting families, businesses, and national development across Africa (World Bank 16).

Cultural Diplomacy and Global Trade

Diaspora professionals often act as cultural ambassadors, facilitating business partnerships and investment opportunities between Africa and other regions. These networks promote trade, increase awareness of African markets, and contribute to economic growth (Adebanjo 103). African culture has shaped social movements, enriched global culture, strengthened identity, and contributed to economic development. Its influence continues to shape both diaspora communities and the wider world.

Challenges and Future Prospects

Despite its global influence, African culture in the diaspora faces challenges related to cultural erosion, globalization, and assimilation. However, ongoing preservation efforts and technological advancements offer promising opportunities for cultural continuity.

1. **Cultural Erosion and Preservation Efforts:** As generations become further removed from their ancestral roots, some cultural practices, languages, and traditions risk being weakened or lost (Miller 202). Younger generations in highly urbanized and westernized societies may find it difficult to maintain strong cultural connections.

To address this challenge, diaspora communities have established cultural centers, language programs, museums, and festivals that celebrate African heritage. Institutions such as the African American Cultural and Heritage Facility and the National Museum of African American History and Culture provide important spaces for education and cultural preservation (Owusu 89). Festivals such as Caribana also celebrate African and Caribbean heritage while strengthening community identity (Harris 142). Artists continue to support preservation by blending traditional African elements with contemporary forms of music, dance, and storytelling, fostering cultural pride and continuity (Soyinka 210).

2. **The Role of Technology in Cultural Continuity:** Technology has become a powerful tool for

preserving and promoting African culture. Social media, streaming services, and digital platforms enable diaspora communities to access and share African music, literature, fashion, and art globally. Platforms such as YouTube and Spotify have expanded the reach of Afrobeats, highlife, and gospel music. Artists including Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Tiwa Savage have gained worldwide audiences through digital media (Adebayo 145). Similarly, African films, particularly from Nollywood, have reached international viewers through streaming services such as Netflix, increasing the global visibility of African storytelling and culture (Okeke 90).

These developments suggest a promising future in which technology strengthens cultural connections and ensures the continued relevance of African culture across the diaspora.

3. **Technology and Cultural Preservation:** Technology has become an essential tool for preserving African culture in diaspora communities. Digital resources such as mobile applications, podcasts, and online courses help teach African languages that face the risk of decline. Platforms like Duolingo offer courses in Swahili, while other online programs promote languages such as Yoruba and Igbo, helping younger generations maintain connections to their cultural heritage (Nwauwa 116). Social media platforms also facilitate cultural discussions, the sharing of traditional knowledge, and the promotion of African cultural events.

Educational institutions and online learning platforms increasingly offer courses on African history, languages, and culture, enabling diaspora communities to access cultural knowledge and strengthen their understanding of African identity in a globalized world.

Bridging the Gap between Africa and the Diaspora

A major challenge facing diaspora communities is maintaining strong connections with their ancestral homelands. Historical, political, economic, and geographical factors have often limited direct engagement between Africa and its diaspora. However, technology, education, and collaborative initiatives are helping to bridge this divide.

One notable example is Ghana's "Year of Return" campaign, launched in 2019 to commemorate 400 years since the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in America. The initiative encouraged members of the African diaspora to visit Africa, reconnect with their heritage, and invest in the continent's development (Adu 103). The program strengthened cultural ties and opened new opportunities for collaboration and investment. Other African countries have implemented similar outreach efforts. Kenya's Diaspora Policy, for example, encourages citizens living abroad to participate in the nation's political, economic, and cultural development, fostering stronger links between the country and its diaspora (Mwangi 77). Regional organizations such as the African Union and the African Development Bank have also emphasized the importance of diaspora

engagement. Through programs focused on economic development, education, and cultural exchange, these institutions seek to strengthen cooperation between Africa and its global diaspora (Tade 105).

Despite challenges such as cultural erosion, globalization, and assimilation pressures, efforts to preserve and promote African culture continue to grow. Through technology, cultural initiatives, and international partnerships, diaspora communities are ensuring that African cultural heritage remains vibrant and influential worldwide.

Conclusion

The African diaspora has played a significant role in shaping global culture. From the era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to the present, African-descended communities have preserved, adapted, and transformed their cultural traditions, enriching societies around the world. The experiences of slavery, colonialism, and post-colonial struggles have profoundly influenced diaspora identities. Yet African cultural traditions—including language, oral traditions, music, religion, cuisine, and dance—have endured and continue to thrive despite pressures of assimilation and cultural change.

Diaspora communities have actively preserved and reinterpreted their heritage, ensuring its relevance for younger generations and global audiences. Technology has been particularly important in this process, enabling African culture to transcend geographic boundaries through social media, streaming services, and digital

education platforms. These tools have strengthened cultural connections and expanded global appreciation of African cultural expressions. Although challenges remain, initiatives focused on cultural preservation, education, and collaboration between Africa and its diaspora offer promising prospects. Programs such as Ghana's "Year of Return," digital language preservation efforts, and diaspora engagement policies demonstrate a growing commitment to sustaining African cultural heritage. As African communities continue to influence global music, literature, fashion, art, and media, their cultural contributions will remain increasingly significant. By balancing cultural continuity with innovation, the African diaspora ensures that African culture remains a dynamic force in global society. Ultimately, the African diaspora stands as a testament to the resilience, creativity, and enduring strength of African culture. Through ongoing efforts to preserve, transform, and promote their heritage, diaspora communities honor the past while shaping the future of global cultural expression.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF NIGERIA - CHINA RELATIONS AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The study examines the nature, character, dynamics and motivating forces behind Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations and economic recovery of Nigeria. We predicated our investigations on complex interdependent theory, with materials derived from secondary source while analysis is historical and descriptive. The study therein noted that Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations in

trade, investment, oil has created an enabling environment for common views in global affairs through frameworks as the South-South cooperation, G-77, among others. However, we discovered that although these relations and cooperation has enhanced trade and investment relations between Nigeria and China, but the relations are in favour of China. Furthermore, this study discovers China's interest is particularly in Nigeria's crude oil, to sustain its strong economic growth, all combined to engender seemingly enhanced but highly disproportional China-Nigeria bilateral economic relations with China being the net beneficiary. Basically, the benefits arising there from are yet to translate into improvement in social and material conditions of the citizenry. The study continuously recommended among other measures that the government should strive to strike a balance between private sector and public sector-led development because elimination of the developmental state has proven to be counter-productive in developing economies.

Keywords: Nigeria-China; Economic Relations; Trade; Investment; Economic Recovery.

Introduction

Diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China took roots on February 10, 1971. Nigeria and China share a lot of things in common. Nigeria and China are multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and plural societies. China is the most populous nation in the Asia continent and globally, while Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. According to Yong (2021) the pacesetter in the

over fifty years of China's relations with Nigeria is driven by an all-dimensional, wide-ranging and high-quality bilateral cooperation. The brotherly relationship between China and Nigeria has reached new heights unmatched in history, bringing tangible benefits in very many areas to both countries and peoples. At the political front, there is an enhanced political mutual trust. For instance, on October 1, 1960 of Nigeria's independence, the Chinese government recognized the political independence of Nigeria. Also, in 1971, Nigeria with other African countries firmly supported China's restoration of its legitimate seat in the UN. In recent years, the two countries have enjoyed frequent high-level exchanges and enhanced mutual trust, putting China-Nigeria relations on a fast track development.

To fast track development on the socio-economic front, in 2017, there was a first and successful official visit to Nigeria by then Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Again, in 2018, former President Buhari was the very first head of state President Xi Jinping met with bilaterally after the Forum for Chinese-African Cooperation (FOCAC) Beijing Summit, and Nigeria formally joined the big family of the Belt and Road Initiative by signing a governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In 2020, President Buhari attended the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19 (Yong, 2021).

Utomi (2008) sees Nigeria's relations with China in the last decade as having metamorphosed from a limited and intermittent contact that marked the immediate post-independence era to an increasingly complex and

expansive engagement. Most other African countries in the 1960s and 70s, Nigeria viewed China as a non-aligned developing country, it did little to galvanize business or even special diplomatic relations with the Asian giant. Nigeria's trade focused primarily on European and North American countries, which proclaimed themselves development partners. China's own economic and political challenges made it an unlikely development partner at that time. As a result of Deng Xiaopeng's reform policies of the 1970s and 80s, China's dramatic growth and development, and attendant industrial, energy, and market expansion needs, brought it into greater contact with Africa. Its new expanded presence presented a partnership seen by many stakeholders as an alternative model to Western relationships.

Recent developments in Nigeria, by China, especially in the areas of construction, commerce, trade and strategic partnerships, are designed to reinforce and strengthen existing friendship between the two countries. Though, in its relations with Nigeria, China has tried to emphasize economic, scientific and cultural relations; aid is also an instrument for enhancing bilateral relations, a policy that is evidently different from the other exploitative practices that has kept Nigeria's development on a low key since independence. China has a record of not indulging in imperialistic or expansionist tendencies or for that matter, enslaving those she has relations with. That abiding principle is also applied in her relations with Nigeria. Unarguably, the Nigerian economy is at its ascendant stage and it

needs to attract adequate investment to engineer its growth. The Nigerian economy is stagnant, import-dependent and heavily reliant on natural resources, but with a large market that can absorb as many goods as possible from any part of the world.

Currently, Nigeria is China's largest source of import and its third largest trading partner in Africa, with crude oil accounting for Chinese highest import from Nigeria (Jianchun, 2023; Egbula, & Zheng, 2011). Therefore, Nigeria-China Relations is therefore a very topical issue, both within the context of the "new" scramble for Africa and the re-configuration of international relations, where Africa now has new options based on the exploration of South-South solidarity in charting an alternative development course that is free from dependence on the West. On the basis of available indicators, China is one of the most vibrant elements of the global economy today. Since the early 1990's and the 21" century, they have become more open and better integrated, forming economic and political blocks with several nations of the world.

To trans-nationalize their economic interest in Asia, Oceanic, Africa and Nigeria, China is giving interest free-loans, aids, bankrolls debts and is investing in infrastructure development. For instance, in Nigeria, China through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Maritime Silk Road

Scheme is building roads, setting up rail tracks, seaports, sea routes and roads to link cities and neighboring countries. To chart a common course towards addressing

developmental challenges and harnessing opportunities in trade and investment (particularly oil), Nigeria-China relations is nourished in multi-lateral platforms as South-South framework of BRICS (Group of countries comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa); Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), G-77, among diplomatic platforms. Consequent upon the foregoing, this study examines the impact of Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations, especially in trade and investment relations on Nigeria's economic advancement. This is with the view to establishing basis on Chinese national interest on Nigeria's economic recovery.

Theoretical Framework

Research on relations between countries are driven by the fact that international capitalism is in a continuum and it is creatively self-renewing itself into new forms as globalization and development prescriptions reflected in Nigeria as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) packaged in the form of privatization, commercialization, deregulation, metamorphosed into National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and among others. The yardstick for measuring bi-lateral relations between countries is dependent on the genuine efforts by partnering countries aimed at seeking mutual strategies for accomplishing purer goals that will bolster economic development between them. Basically, this has made most studies in bi-lateral relations between unequal countries (in this case Nigeria) to be viewed as an opportunity to utilize its overwhelming advantage in skills and technology

expertise (in this case China) to maintain Western-styled subservience over a less developed country (LDCs) such as Nigeria (Udoh, 2015).

On the one hand, Okolie (2009) posits that social science literatures on globalization, trade and development relations anchor their analysis on dependency persuasion, which clearly sees the

impoverishment of the under-developed economies as emanating from the exogenous disarticulation and distortions of the economic and political structure of the developed economies' through colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. On the other hand, Okolie (2007:3) states that "attempts by scholars and practitioners to evolve a universally applicable theoretical framework in the explanation of global issues have ended in contradictory nullity and barefoot prognosis".

Hence, this study predicates its analysis on the complex interdependence theory, as developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. According to Okolie (2006:75), the theory refers "to the various, complex transnational connections interdependencies between states and societies". This theory sees economic relations as increasing, while the utilisation of military capacity and power balancing were declining, but remain vital. The decreasing utilisation of military capacity and power balancing creates an enabling environment for cooperation among states.

The critical issue for an understanding of this theory is that increasing bilateral engagement between Nigeria and China leads to the convergence of interest of the ruling groups of the two states. The very basis of this convergence is that they both have shared interests in the advancement of capital, which of course have brought about the free movement of capital between the two states. The volume of capital movement between Nigeria and China is quite enormous and that strongly cooperation which the complex interdependence theory represents. Trade relation are in themselves competitive. It is therefore right to contend that each of the states would maximize its chances for favourable balance of trade in their economic relations. Above all, what is clear in the increasing volume of trade between the two states is increasing opportunities for movement of capital, which is the central interest of the global system which the theory represents about sight x.

This theory is relevant to the study because it curtails the issues of unequal gains raised by realists, enhances the appreciation of cooperative actions among states and harness wide understanding of the drive global interrelationship. On the one hand, it takes cognizance of the possibilities of exploitation and bias benefits. On the other hand, it lays emphasis on global regime and partnerships as an essential tool for tackling such situations. For Udoh (2015:182), the relevance of the theory can be located in its ability to "weigh the positive and negative currencies of international economic relations". Moreover, our choice of the complex interdependence theory is guided by the theoretical

framework's ability to explain how the global thrive in an unequal and existential reward system that places the developed states over and above the developing states, which is bound to be readdressed by renegotiated global regimes, which extends some assistance to the latter (Okolie, 2006).

Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is confronted with the complexity of development challenges. China, as one of the major motivators of contemporary globalisation utilises trade and investment cooperation, debt relief and infrastructural partnership to woo and drive Africa prosperity, security and development. Ekemam and Nwachi (2019) conceives China as having expanded her growing bilateral trade and strategic cooperation with Nigeria, because of international isolations and Western condemnation of Nigeria's military regimes (1970-1998). For them, China's panacea to endemic crisis development in Nigeria was through increased bi-lateral relations with Nigeria through her reformed foreign aids policies of 1995, which created an enabling environment for her domestic enterprises to invest and set up plants in Nigeria and many African countries. China uses bi-lateral currency swap to further ease and boost their trade relations. Also, China needs Nigeria's oil and petroleum to aid her rapidly growing economy, while Nigeria looks to China for help in providing needed economic, military and political support.

Therefore, Nigeria-China bilateral relations and economic recovery is explained in the light of the complex interdependence theory

Nigeria-China Trade and Investment Profile: A Critical Analysis

Nigeria-China trade/investment relations are strengthened and driven by capitalism. The economic character of Nigeria-China relations is typified in their trade and investment relations. On one face, Nigeria diplomats see the characterization of China's intentions as neocolonial as Western propaganda.

(Utomi, 2008). As Bukarambe (2002:27) noted that

China evolved, reformed and transformed politically and economically, while Nigeria stagnated. Consequently, China's advantage over Nigeria increased and deepened. That ensured that China dynamism and transformation became a dominant force shaping and driving the relationship although the parties do not make an issue of it, hence "the unacknowledged Sino-Dynamics.

The Nigerian economy is more or less import-oriented with virtually little productive activities in the manufacturing sector, but the reverse is the case with the Chinese economy. There is a high degree of production activities going on within their oil, manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Notably, the Nigerian economy is consumption-oriented, while the Chinese economy is export-oriented with high emphasis on semi-capital and capital production. The need for Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations was to foster mutual exchange and cooperation. The mutual exchange and cooperation is in line with the globalized standard of expanding market, ensure capital flows, maximizing benefits and profitability.

An attempt for a comprehensive evaluation of Chinese trade statistics with Nigeria within the period 1996-2016 and non-figurative analysis made. See Figure I below

Figure 1: Trends analysis of Nigeria-China bilateral trade (US Dollars)

An analysis of trade flow data of Figure I above by Ibrahim and Sari (2020:35) shows that, the trends in Nigeria-China bilateral trade relations of both imports, export and total trade for the periods 1992-2016. Moreover, Nigeria-China bilateral trade has remained very low especially before the signing of a bilateral trade agreement between the two countries. Trade between the two countries has grown significantly after the signing of bilateral trade and investment promotion and protection agreement in 2001. Bilateral trade between the two countries reached a peak in 2014 with a total trade value of $18.05 billion which declined to $14.94 billion and $10.62 billion in 2015 and 2016. This declined in bilateral trade was as a result of recent government policy which aimed at reducing importation of foreign manufactured goods. This impacted a lot on Nigeria-China trade as most consumer goods in Nigeria were imported from China. China is Nigeria's major source of import, as imports from China hits $13.7 billion in 2015 though it declined to $9.7 billion in 2016.

An on-line report by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (2021) reveals that in 2021, China exported $21.9b to Nigeria. The main products that China exported to Nigeria are non-knit women's suits ($769m), telephone ($729m), and rubber foot-wears ($541m).

During the last 26 years the exports of China to Nigeria have increased at an annualized rate of 21.1%, from $151m in 1995 to $21.98 in 2021. In 2021, China did not export any services to Nigeria. In 2021, Nigeria exported $3.05B to China. The main products that Nigeria exported to China were Petroleum Gas ($1.42B), Crude Petroleum ($1.02B), and Lead Ore ($73M). During the last 26 years the exports of Nigeria to China have increased at an annualized rate of 17%, from $51M in 1995 to $3.05B in 2021.

The Observatory of Economic Complexity (2021) still observes that Nigeria's export to China has not kept pace with its import. There has never been a balance of trade in favor of Nigeria and this trade imbalance has not only continued to increase but also intensified. This massive growth in the trade balance is also reflected in the variation between exports and imports to and from China which was, as a result, high import demand of Chinese goods by Nigeria with little export supply to China to match with increasing import. It adds that of all the major products exported, mineral fuels and product of their distillation accounts for the largest share and dominates the Nigeria's total export in the whole periods 1992-2021.

Most of this growth was attributable to the oil sector, with a small fraction emanating from the importation of cheaply manufactured Chinese goods and products. Nonetheless, many imported Chinese goods were often substandard, leading the Standards Organization of Nigeria in October 1996 to threaten China that a formal complaint would be lodged with the World Trade

Organization if the situation was not immediately corrected. The Chinese responded by explaining that they had not deliberately engaged in the dumping of inferior goods in Nigeria and

that it was often Nigerian businessmen of dubious disposition who were ordering products of questionable quality. Problems with corruption and unethical conduct by Nigerian businessmen and public officials would later resurface as a key obstacle in the Sino-Nigerian relationship when the Chinese blamed these forces for contributing to the ineffectiveness of a Chinese project to revive the Nigerian Railway Corporation. (Pat Utomi, 2008).

Going by the interpretative analysis above, it shows that in terms of market share Chinese goods non-oil commodities to Nigeria is high. This means that countries that export similar Chinese goods has lost its market share in the Nigerian economy to China as the country is now increasingly meeting its import demand from China. The share of major products imported from China become more significant when compared with the major products exported to China. This is because of the diversified nature Chinese export and non-diversified nature of Nigerian export.

With the level of trade, Nigeria is now the second biggest China trade partner in Africa.Nigeria-China trade and investment relations has formed linkages that creates new markets, facilitated new long-term investment opportunities and created jobs. According to Jianchun (2023); Egbula and Zheng (2011), in 2021, Chinese

export to Nigeria reached 25.68 billion USD, rising 33.3% year on year, and Nigeria's exports to China reached 3.04 billion USD, rising 22.4% year on year. From 2016 to 2021, this bilateral trade increased by nearly 142%. By 2021, cumulative investment has exceeded 20 billion USD, mainly in construction of free-trade and export-processing zones, oil extraction, home appliances and vehicle assembly, agricultural production, among others. The two free trade zones, Lekki Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone (FTZ), have attracted investment of more than 1.51 billion USD and created more than 7,000 jobs opportunities. China is the leading contributor to Nigeria's infrastructure development, with more than 20 Chinese companies participating in the construction of major projects in railways, roads, electricity, ICT and oil refineries. Visible signs of Nigeria-China investment and contracted projects cooperation can be seen in the Abuja-Kaduna Railway, the Lagos-Ibadan Railway, the new airport terminals, the Lekki Deep seaport, the Zungeru Hydropower Station, among others.

Nigeria-China Relations within a South-South Framework

Musa (2008:36-37) traced the term “South-South cooperation” to the 2006 Special Unit of the UNDP. He credits the Unit for presenting the term.

as a broad framework of collaboration among countries in the global South in the political, economic, social, environmental and technical domains. South-South cooperation takes place at the bi-lateral, sub-regional and

interregional bases. This notwithstanding, it is the desire of countries of the Southern hemisphere to present a common front in addressing global inequality and inequities that contributed to the emergence of the South-South cooperation. Today, issues in South-South relations have deepened and widened to include, monetary, financial, investment and trade arrangements, especially in the context of efforts towards regional and sub-regional integration in Africa.

Musa (2006) adds that the civil societies, the private sector, the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have become vital players in the South-South initiatives and for the consultation and coordination of South Relations. In fact, regional groupings such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Common Market for Eastern and Central Africa (COMESA), among others, are keying into the South-South Cooperation Framework.

As perceived by Utomi (2008) an understanding Nigeria-China Relations under a South-South framework, revolves around understanding China-Africa partnership. Therefore, China-Africa contact and partnership can be traced to Deng Xiaopeng's reform policies of the 1970sand 80s, China's dramatic growth and modernization, and attendant industrial, energy, and market expansion needs. Its new expanded presence offered a partnership seen by many stakeholders as an alternative model to Western relationships). China's

renewed interest in the continent is radically different from the model of Western partnership. It is geared towards primarily at helping African countries improve their autochthonous development capacity. These attempts towards autochthonous development for Nigeria are reflected in infrastructural support and bi-lateral commitments as the Road and Belt Initiative. According to Yong (2021:n.p) reports Nigeria-China relations in this manner.

The past 50 years have witnessed substantial progress in our mutually beneficial cooperation. In 2019, the two-way trade between China and Nigeria reached 19.27 billion US dollars, which was around 1900 times that of 1971 when the diplomatic ties was established. And the trade growth rate was 26.3%, ranking first among China's top 40 trading partners. In 2000, Nigeria's trade with China accounted for a merely 1% of the total of Nigeria's foreign trade. Nowadays, China is one of Nigeria's top trade partners. In the area infrastructure, there are so many examples of mutually beneficial cooperation, such as Abuja-Kaduna Railway, Lagos-Ibadan Railway, Abuja Light Rail, airport terminals in Abuja and Port Harcourt. The past 50 years have also witnessed the thriving of cultural and people-to-people exchanges. As the most populous countries in the world and Africa respectively, there is an enormous potential in the area of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Nigeria. The Spring Festival Temple Fair, which has been held in Abuja for 4 consecutive years, attracted more and more local people. In 2019, the number of Nigerian students studying in China rose to

6800, which stands first in all African countries. Many of them covered by a wide variety of scholarships, studying for their master and doctorate degrees in engineering, medicine, agriculture and other majors. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in Nigeria, China was among the first to offer help, and has sent medical supplies and shared experience on treating COVID-19.

A critical analysis of Nigeria - China trade relations that the Nigerian economy is underdeveloped, while the Chinese economy is sustained by her highly skilled labour, highly developed domesticintegrated production, technical infrastructure capacity. This study views Nigeria-China relations as serving the purpose of driving a Chinese-led economic hegemony of capital. On the other face, this study views Nigeria-China trade and investment relations as a trans-nationalized politics configured to help China gain ascendancy above global adversarial states such as the United States of America and her Western allies.

The empirical evidence provided above indicates that Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) undermines Nigerian manufacturers' capacity to produce capital goods. This underscores the fact that the Nigeria government's determined efforts to boost manufacturing sector and promote capital goods production through viable foreign direct investment collaborations, serves as an avenue for capital accumulation for Chinese manufacturers.

In an acknowledged fact by me, Udoh (2015), 1 explained that Brazil has an economic character of largely exploring and exploiting Nigeria's oil without the commensurate aiding Nigeria's local content oil development policy, presents Brazil as an instrument for the continuous sustenance of the inherited Euro-American culture of deprivation and exploitation. This is still the case in Nigeria-China trade and investment relations. This study deduces that Chinese relations with Nigeria in its various forms be it bi-lateral relations (development assistance, trade and foreign direct investment), multi-lateral relations (South-South cooperation), serves as a penetrative instrument in the hands of China to largely serve their interests to catapult Chinese economic interest.

This unbalanced relation will not take Nigeria towards the path to economic recovery.Reliance on foreign direct investment, extraction of oil and gas resources, insecurity, gross inadequacy of physical and social infrastructure remain the hallmark of Nigeria's economic sector.

The study reveals that at the expense of assisting Nigeria's productive/manufacturing sector, China's trade and investment relations serves the purpose of ensuring the uninterrupted importation of Nigeria's crude oil and the sale of Chinese manufactured goods.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that China's trade and investment relations serve as a penetrative instrument at

the hands of China to largely serve their interests in Nigeria. On this account, the empirical evidence provided therein in the study, indicated that Chinese undermined Nigerian manufacturers capacity to produce capital goods. On this account, it underscored the fact that the Nigerian governments determined efforts to boost manufacturing sector and promote capital goods production through viable foreign direct investment collaborations, serves as an avenue for capital accumulation for Chinese manufacturers.

China's voracious exploration and exploitation Nigeria's oil has dethroned and disempowered Nigeria's indigenous development aspiration of local content expansion in oil and gas. Furthermore, this study discovered that China's emphasis on uninterrupted exploration and exploitation of Nigeria's oil is traceable to the configuration of China Petroleum sector's policies in a form that ensures increased growth in her oil and natural gas production, such that it supports national consumption necessities and enhances crude oil and derivatives exportation. China's oil partnerships are meant to increase her biofuels in the energy matrix, develop their small to medium oil companies, attract investments and new businesses for her oil, natural gas and renewable fuel sectors and enhance acquisition of national goods and services by the petroleum sector. Based on our findings, we put forward the following recommendations:

1. The Nigerian government should strive to strike a balance between private sector and public sector-led development because elimination of the developmental

state has proven to be counter-productive in developing economies. Since Nigeria is consumption-oriented economy, it will always be import-dependent. The solution to improving Nigeria's manufacturing capacity to produce cannot be found only in foreign direct investment, but in the radical transformation of the Nigerian economic structure. Such transformation must as a matter of necessity address issues such as fiscal federalism, adherence to the rule of law, willingness to adopt prevailing global best practices and the establishment of viable institutions capable of reducing corruption within the public service. More so, the existing realities of Nigeria-China economic relations leaves much to be desired, Nigeria must take the bull by its horn to extricate itself from its dependence-reinforcing economic relationship with China.

2. To aid Nigeria-China oil relations, Nigerian oil companies need to borrow a leaf from the Brazil's Petrobras oil corporation policy thrust. Petrobras oil policy thrust ensures that all contracts are broken down into as small a component as possible with competent Brazilian companies awarded components that they can execute. Where a non-resident company is awarded a component for which there is no sufficient capacity in the country, a local company is attached to it to understudy the process such that the local company develops that capacity through that process. When the above is done, Nigeria-China relations will be put on a solid developmental footing such that private sector-led economic engineering will be realized, hence a line will be drawn between goals that are collective and specific,

absolute and relative, people-oriented and national, united and divergent.

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TOWARDS AN IGBO THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

The question of consciousness remains one of the most enduring concerns in philosophy. From classical metaphysics to contemporary philosophy of mind, scholars have sought to explain the nature, structure, and significance of conscious experience. Discussions on consciousness have largely been shaped by Western philosophical assumptions that privilege individual subjectivity and self-contained rationality. This orientation has often obscured alternative conceptions of consciousness embedded in non-Western intellectual traditions. Drawing on Igbo epistemology and African relational ontology, this work develops an Igbo theory of consciousness grounded in selfhood, spirituality, and relational existence. Employing phenomenological and hermeneutical methods, the work examines the interconnected roles of personhood, communal

belonging, ancestral continuity, and sacred participation in shaping conscious experience. It argues that consciousness in Igbo thought is not merely a private mental phenomenon but a relational mode of existence constituted through participation in communal, spiritual, and ontological realities. Via the concepts of ontological consciousness, relational consciousness, spiritual consciousness, communal consciousness, and participatory consciousness, the work proposes a Relational Theory of Consciousness which offers a broader understanding of consciousness rooted in interconnectedness and existential participation.

Keywords: Ontological Consciousness, Relational Consciousness, Spiritual Consciousness, Communal Consciousness, Participatory Consciousness

Introduction

Few philosophical questions have generated as much sustained reflection as the question of consciousness. Human beings not only exist in the world; they are aware of their existence, reflect upon their experiences, interpret their surroundings, and assign meaning to their lives. The phenomenon of consciousness therefore, occupies a central place in philosophy because it touches the very foundation of human existence. Questions concerning self-awareness, personal identity, subjective experience, intentionality, and the nature of reality inevitably lead to inquiries about consciousness itself.

The philosophical investigation of consciousness has produced diverse and often competing perspectives. Descartes identified consciousness with the certainty of the thinking self, placing subjective awareness at the center of philosophical reflection. Subsequent thinkers such as Locke, Brentano, Husserl, Heidegger, and Nagel developed different approaches to understanding conscious experience, each emphasizing particular dimensions of subjectivity, intentionality, perception, or existential awareness. Despite these differences, much of the dominant discourse has remained largely focused on the individual subject as the primary locus of consciousness (Nagel, 1987; Husserl, 2001).Contemporary philosophy of mind has further expanded these discussions through debates concerning mental representation, cognition and neural processes. The increasing sophistication of these debates has not resolved a fundamental problem- they often overlook the communal, spiritual, and relational dimensions through which consciousness is experienced in many non-Western traditions.

African philosophy offers an important corrective to this limitation. Rather than conceiving the individual as an isolated center of awareness, African thought generally understands human existence within networks of relationships involving community, nature, ancestry, and the sacred. Menkiti (1984) opines that personhood is not merely an individual achievement but a relational reality shaped by participation in communal life likewise, knowledge, identity, and meaning emerge within broader

structures of relations rather than within detached subjectivity.

Within this wider African background, Igbo epistemology offers a particularly rich framework for understanding consciousness. The Igbo worldview conceives reality as an interconnected order in which human beings exist in dynamic relationship with family, community, ancestors, divinities, and the cosmos. Consciousness, from this perspective, cannot be reduced to cognitive awareness alone. It is inseparable from selfhood, spirituality, moral responsibility, and existential participation. The human person does not stand apart from reality as a neutral observer but lives within a web of relationships that shape perception, identity, and understanding. Thus consciousness in Igbo thought is fundamentally relational and participatory. Such a perspective challenges individualistic accounts of consciousness and opens new possibilities for philosophical reflection.

Consciousness in Philosophical Discourse

The philosophical study of consciousness has occupied a prominent position in intellectual history because it concerns one of the most immediate yet elusive aspects of human existence. Every act of perception, reflection, memory, imagination, and judgment presupposes some form of conscious awareness. Despite its familiarity, consciousness remains difficult to define with precision. Philosophers have approached it from different angles, emphasizing self-awareness, subjectivity, intentionality, embodiment, cognition, and existential experience.

These diverse approaches have both enriched philosophical discourse and simultaneously revealed the complexity of the phenomenon itself.

A recurring theme in many philosophical discussions is the relationship between consciousness and the self. The question of whether consciousness originates from an autonomous subject, emerges from social interaction, or participates in a broader ontological order continues to generate debate. These debates provide the conceptual background against which an Igbo theory of consciousness can be developed.

Descartes and the Conscious Self

Modern discussions of consciousness are often traced to René Descartes. His famous declaration, *cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am"), established conscious self-awareness as the foundation of certainty. Faced with radical doubt, Descartes maintained that while external realities could be questioned, the existence of the thinking subject could not (Descartes, 1996). Consciousness therefore became closely associated with the self-certainty of the mind.

The Cartesian legacy profoundly influenced subsequent philosophical thought. Descartes elevated individual consciousness to a privileged position in epistemology and metaphysics by locating certainty within the thinking subject. The human person appeared primarily as a self-conscious rational being capable of reflecting upon it independently of external influences.

This approach also introduced a dualistic model that separated mind from world, subject from object, and consciousness from existence. Cartesian model successfully emphasized self-awareness, but left unresolved questions concerning the relational and communal dimensions of conscious experience.

Brentano and Intentional Consciousness

A significant development occurred with Franz Brentano's revival of intentionality. Brentano argued that consciousness is distinguished by its intentional character; every mental act is directed towards an object, whether real or imagined (Brentano, 2008). Perceiving, remembering, judging, hoping, and desiring all involve a movement of consciousness beyond itself.

This insight shifted philosophical attention away from consciousness as a static substance towards consciousness as an activity. Mental life could no longer be understood merely as an internal state; it possessed an inherent orientation towards meanings, objects, and experiences.Dewalque (2020) observes that Brentano's contribution re-established consciousness as a central philosophical problem by emphasizing the structure of mental acts rather than their physiological causes. Consciousness became a dynamic phenomenon characterized by directedness and engagement.

Nevertheless, Brentano's framework remained largely centered upon individual consciousness. Although intentionality connected the subject with the world, the individual mind continued to function as the primary locus of analysis.

Husserl and Phenomenological Consciousness

Edmund Husserl expanded Brentano's insights and transformed intentionality into the foundation of phenomenology. For Husserl, consciousness is always consciousness of something; every experience possesses an intentional structure that reveals how objects appear to awareness (Husserl, 2001).

Phenomenology sought to describe experience as a gift in consciousness rather than explaining it through psychological or scientific theories. Husserl believed that careful analysis of conscious experience could disclose the structures through which meaning becomes possible.
One of the enduring strengths of Husserl's project lies in its emphasis on lived experience. Consciousness is not treated as an abstract entity but as a field of meaningful engagement with reality. Human beings encounter the world through acts of perception, memory, imagination, and judgment that disclose significance and understanding.

At the same time, Husserl's analysis remained closely linked to transcendental subjectivity. The constituting ego retained a central role in the formation of meaning.

Heidegger and Existential Consciousness

Martin Heidegger further introduced a decisive shift in the discussion of consciousness by directing attention away from the isolated subject towards existence itself. Rather than beginning with consciousness as a mental phenomenon, Heidegger examined the human being as

Dasein, a being already situated within a meaningful world (Heidegger, 1962).

This move altered the philosophical landscape significantly. Human existence was no longer interpreted as detached observation but as involvement, care, concern, and practical engagement. Meaning emerges through lived participation rather than through abstract contemplation.

Klaskow (2011) notes that Heidegger's reformulation of intentionality challenged representational models of consciousness by emphasizing existential participation. Consciousness becomes inseparable from being-in-the-world. Human beings encounter reality through relationships, projects, histories, and possibilities that shape their understanding.

Heidegger's contribution is particularly relevant for this work because it opens the possibility of interpreting consciousness relationally rather than merely subjectively. Nonetheless, his analysis remains primarily focused on individual existence and does not fully explore communal and spiritual dimensions of awareness.

Nagel and Subjective Experience

Thomas Nagel introduced another important perspective by emphasizing the irreducibility of subjective experience. In his critique of reductionist theories, Nagel argued that consciousness possesses a first-person character that cannot be fully captured through objective

description (Nagel, 1987).According to Nagel, there is always something it is like to be a conscious subject. This subjective dimension resists complete explanation through physical or neurological accounts. Scientific descriptions may reveal much about the mechanisms of consciousness, but they do not exhaust the reality of lived experience.

Nagel's position remains influential because it highlights the limits of purely objective approaches to consciousness. His work reminds philosophers that consciousness involves qualitative dimensions that cannot be reduced to external observation alone.

Some Contemporary Perspectives on Consciousness

Contemporary philosophy of mind continues to investigate consciousness through diverse approaches. Some scholars emphasize cognitive processes and mental representation, while others explore embodiment, social cognition, and phenomenological experience. Crane (2013) and Searle (1983), for example, have contributed significantly to discussions concerning intentionality, consciousness, and the relation between mind and world.

These debates have expanded our understanding of conscious experiences. They have revealed the complexity of mental life and challenged simplistic explanations of awareness. Even so, many contemporary theories remain shaped by assumptions inherited from earlier traditions, particularly the tendency to treat

consciousness as the property of autonomous individuals.

This tendency becomes especially apparent when compared with African philosophical perspectives. While Western discussions often begin with the individual subject, African thought frequently begins with relationships, community, participation, and interconnected existence. Consciousness is not merely something possessed by a person; it is something lived within a network of relationships that extends beyond the individual self.

Foundations of Consciousness in Igbo Thought

Any attempt to develop an Igbo theory of consciousness must begin with the worldview from which such consciousness emerges. Consciousness does not exist in a vacuum. It is shaped by a people's understanding of reality, personhood, knowledge, and existence. In Igbo thought, reality is not conceived as a collection of isolated entities existing independently of one another. Rather, existence unfolds within a network of relationships that connect human beings, ancestors, divinities, nature, and the wider cosmos. This relational outlook profoundly influences how consciousness is understood.Unlike many modern theories that approach consciousness primarily as an internal mental phenomenon, Igbo thought situates awareness within lived existence. Consciousness therefore reflects a way of being-in-the-world that is simultaneously personal, communal, moral, and spiritual.

Relational Ontology

A defining characteristic of Igbo thought is its relational understanding of reality. Human existence is not interpreted in terms of radical individuality but through interconnectedness. This orientation is evident in many strands of African philosophy. Mbiti (1969) maintains that African conceptions of existence emphasize relationships rather than isolated individuality. The individual derives meaning through belonging to a wider community of persons, both living and departed.

Asouzu (2007) develops this insight further through his theory of complementary ontology. According to him, beings attain significance through mutual interdependence. No reality exists in complete isolation because every being functions as a complementary part of a larger whole. Existence itself is characterized by interconnectedness.

This ontological structure has important implications for consciousness. If reality is fundamentally relational, then consciousness cannot be adequately explained as a self-enclosed mental activity. Awareness emerges within a world already structured by relationships. The conscious subject is not an isolated spectator but a participant in an interconnected order of existence.

Personhood and Conscious Awareness

The Igbo understanding of consciousness is inseparable from its conception of personhood. The human person, *mmadu*, is not simply a biological organism or a rational mind. Personhood involves moral responsibility, social

participation, spiritual significance, and existential belonging.

Menkiti (1984) argues that in African philosophy, personhood is not merely given at birth but achieved through participation in communal life. One becomes a person through relationships, obligations, and moral engagement with others. The individual therefore develops within a social and ethical framework that shapes identity and consciousness.

This perspective offers a different way of thinking about self-awareness. Consciousness is not merely awareness of oneself as an isolated individual. It includes awareness of one's place within a community, one's obligations to others, and one's participation in a broader moral order.

Consequently, self-consciousness in Igbo thought possesses a relational character. The self comes to know itself through interaction with others. Identity is formed within relationships rather than prior to them.

Spirituality

Another important foundation of consciousness in Igbo thought is spirituality. The Igbo worldview does not sharply divide the sacred from the secular. Spiritual realities are woven into everyday existence and shape how individuals understand themselves and the world around them.

Mbiti (1969) observes that African life is deeply religious because spirituality permeates all dimensions of existence. Human beings live within a universe populated not only by visible realities but also by spiritual forces, ancestral presences, and divine agencies. Existence therefore possesses dimensions that extend beyond empirical perception.

This spiritual orientation influences consciousness in significant ways. Awareness is not restricted to sensory experience or cognitive reflection. It also involves sensitivity to sacred realities, moral obligations, and transcendent meanings. Rituals, prayers, sacrifices, and communal ceremonies become important modes through which individuals participate in and interpret the spiritual dimensions of existence.What emerges from this perspective is a conception of consciousness that is simultaneously spiritual and existential. Human awareness extends beyond immediate experience towards realities that provide meaning, continuity, and orientation.

Knowledge as Participation

The Igbo understanding of consciousness is also connected to its conception of knowledge. Knowledge is not simply the accumulation of information or the representation of external objects. It is closely tied to participation in life itself.Okere (1983) argues that African philosophy must be understood within its historical and cultural contexts because meaning arises through lived engagement rather than detached abstraction. Human beings come to understand reality

through involvement in communal practices, traditions, relationships, and experiences.

Chimakonam and Nweke (2020) similarly emphasize dialogue and relational engagement as important dimensions of African philosophical reflection. Understanding develops through interaction rather than isolation. Knowledge therefore possesses a participatory character.

This insight broadens the meaning of consciousness. Awareness is not merely an internal state of mind; it is a way of engaging with reality. Consciousness grows through participation in family life, communal responsibilities, ritual practices, moral decisions, and spiritual experiences.

The knowing subject is not separated from the world being known. Instead, the subject belongs to that world and acquires understanding through active involvement within it.

Selfhood, Spirituality, and Relational Existence

The preceding discussion established that consciousness in Igbo thought emerges from a worldview shaped by relational ontology, communal personhood, spirituality, and participatory existence. These foundations invite a deeper question: what constitutes conscious life within such a worldview? A closer examination reveals that selfhood, spirituality, and relational existence are not separate dimensions of human experience. Rather, they

are interconnected realities through which consciousness is formed, expressed, and sustained.

Selfhood

The question of selfhood occupies a central place in discussions of consciousness because every account of awareness presupposes some understanding of the self. In many Western traditions, the self is frequently presented as an autonomous center of experience that exists independently of others. Consciousness, on this view, originates within the individual subject and is subsequently directed towards the world.

Contrary to this western understanding of the self, the Igbo conception of selfhood follows a different path.The self is not an isolated entity standing apart from its environment. Instead, it emerges through relationships that connect the individual to family, community, ancestors, and the wider order of existence. Personhood is not simply a private possession; it is lived and expressed through participation in communal life (Menkiti, 1984).

This understanding has significant implications for consciousness. Self-awareness is not merely the awareness of one's private thoughts and experiences. It includes an awareness of belonging, responsibility, and participation. The individual recognizes himself or herself as part of a larger whole. Consciousness consequently acquires a relational dimension because the self comes to understand itself through its connections with others.

Such a perspective does not deny individuality. Rather, it situates individuality within a broader framework of relationships. The self remains distinct, yet its identity is enriched and sustained through communal existence. Consciousness thus reflects both personal uniqueness and relational belonging

Chi and Personal Consciousness

An important aspect of Igbo selfhood is the concept of *chi*. although interpretations of *chi* vary, it is generally understood as a personal spiritual principle associated with destiny, guidance, and individuality. The concept occupies a unique place within Igbo thought because it links personal identity with a transcendent dimension of existence.

The significance of *chi* lies in its role as a bridge between individuality and spirituality. The human person is not merely a biological or social being but also a spiritual reality. Through *chi*, consciousness acquires depth beyond ordinary awareness. Personal existence is connected to a larger order that shapes purpose, direction, and meaning.

This connection introduces a richer understanding of self-consciousness. Awareness is not confined to immediate experience or rational reflection. Individuals often interpret their lives in relation to destiny, vocation, and spiritual guidance. Consciousness therefore includes a reflective engagement with questions concerning purpose and existential meaning.

The presence of *chi* within Igbo thought demonstrates that consciousness cannot be adequately explained through material or cognitive processes alone. Human awareness possesses a spiritual orientation that shapes how individuals understand themselves and their place in the world.

Spirituality

Spirituality represents one of the most distinctive dimensions of consciousness in Igbo thought. While many contemporary theories focus on cognition, perception, and mental representation, the Igbo worldview recognizes that conscious life is also shaped by encounters with sacred realities.

Spirituality is not confined to formal religious practice. It permeates ordinary existence and influences how individuals interpret events, relationships, successes, failures, and moral choices. The sacred is woven into daily life, providing a framework through which experiences acquire meaning.Mbiti (1969) observes that African life is deeply informed by religious consciousness because spirituality penetrates every sphere of existence. Human beings do not move between separate sacred and secular worlds. Rather, they inhabit a reality in which spiritual significance is continuously present.

This spiritual awareness contributes to the formation of consciousness in several ways. First, it expands the horizon of experience beyond immediate sensory perception. Second, it encourages individuals to interpret

life within a larger moral and existential order. Third, it fosters an awareness of realities that transcend the individual self. Lastly, it opens the discussion for further discussion of transcendental consciousness in Igbo worldview.

Ancestral Presence

One cannot fully understand consciousness in Igbo thought without considering the place of the ancestors. Ancestral presence occupies an important position within communal life because it provides continuity between past and present generations.

Ancestors are remembered not merely as historical figures but as participants in the ongoing life of the community. Through rituals, commemorations, oral traditions, and collective memory, they remain part of the moral and spiritual landscape. Their presence reinforces communal values and strengthens the bonds that unite generations.

This ancestral dimension broadens the scope of consciousness. Human awareness extends beyond immediate personal experience to include historical memory and inherited wisdom. Individuals understand themselves not only as members of a present community but also as participants in a continuing story that links the living with those who came before them.Consciousness thus acquires a temporal depth often overlooked in individualistic accounts of awareness. The past remains active within the present, shaping identity, meaning, and moral orientation.

Relational Existence

Perhaps the most important feature of consciousness in Igbo thought is its relational character. Human beings exist within relationships that shape perception, identity, and understanding. These relationships extend in multiple directions: towards family, community, ancestors, spirituality, and the wider cosmos.Wiredu (1996) argues that African conceptions of existence emphasize interconnectedness and mutual dependence. Individuals do not flourish in isolation because human life is sustained through relationships. Consciousness reflects this reality by developing through interaction, participation, and shared experience.

Relational existence transforms the meaning of awareness itself. To be conscious is not simply to possess subjective experiences. It is to inhabit a world of relationships and to recognize one's place within that world. Awareness becomes inseparable from belonging.This insight provides a powerful alternative to theories that reduce consciousness to mental states or cognitive processes. It suggests that consciousness is fundamentally a way of existing rather than merely a function of the mind.

Towards An Igbo Theory of Consciousness

The foregoing discussions reveal that consciousness in Igbo thought cannot be adequately explained through the categories that dominate much of contemporary philosophy of mind. Neither subjective awareness alone nor cognitive representation sufficiently captures the richness of conscious experience as understood within

the Igbo worldview. Selfhood is relational, spirituality permeates existence, and human life unfolds within networks of communal and ontological participation. These features suggest the need for a theoretical model capable of accounting for the distinctive character of consciousness in Igbo thought.

This work proposes an Igbo theory of consciousness grounded in five interconnected dimensions: ontological consciousness, relational consciousness, spiritual consciousness, communal consciousness, and participatory consciousness. These dimensions do not function independently of one another. Together, they form what this work described as*Relational Theory of Consciousness.*

Ontological Consciousness

At the heart of this proposed theory lies the idea that consciousness is rooted in existence itself. Human awareness is not merely an internal mental event occurring within an isolated subject. Rather, it emerges from the individual's participation in the wider structure of reality.Asouzu's (2007) complementary ontology provides an important foundation for this insight. His argument that beings derive meaning through mutual complementation suggests that existence is fundamentally interconnected. Human consciousness therefore develops within an ontological order that precedes individual reflection.

Consciousness is not simply awareness of being; it is awareness through being. Human beings encounter

themselves within a world already constituted by relationships, meanings, and existential possibilities. The conscious subject does not stand outside reality examining it from a distance. Rather, the subject is already situated within the reality that becomes the object of awareness.

Ontological consciousness thus refers to the awareness that emerges from participation in existence itself. It reflects the recognition that human life is embedded within a larger order of being that shapes understanding and meaning.

Relational Consciousness

A second dimension of the theory concerns the relational character of consciousness. If personhood develops through relationships, then consciousness must also bear a relational structure.

The individual comes to self-awareness through encounters with others. Family, community, friendship, dialogue, and social interaction all contribute to the formation of conscious identity. Human beings do not first become fully self-aware and then enter relationships. Relationships themselves play an important role in shaping awareness.Mbiti's (1969) well-known expression, "I am because we are," captures this insight with remarkable clarity. Human existence is grounded in interconnectedness. Consequently, consciousness cannot be understood apart from the relational contexts within which individuals live and act.

Relational consciousness therefore refers to the awareness that arises through interaction and mutual recognition. It highlights the fact that human understanding develops within shared worlds rather than within isolated minds.

This perspective offers an important corrective to Western theories that emphasize radical individualism. Consciousness is not merely private interiority. It is also a relational achievement sustained through engagement with others.

Spiritual Consciousness

Another indispensable feature of an Igbo theory of consciousness is spirituality. The spiritual dimension of existence influences how individuals interpret reality: understand themselves: and relate to the world around them.

Within the Igbo worldview, human life unfolds within a universe that includes both visible and invisible realities. Spiritual forces, divine presence, ancestral continuity, and sacred meanings all contribute to the texture of conscious experience. Awareness is therefore not limited to empirical perception alone.

Spiritual consciousness refers to the human capacity to perceive and respond to transcendent dimensions of existence. It includes awareness of sacred realities, moral obligations, and existential meanings that extend beyond immediate sensory experience.

This dimension challenges reductionist accounts that attempt to explain consciousness solely through physical or neurological processes. While biological and cognitive factors undoubtedly contribute to conscious life, they do not exhaust its significance. Human beings continually seek meaning, purpose, and connection with realities that transcend ordinary experience. Hence, spiritual consciousness reflects openness to dimensions of existence that cannot be reduced to material explanations alone.

Communal Consciousness

Closely related to relational consciousness is the notion of communal consciousness. While relational consciousness emphasizes interpersonal interaction, communal consciousness focuses on the collective dimensions of awareness.

Communities embody shared memories, values, traditions, symbols, and narratives that shape how individuals perceive reality. Through participation in communal life, individuals inherit ways of understanding the world and interpreting experience. Thus, the significance of communal consciousness becomes particularly evident in the transmission of traditions and collective memory. Through language, rituals, stories, and social practices, communities preserve forms of knowledge that shape individual awareness.

Menkiti (1984) emphasizes that community plays a constitutive role in the formation of personhood. A similar observation may be made concerning

consciousness. Awareness develops within cultural and communal frameworks that provide meaning and orientation.

Communal consciousness therefore refers to the shared dimension of awareness that binds individuals together within a common world of meaning. It reminds us that consciousness is never entirely private because it is continually influenced by communal life.

Participatory Consciousness

The final dimension of the theory concerns participation. Throughout Igbo thought, knowledge, identity, and existence are closely connected to active involvement in life. Consciousness reflects this participatory orientation. Human beings become aware through engagement rather than detachment. Understanding develops through action, relationships, moral responsibility, ritual practice, and lived experience. Awareness is not merely something one possesses; it is something one enacts.This insight of Okere (1983) suggests that consciousness should be understood as an active process of participation in the world.

Participatory consciousness therefore refers to awareness as lived engagement. It emphasizes that consciousness grows through involvement in the realities that constitute human existence. The individual does not merely observe life but participates in it.

This dimension completes the proposed theory by bringing together ontology, relationality, spirituality, and

community within a single framework. Consciousness emerges as a dynamic process through which human beings engage with themselves, others, and the wider realities that shape existence.

Taken together, ontological consciousness, relational consciousness, spiritual consciousness, communal consciousness, and participatory consciousness provide the foundation for an Igbo theory of consciousness. The theory challenges purely individualistic and reductionist models by presenting consciousness as a relational mode of existence grounded in participation, belonging, and interconnectedness.

Critical Evaluation

The Igbo theory of consciousness developed in this work offers a significant alternative to dominant individualistic and reductionist accounts of conscious experience. Its principal strength lies in its capacity to integrate selfhood, spirituality, community, and existential participation into a coherent understanding of consciousness. By emphasizing relationality, the theory draws attention to dimensions of human awareness that are frequently overlooked within contemporary philosophy of mind and consciousness studies. In doing so, it demonstrates that African philosophical traditions possess conceptual resources capable of contributing meaningfully to global discussions on consciousness.

A further strength of the theory lies in its challenge to the assumption that consciousness is exclusively a private mental phenomenon. By locating awareness

within communal life, ancestral continuity, and spiritual participation, the Igbo perspective presents a broader account of human experience than approaches that focus solely on cognition, representation, or neurological activity. This contribution aligns with Chimakonam's (2021) argument that African philosophy should not be treated merely as a regional intellectual tradition but as a source of original conceptual frameworks capable of transforming contemporary philosophical discourse. From this perspective, the theory contributes to the decolonization of knowledge by expanding the range of categories through which consciousness may be understood.

Despite these strengths, certain limitations remain. The theory is primarily philosophical and interpretive in orientation, making it difficult to establish direct points of engagement with empirical research in neuroscience, psychology, and cognitive science. While the relational and spiritual dimensions of consciousness provide valuable insights into human existence, they may not easily lend themselves to empirical verification within dominant scientific methodologies. Furthermore, the diversity of Igbo cultural experiences suggests that no single theoretical framework can exhaustively capture every understanding of consciousness within Igbo society.

The theory also raises questions that invite further investigation. How might relational consciousness be brought into dialogue with contemporary theories of embodiment and social cognition? In what ways can

spiritual consciousness contribute to interdisciplinary studies of human awareness without losing its philosophical depth? These questions indicate that the present work should not be regarded as a final account of consciousness but as an invitation to continued philosophical inquiry.

Nevertheless, the theory succeeds in demonstrating that consciousness can be understood beyond the limits of individualism and material reductionism. By foregrounding relational existence, spirituality, communal participation, and ontological belonging, it opens new directions for philosophical reflection. More importantly, it affirms Chimakonam's (2021) contention that African philosophy can generate innovative concepts capable of enriching and reshaping global philosophical debates. The Igbo theory of consciousness therefore stands not merely as a cultural interpretation of awareness but as a genuine philosophical contribution to contemporary consciousness studies.

Conclusion

The enduring challenge in consciousness studies has been to explain not only how human beings are aware but also what kind of reality consciousness discloses about human existence. Many philosophical traditions have approached this question by focusing on subjectivity, cognition, mental representation, or neurological processes. While these approaches have generated important insights, they often leave insufficient room for the communal, spiritual, and

existential dimensions through which consciousness is experienced in many cultural traditions.

The Igbo perspective explored in this work suggests a different point of departure. Consciousness is not primarily an isolated mental event occurring within a self-enclosed subject. It is a mode of existence that emerges through participation in relationships that connect the self to community, spirituality, ancestry, and the wider structure of reality. Human awareness develops within a world already inhabited by meanings, obligations, memories, and sacred possibilities. The conscious person is therefore not merely a thinking being but a participating being.

From this standpoint, consciousness appears less as a possession of the individual and more as an expression of relational existence. Selfhood, spirituality, and communal belonging are not external influences upon consciousness; they are among the very conditions that make conscious life possible. Awareness is shaped by encounters with others, sustained through shared forms of life, and deepened by engagement with realities that transcend immediate experience.

The Igbo theory of consciousness proposed in this work ultimately invites a reconsideration of what it means to be conscious. It challenges the tendency to reduce consciousness to cognition alone and argues for a richer understanding grounded in participation, belonging, and interconnectedness. In doing so, it offers a philosophical vision in which consciousness is neither detached from

the world nor confined within the individual self. Rather, it is the living expression of humanity's ongoing relationship with being, community, and the sacred.Seen in this light, consciousness is not simply awareness of existence; it is a way of dwelling meaningfully within existence itself.

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FOREIGN POLICY AND NIGERIAN NATIONAL INTEREST; A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENT GOODLUCK JONATHAN AND BUHARI ADMINISTRATION

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Abstract

Historically, the trajectory of articulating and implementing Nigeria's foreign policy has been shaped by both civilian and military regimes. Essentially, foreign policy serves as the dual purpose of defining and guiding external relations of states or national governments in the promotion and realization of their national interests in the international arena. Foreign policy emphasizes the interaction that consistently goes on between state actors and non-state actors. The modes

of interaction in the pursuit of a state's foreign policy objectives have occasionally remained cooperative, conflictual and competitive. The hallmark of foreign policy obviously lies in the fact that it is internally formulated and externally projected and implemented, hence, the national interests of states are paramount in promoting their prestige, image and perception. Again, the foreign policy of a state is actually an extension of its domestic policy to be applied globally. From this perspective, the paper comparatively reappraises Nigeria's foreign policy and the extent to which it contributed to the realization of her national image under the presidencies of Goodluck Jonathan (2011-2015) and Muhammadu Buhari (2015-2019), using the rational actor model in analyzing the data generated from secondary sources. It basically accentuated on some very remarkable achievements of Nigeria's foreign policy and how they positively impacted on Nigeria's national image against all odds under the period of review. The paper recommends the continuity of good governance and public policies by successive administrations as a way of consolidating Nigeria's foreign policy achievements and gains for the continued advancement of her positive national image.

Keywords: Comparative, Foreign Policy, National Image, National Interest, administration.

Introduction

Nigeria as a political entity came into being on 1" January, 1914, when the British colonial government amalgamated the protectorate of Northern Nigeria with

the colony and protectorate of Southern Nigeria (Ishiaki, 2001, p. 1). This is indicative of the fact that Nigeria has had an existing relationship with the outside world before attaining statehood in 1960, and obviously had no foreign policy of her own other than that of Britain as her colonial master. For instance, in 1959, Nigeria and India particularly had diplomatic relationship in the area of fighting against colonialism as British colonies. However, with the granting of political independence to Nigeria by the British colonial power, she legitimately expressly became saddled with the exclusive responsibility and sovereign right to henceforth formulate her own foreign policy as well as conduct external relations with other sovereign political entities.

According to Gilbert (2001, p.127), Nigeria as a nation-state was born into a bipolar international system on 1" October 1960. Ever since then, she has been actively involved in a new phase of multilateral diplomatic relations with various state actors and non-state actors in the contemporary Westphalian state system vis-a-vis the promotion and advancement of her national interest. Nigeria as a British colonial creation having therefore officially gained political independence was accorded the needed diplomatic recognition from other sovereign independent states as it were. Consequently, she got admitted formally into the United Nations as its 99th member state, and thereby has the membership of several other notable multilateral international organizations like the Commonwealth of Nations, Organization of Africa Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU), Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), etc. Indeed, the Nigerian state, at the continental level of international politicking visibly played a very important role in the bargaining and negotiation that preceded the formation of the OAU (Nwahiri, 2010). Nigeria was also instrumental at the sub- regional level to the formation of ECOWAS and as such houses its headquarters in her present capital city of Abuja.

However, the history of Nigeria's foreign policy in the immediate post-colonial Nigeria cannot be given without particular reference to the First Republic which lasted from 1960 to 1966. Thus, the principles of Nigeria's foreign policy were basically the brain child of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Prime Minister (Nwahiri, 2010, p. 34). In essence, according to chapter 2, section 19 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the foreign policy objectives include:

1. promotion and protection of the national interest;
2. promotion of African integration and support for African unity;
3. promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of discrimination in all its manifestation:
4. respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international conciliation, arbitration, and adjudication and;

5. promotion of a just world economic order.

In other words, the implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy since independence in 1960, has somewhat been characterized by various foreign policy postures and conceptual constructs that have been enunciated by various administrations in Nigeria, ranging from, the seven-point agenda the transformation agenda, the change mantra, citizenship diplomacy, afrocentrism, multilateralism and economic diplomacy.

Although, Nigeria is popularly referred to as "the Giant of Africa", and it is rather regrettable to note that her national image has been greatly smeared. This is largely due to a number of ethical reasons ranging from corruption, insecurity, bad governance, misappropriation, mismanagement, misapplication and embezzlement of public funds. The public perception of the Nigerian state is indeed on the negative side.

In addition, Akinterinwa (2014, p.237) observed that weak and infective governance structures and lack of transparency accountability have had a detrimental impact on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. Hence, in 2014, the All Progressive Congress (APC) presidential campaign was anchored on "Change Mantre" of fighting corruption, insecurity and improving the Nigerian economy. Notwithstanding the immediate past administration led by president Goodluck Jonathan also anchored hers on "The Transformation Agenda" which was closely related to the philosophy and manifesto of the Buhari led APC government. The

difference in the focal points of administrations can easily be noticed in the nomenclature not in practice.

However, these measures were geared towards redeeming Nigeria's prestige and hitherto battered national image and perception in the international community through the instrumentality of leaders' foreign policy thrusts and conceptual constructs. Indeed, in Nigeria today, there is an increasing level of corruption, insecurity and economic sabotage. For example, the embezzlement of public funds by government official and politicians, bombing and kidnapping activities by especially Boko Haram terrorists and perhaps the Niger Delta militants in the areas of crud oil theft and oil bunkering have all culminated in the economic sabotage of Nigeria.

In fact, one of these unfortunate incidents was the 26 August, 2011 bombing of the UN building in Abuja by a suicide bomber attributed to Boko Haram terrorist group in which 50 persons died (Gilbert, 2014). Consequently, President Muhammadu Buhari strongly admitted that insecurity remains a big challenge in Nigeria, and also solicited one every citizenry to unite and build bridges across ethnic divides given that the Nigerian state has been bedeviled by past economic and political mismanagement, thus institutionalizing corruption as it were (Ubani, 2019). This is actually not far from the reason why the former British Prime Minister, David Cameron had earlier described Nigeria as a fantastically corrupt nation.

The outright implication of this ugly development therefore, is that the Nigerian state suffers a negative image and perception within the international system. Foreigners, for example, who already have business in Nigeria and other prospective foreign investors, tend to have lost confidence in the leadership of the country. In other words, they have even become scared of investing in the Nigerian economy and this has affected to a great extent, the country's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) as well as her national image and reputation. This in actuality is unhealthy for country's development. Hence, it is the focus of this article to comparatively reappraise the achievements of Nigeria's foreign policy towards the promotion of her national image under the presidencies of Goodluck Jonathan and Mohammadu Buhari.

Conceptual Clarifications

Foreign Policy Foreign policy, like most issues in social science literature, has been susceptible to multiple scholarly interpretations. However, according to Handreinder (1967), as cited by Nwahiri (2007, p.4), foreign policy is "a coordinated strategy with which institutionally designed decision-makers seek to manipulate the external environment." Thus, states cannot exist without the formation and implementation of foreign policy to advance their national interests. According to Gilbert and Thom- Otuya (2005), citing Northedge (1968), it is "…interplay between the outside and the inside. This implies that states are constantly interacting with one another in the international system through the application of their distinct foreign policies. Every nation's foreign policy is apparently always geared

to advance the national interest (Palmer & Perkins, 2002). According to Okeke (2017, p.342), national interest guides the formulation of foreign policy, but it is not an end in itself; rather, it is a means to an end. In addition, it adds flavour to the execution and implementation of any state's foreign policy, and a state without a pre-designed national interest is doomed to succumb to the complexities of global politics.

However, Frankel (1967) also cited in both Gilbert (2013, p.23) and Nte (2016, p. 21), views foreign policy as "… considering of decisions and actions which involve to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and another." It therefore suffices to say that foreign policy can be understood as a country's response to the world outside or beyond its own frontiers or boundaries (Chibundu, 2003, p. 1). For Goldstein and Pevehouse (2009), foreign policies are the strategies governments use to guide their actions in the international arena. To them, foreign policies are largely responsible for spelling out the objectives state leaders have decided to pursue in a given diplomatic relationship or engagement.

National Image

The ability of a nation to forge and sustain favourable ties with other nations as well as with international audiences is one of the most important notions in the age of globalisation (Kinsey & Chung, 2013). These academics accordingly noted that a state's national image might affect her capacity to forge coalitions and, as a result, increase her soft power's global influence.

According to Nye (2004), having soft power means being able to lure others to you rather than using force or money to get what you want. Wang (2008) pointed out that national image, in contrast, deals with the opinion produced by the perceptions and assessments of the global public. Making an image is therefore a key component of a country's foreign policy. An image can be thought of as how other actors in the international community (including states and non-state actors) perceive a nation, and this view might be the outcome of an objective or subjective goal (Kobani, 2021, p.33). In a similar vein, Chidozie et al. (2014) claimed that a country's international reputation serves as a foundation for self-reappraisal in the event of any negative perception. Global image primarily refers to how a nation is viewed by other international actors in the course of its contacts with others, and in particular, the behaviour of its population both at home and abroad (Boma-Lysa et al, 2015; Kobani, 2012). Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that image-building must necessarily comprise a basic component of a country's foreign policy and that how a country is seen, particularly in the twenty- first century, depends on her national image (Adeniyi, 2012; Kobani, 2021).

A Comparative Analysis of Nigeria's Foreign Policy and its National Image: The Democratic Administrations of Jonathan and Buhari in Perspective. The Goodluck Jonathan's Administration (2011-2015)

Although, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan became Nigeria's fourth executive President in May, 2010,

following the death of his boss and predecessor, President Umaru Musa Yar Adua. It is also important to mention that at the expiration of that tenure in May 2011, he contested and won the presidential election, and was subsequently sworn in on 29 May, 2011. He then migrated from the famous "seven (7) Points Agenda" of the previous administration where he served in three capacities - Vice President, Acting President and finally President; to the "Transformation Agenda" of his foreign policy thrust. The transformation agenda served as the articulation of government prioritized policies, programmes, and projects that will guide Jonathan's administration from 2011 to 2015 (Thom-Otuya, 2015). It was also a conscious attempt to rationally and decisively aim at realizing a holistic transformation of the Nigerian state, as it were.

Thom-Otuya (2015) added that she expected Nigeria to be one of the top twenty economies in 2020 and that the policy initiative was meant to transform the country's economy in order to meet future needs of the Nigerian populace. Again, the "Transformation Agenda" as a comprehensive initiative launched by the Jonathan's administration towards addressing the country's economic underdevelopment and review of the role of the legislature and the judiciary within a period of four years from 2011 to 2015, was chaired by former President Goodluck Jonathan and also assisted by Dr. (Mrs) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who doubled as the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy. It covered crucial topics like managing public spending and information and communication

technology (ICT), as well as others like job creation, education, health, power, transportation, the Niger Delta, labour and productivity, and foreign policy and economic diplomacy.

President Jonathan instructed the presidential advisory council on international relations to coordinate the restructuring of Nigeria's foreign policy in order to be investment driven in line with the domestic policy of the transformation agenda in 2011 in light of President Jonathan's electoral victory. The nation's foreign policy experts, seasoned diplomats, professionals, and intelligentsia were asked to chat a new course for the future of our foreign policy without discarding the past after his interactive session with some Nigerians in the diaspora caused by his foreign visits. Gilbert and Ubani (2015) also noted that the transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan has been adjudged to have made some appreciable progress in strategic areas of the Nigerian economy. In essence, the Jonathan administration recognised the urgent need to create bi-national commissions with Canada and Germany in order to, among other things, strengthen business ties and advance development cooperation. There was also the establishment of a bi-national commission between Nigeria and the United States which made Nigeria destination point for US entrepreneurs and investments (Nte, 2016, p.74). It is therefore important to mention that only Nigeria and South Africa have bi-national cooperation agreements in Africa with the US. This was made achievable during the Jonathan presidency through his foreign policy direction which culminated in the

economic growth and development of Nigeria during his regime. It is also on record that Britain, South Africa and China have strategic trade partnership with Nigeria The upgrading of Nigeria-China Joint Commission to a bi-commission speaks volumes of the Jonathan administration's resolve to aggressively attract Foreign Direct Investment in the country and for the wellbeing of her citizens.

Specifically, in the context of economic diplomacy, some scholars have argued that Nigeria's foreign policy greatly impacted on her image globally.

Nigeria, under President Jonathan, also enjoyed the privilege of being died on the occasions in the United Nations Security Council. This first happened in 2011-secondly in 2013-2015. Be that as it may, Nigeria, at the continental level Chairman of the African Union, in charge off democracy, election and good governance Africa. Also, at the sub-regional level, the Jonathan administration played ECOWAS interventions and mediation in the conflict situations in Guinea-Bissau. Come d'Ivoire, Mali and Libya (Nhe, 2006 Ja Ayotunde, 2016). For instance, Nigerian state under Jonathan displayed its sagacious hip role under the platform of ECOWAS to vehemently oppose the decision of President Laurent Ghaggo of Cote D'Ivoire for refusing to transit power in 2010 after the Presidential elections in the country that saw is defeat.

Another distinguishable role played by the Jonathan's regime in the maintenance and sustenance of continental peace and security, was her support for the Libyan’s

National Transitional Council as well as her leading role in the ECOWAS Framed Ag on the crisis situation in the Republic of Mali. Nigeria infact took all of these foreign galley decisions in finding lasting solutions to the political crisis of these countries in the spirit of her Afrocentric foreign policy principle guided by her national particularly on the continent of Africa.

Consequently, Nte (2016, p.75) argued that President Goodluck Jonathan left an indelible print as his government was the first to concede power to an opposition party after a democratic election and this projected the country's image in the international community as a democratic and peace-loving nation. This no doubt heralded the consolidation o democratic governance in Nigeria's political history. Even the phone call that was made by President Jonathan to General Buhari as he was then called, before the final preside election result was declared in favour of the latter, boosted in toll Nigeria's reputation as a nation that promotes and cherishes democratic idea. Besides, the peaceful transition programme and subsequent inauguration of President Muhammadu Buhari May 29, 2015, equally climaxed the image of the country in the global system.

However, given the principle of reciprocity in international relations, the Nigerian under Jonathan was able to invoke and apply this principle in 2012, when African state deported some Nigerians for not having what they called "yellow fever vaccination cards" in line with conceptual construct of citizen diplomacy, that is, the protection of her citizens in the diaspora. Indeed,

Nigeria retaliated in alert measure by even threatening to shut down South African companies operating in Nigeria especially MTN and DSTV, the Nigerian government also demanded for an id apology from the government of South Africa which she did not hesitate to oblige Nigeria probably because of the South African strategic economic cum business interest in the country and infact Nigeria was able to expressly use her foreign policy for the ma of her national interest (Ubani, 2019).

The Muhammadu Buhari's Administration (2015-2019)

Following President Jonathan's defeat in the 2015 presidential election, Gemenil Muhammadu Buhari became the fifth democratically elected executive president of Nigeria, and was subsequently sworn into office on May 29, 2015. However, it is the rationalization and practice of all administrations in Nigeria, to anchor their foreign policies on the national development of the country, by identifying circumstantially the needs of the state and also mapping out strategies to actualize the foreign policy objectives. Thus, President Buhari and his All Progressive Congress (APC) led federal government came up with the popular "Change Mantra" as its foreign policy posture. For instance, in his inaugural speech, he obviously and categorically stated that his government shall focus on the economy, fight against corruption, and ensure the provision of security, that is, the tripod of his foreign policy direction.

Hence, his efforts have been channeled towards the realization of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives in the light of his administration's achievements and restoring Nigeria's external image. It will be recalled that before the emergence of President Buhari in 2015, the global image of Nigeria was not nothing to reckon with and write home about. Infact, it was bad to the extent that Nigerians living abroad were so maltreated and at the same time treated with disdain. Even those travelling abroad were subjected to all kinds of inhuman treatment and molestation and also found it very difficult to secure vises to travel some countries especially in North America and Europe. They were alas roughly searched at the airports of their destinations This explains how pathetic the situation was with Nigerians living and travelling abroad before 2015, especially because of massive corruption and Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria.

However, with the emergence of the Buhari's administration, Nigeria began to witness and experience a new phase of diplomatic relation towards promoting the country's national image in the global arena. Based on Nigeria's national interest and the West African Sub-Region with particular emphasis to fight egalent servei corruption, maintenance of peace and security and development of the enry (Nte, 2016, p.75-76). By way of tackling Nigeria's internal security challenges President Buhari embarked on several diplomatic tours to neighbouring member states of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) such as Cameroun, Chad and Niger in the North-Eastern region of Nigeria, to seek

synergistic appevach in fighe against Boko Haram menace in particular and terrorism at large. Although, Berin Republic is not a member state of the LCBC but geve tooral and technical support to Nigeria to decisively and aggressively combat the Boko Haram insurgency that massively hitherto ravaged country's national security.

The implication of this multilateral diplomatic security arrangement eventually led to the setting up of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNTTF) to curb the Boka Haram Insurgency in the Lake Chad region (Odulejo, 2017). He also visited the former President Francois Hollande of the French Republic to solicit his country's assistance in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency and terrorism. In furtherance of laundering Nigeria's national image, the Buhari regime through her several diplomatic shuttles sought for the return of the country's money looted by its corrupt leaders and deposited in foreign banks.

The frantic efforts made by the government in recovering some of these looted funds like the Ahacha loots) have also boosted the image of the Nigerian state. Nite (2016, p.765) therefore reported that more than $230 million USD has been recovered from Foreign banks. President Buhari also paid a state visit to the German's Chancellor Angel Merkel, and participated in the summit held at Germany and seized the medium to solicit for security assistance as well as rebuilding of the massively devastated of Nigeria's North-Eastern region by the Boko Haram insurgency as well as the G20 summit. The visits yielded some positive results because

of the acceptance of German government and other G7 member states to assist in that direction. Driven also by President Muhammadu Buhari's commitment in the fight against corruption in Nigeria, he was named the African anti-corruption champion by the AU in 2018 Again, Nte (2016) is of the view that President Buhar's diplomatic shuttles to the US and China also yielded much dividends. To him, the moral support of USA to the administration is a booster but more importantly, China through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had undertaken to make investments worth $6 billion USD in Nigeria.

The signing of a bilateral agreement with the United Arab Emirates government by President Buhari for the seizure of stolen assets with a view to recovering looted funds from Nigeria kept in UAE banks. In recognition of Nigeria's foreign policy under President Buhari and also in line with its Afrocentric principle, the government has shown much commitment in promoting democratic governments in Africa as well as supporting general elections in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea Conakry and the Gambia through materials and technical support. Between 2016 and 2017, the Buhari administration was instrumental to stepping down of President Yahya Jammeh who lost the presidential election in the Gambia and conceded, but later reneged to hand over power to the winner of that election, President Adama Barrow. That in itself was a big plus to Nigeria's foreign policy under President Buhari.

It should be noted also that, though, the Jonathan administration in January 2014 signed into law die Same

Sex Marriage Prohibition Act, after its passage by die National Assembly. Thus, a greater percentage of Nigerians world over commended President Jonathan for being courageous in that direction despite pressures from the Obama led US government. As if that was not enough, so, when President Buhari visited the White House to seek for financial assistance for Nigeria, the issue of the status of Gays and their rights were tendered and President Buhari subtly declined the offer (Nte,2016, p.78). Since it was considered to be unethical and equally not in the national interest of Nigeria. As a result, both regimes were heavily commended for rationally being focused and consistent in pursuing their foreign policies without doubt. Meanwhile, it is also fundamentally important to specifically highlight other remarkable achievements of the Buhari administration which the implementation of his foreign policy thrust has engendered:

- The release of over 16, 000 persons in Boko Haram captivity as well as 106 chibok girls abducted in 2014 and105 Dapchi school girls equally being abducted.

- The recovery of 14 local governments and territories hitherto under the firm grip and control of Boko Haram in Nigeria's Northeast region and the return of about one million displaced persons to their communities.

- Introducing an improved mechanism for the distribution of aids to IDPs in the Northeast based on the setting up of the Special Intervention Programme

of the federal government (ie. Door-to-door strategy).

- The successful implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) and the increase of government revenue to more than N3 trillion, thereby bolstering transparency and accountability.

- The implementation of the Bank Verification Number (BVN), thereby preventing corruption through the closing of loopholes for the syphoning of public funds and the tracking of illicit funds through multiple accounts.

- The release of bailout fluids of about N689 billion to 27 states of the federation for the payment of outstanding workers' salaries.

- The implementation of the 2011 UNEP report for the on' exercise after several years of environmental degradation air with the setting aside of US $170 million funding in an established for that purpose.

- The release of N2 billion take off grant for the Nigerian Maritime University in Okerenkoko of Delta State, with a view to addressing part of the demands by the Niger Delta region.

- The introduction of the new Whistleblowing policy by the federal ministry of finance in December 2016, to ensure recovery of looted funds and tax evasion and other corrupt practices. For instance, the government in May 2018 paid N439.2 million to

about 14 whistleblowers for useful information on tax evasion.

- The establishment of Nigerians in Diaspora Commission through the signing of the bill in 2011 so as to complement the duties and efforts of the Nigeria's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Missions in the area of citizen diplomacy (Ubani, 2019).

Conclusion

This study reappraised the dynamics of Nigeria's foreign policy using in comparative terms the presidencies of Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari as a veritable inter-state diplomatic instrument for the realization of the country's national image. Due to the obvious fact that a state's foreign policy also serves as the engine room for the advancement of her national priorities in the contemporary international system. The politics of Nigeria's external relations is therefore such that cannot be overemphasized. Several criticisms notwithstanding have been leveled against Jonathan and Buhari foreign policy directions as exemplified in the Transformation Agenda and the Change Mantra respectively, for not achieving much in the promotion of the country's national interest. Nevertheless, their foreign policies have contributed immensely towards the realization of Nigeria's national image vis-a-vis their foreign policy achievements.

Recommendation

We recommend therefore that:

1. There should be continuity of good governance and public policies by successive regimes no matter the political affiliations and convictions of the leaders, such as the implementation of BVN, TSA, and the Maritime University, since foreign policy is an extension of a state's domestic policy.

2. Successive Nigerian governments should as a matter of the country's national interest, consolidate on foreign policy achievements already recorded thereby not just restoring but improving Nigeria's external image.

3. Seasoned experts, technocrats, and credible people should always be used in the conduct of government business especially in formulating and implementing foreign policies. Specifically, the appointment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs should always be one taken from the Foreign Service because of experiential knowhow.

4. There should be realizable and beneficial foreign policy thrusts by successive governments in line with Nigeria's foreign policy objectives and principles.

5. There should be an overhauling of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) and the appointment its Director-General should be devoid of undue political patronage and also legally led by a seasoned and renowned Professor of Political

Science cum International Relations. 6. There is the urgent need for the readjustment of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives, principles, and strategies by the critical stakeholders so as to keep abreast with current global trends for the advancement of the nation's strategic national interest and national image.

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THE IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM (ỊGBA BỌỊ) AS COLONIAL-ERA ECONOMIC ADAPTATION: CONTINUITY, CHANGE, AND RESISTANCE, 1900–1950

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Abstract

This article examines the ịgba bọị apprenticeship system among the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria as an institution of colonial-era economic adaptation between 1900 and 1950. Challenging existing scholarship that treats its persistence into the colonial period as mere cultural conservatism, the article argues that ịgba bọị underwent a fundamental transformation under British colonialism, shifting from a craft-based, kinship-embedded mechanism of skill transmission into a flexible commercial training and capital accumulation system that enabled Igbo actors to navigate and resist colonial capitalism. Drawing on colonial administrative records and secondary literature, the article traces the disruption of pre-colonial Igbo economic organization, the deliberate adaptation of ịgba bọị to commercial contexts from the 1920s, and the emergence of expansive Igbo trading networks anchored in the apprenticeship relationship. The article engages A.I. Nwabughuogu's

thesis of middleman decline, arguing that decline and adaptation are complementary rather than contradictory frameworks addressing different levels of Igbo commercial life. Theoretically, colonial ịgba bọị is interpreted through James Scott's concept of "everyday resistance" a systematic subversion of colonial economic logic through the redeployment of indigenous institutional forms contributing to the revisionist literature on African economic agency.

Keywords: ịgba bọị; Igbo apprenticeship; colonial economy; Nigeria; economic adaptation.

Introduction

Among the many institutions that define Igbo social and economic life, few have proven as resilient, as adaptive, or as consequential as the ịgba bọị apprenticeship system. Known by variant names across Igbo-speaking communities*nwa boy* in some districts, the "trader boy" system in colonial administrative parlance ịgba bọị refers to the practice by which young men, and occasionally young women, are placed in the household and business of a more established trader or craftsman, typically a kinsman or trusted community member, to learn a trade over a fixed period. At the conclusion of this period, the apprentice receives a capital endowment the "settling" with which to establish an independent enterprise. Today, the ịgba bọị system is recognised as a defining pillar of Igbo commercial culture, sustaining business networks of extraordinary reach across Nigeria and the wider African diaspora. Yet its history and specifically

its transformation during the colonial period remains surprisingly underexplored in the scholarly literature.[1]

The foundational scholarship on Igbo society from Victor Uchendu's pioneering anthropological study of 1965 through Elizabeth Isichei's comprehensive history of 1976 and Adiele Afigbo's reconstructions of Igbo political culture in the same decade treated institutions like ịgba bọị primarily in their pre-colonial or ethnographic dimensions, as markers of Igbo cultural organisation rather than as dynamic responses to historical change.[2] The management studies literature has partially filled this gap: Adebukola Oyewunmi, Olabode Oyewunmi, and Chinonye Moses's chapter "Igba-Boi: Historical Transitions of the Igbo Apprenticeship Model," published in the Emerald volume Indigenous African Enterprise (2020), represents the most sustained existing scholarly engagement with the system across historical periods, documenting its structural features and its role in the post-civil war commercial revival.[3] Valuable as this contribution is, however, it operates within a management studies framework, draws on no colonial archival sources, and does not engage with the resistance literature or the economic agency debates in African historiography. The present article seeks to provide the historical grounding that the management studies literature has not supplied.

The most important prior contribution to the specifically historical study of Igbo commercial life in the colonial period is A.I. Nwabughuogu's 1983 article, "From Wealthy Entrepreneurs to Petty Traders: The Decline of African Middlemen in Eastern Nigeria, 1900–1950,"

published in the Journal of African History.[4] Nwabughuogu's argument is that the colonial period witnessed not adaptation but decline that Igbo middlemen who had occupied commercially powerful positions in the pre-colonial and early colonial economy were progressively displaced by expatriate firms, ending the period significantly worse off than they had begun it. This article engages directly with Nwabughuogu's thesis, accepting the evidence of commercial displacement that he documents while arguing that his framework of decline misses the institutional innovation occurring simultaneously at a different level of Igbo commercial life. The ịgba bọị system was not the mechanism of the established middlemen whose decline Nwabughuogu charts; it was the mechanism through which a new generation of Igbo traders, operating at smaller scales and through indigenous institutional networks, built the commercial capacity that would ultimately produce the Igbo commercial diaspora. Decline at the level of the established middleman and adaptation at the level of the apprenticeship institution is not contradictory findings; they are complementary dimensions of a complex and internally differentiated colonial economic history.

The argument of this article is straightforward but revisionist in its implications. The ịgba bọị system did not simply survive colonialism; it was reinvented by it. Confronted with the economic dislocations of British colonial rule the imposition of direct taxation, the reorganization of trade through expatriate firms, the disruption of indigenous long-distance commerce, and the forced monetization of the Igbo economy Igbo actors

responded by adapting ịgba bọị from a kinship-embedded craft apprenticeship into a flexible commercial institution capable of operating within and against the structures of colonial capitalism. This adaptation was neither accidental nor passive; it was deliberate, purposeful, and ultimately generative, producing the foundations of the Igbo commercial diaspora that would become one of the defining features of Nigerian economic life by the mid-twentieth century.

The argument engages with three broader historiographical conversations. The first is the revisionist literature on African economic agency in colonial contexts, associated with scholars such as Sara Berry, Frederick Cooper, and A.G. Hopkins, which has challenged the tendency to portray African actors as passive recipients of colonial economic transformation.[5] The second is the specific literature on Igbo economic history, including the debates around Igbo migration, commercial organisation, and what Uchendu famously called the "achievement motivation" at the heart of Igbo cultural life.[6] The third is the theoretical literature on resistance, and specifically James Scott's influential concept of "everyday resistance" the repertoire of small-scale, informal, non-confrontational practices through which subordinate groups subvert dominant structures without openly challenging them.[7] The ịgba bọị system in the colonial period, this article argues, exemplifies exactly this kind of resistance: not a revolt against colonialism but a systematic circumvention of its economic logic through the redeployment of indigenous institutional forms.

The primary sources for this study include colonial administrative records from the National Archives of Nigeria at Enugu (NAE), encompassing Annual Reports from Owerri, Onitsha, and Awka Divisions for the period 1900 to 1950, supplemented by secondary literature in Igbo history, colonial Nigerian economic history, and African economic history, as well as by the oral tradition preserved in published ethnographic accounts of the early twentieth century.

The Pre-Colonial ịgba bọị: Origins, Structure, and Social Logic

Any account of the colonial transformation of ịgba bọị must begin with a reconstruction of the institution in its pre-colonial form, for it is only against this baseline that the nature and extent of colonial-era change can be properly assessed. The pre-colonial ịgba bọị system was, at its core, an institution for the transmission of economically productive knowledge within a framework of supervised dependency. A young man typically between the ages of twelve and eighteen would be placed by his family in the household of a master craftsman or trader, often a kinsman, for a period that typically ran between three and seven years. During this period, the apprentice was economically dependent on his master, providing domestic and productive labour in exchange for instruction, shelter, and subsistence. At the conclusion of the apprenticeship, the master was obliged to provide the settling: the capital endowment, tools, starter goods, or money with which the apprentice could establish an independent livelihood.

The social logic of the pre-colonial ịgba bọị was deeply embedded in the broader structures of Igbo society. The Igbo political world, as Uchendu and Afigbo both observed, was characterised by a republican ethos in which status was achieved rather than ascribed.[8] The titled man like the ozo holder, the nze, commanded deference not primarily by virtue of birth but by virtue of demonstrated accumulation and generosity. In this context, ịgba bọị served a dual function: it was simultaneously a mechanism for economic mobility (enabling the young man without capital to acquire the skills and resources necessary for adult economic participation) and a mechanism for social reproduction (allowing the established master to build a network of obligation, deference, and commercial loyalty that would outlast the formal apprenticeship period).

The trades transmitted through pre-colonial ịgba bọị were predominantly artisanal: blacksmithing, woodcarving, pottery, weaving, and, in riverine communities, boatbuilding and net fishing. Long-distance trade like the movement of palm oil, yams, livestock, and craft products along the routes connecting Igbo hinterland communities to the Niger Delta coast was a secondary but significant domain of ịgba bọị activity, particularly in communities like Aro Chukwu, whose long-distance trading networks were among the most extensive in pre-colonial West Africa.[9] It was this commercial dimension of the pre-colonial ịgba bọị that's always present but subsidiary to the artisanal that would prove, under colonial conditions, to be the institutional seed of a far more extensive transformation.

A feature of the pre-colonial system of particular importance for understanding its colonial-era resilience was the mechanism of communal enforcement that regulated the master's obligations to his apprentice. The master who failed to provide the settling at the conclusion of a completed apprenticeship faced no colonial legal sanction, Igbo communities had no formal commercial law in the European sense but faced something equally coercive: social ostracism and irreparable damage to the reputation that Uchendu identified as the supreme social asset in Igbo life, the aha mma.[10] This social enforcement mechanism, rooted in communal accountability rather than state coercion, would prove to be one of the institutional features that made ịgba bọị adaptable to the commercial conditions of the colonial period, when indigenous institutions lacked formal legal standing and colonial courts were inaccessible or hostile to African commercial claims.

Kenneth Onwuka Dike's foundational study of trade and politics in the Niger Delta documented the sophistication of pre-colonial commercial organization in the region adjacent to Igbo land, providing important context for understanding the commercial traditions on which ịgba bọị drew.[11] The Igbo, as participants in the extensive trade networks that Dike described, were not strangers to commercial complexity; what colonialism imposed was not commerce itself, but a specific and constraining set of commercial conditions to which the ịgba bọị system would prove a particularly effective institutional response.

Colonial Disruption and the Conditions for Adaptation

The first two decades of British colonial administration in Igbo land were, from the perspective of Igbo economic life, a period of systematic disruption. The mechanisms were multiple and interconnected, but three deserve particular attention for their bearing on the ịgba bọị system and its subsequent transformation.The first and most structurally significant was the destruction of the Aro long-distance trading network. The Aro Expedition of 1901–02, in which British forces destroyed the Aro Chukwu oracle and dismantled the social infrastructure on which Aro commercial dominance depended, dealt a devastating blow to the most extensive pre-colonial commercial system in Igbo land.[12] The consequences extended far beyond the Aro themselves: the network of markets, credit relationships, and commercial routes that the Aro had anchored was disrupted across a wide swathe of Igbo land, depriving communities of established channels for participation in the wider regional economy. The commercial vacuum thus created was both a crisis and an opportunity a crisis for those whose livelihoods had depended on the existing network, and an opportunity for actors with the institutional capacity to develop alternative commercial arrangements.

The second mechanism of disruption was the imposition of direct taxation. Taxation created an immediate demand for cash in communities that had operated primarily through barter and commodity exchange, forcing Igbo producers and traders into the money

economy on terms dictated by the colonial state and the expatriate trading firms that dominated the formal commercial sector.[13] Annual Reports from Owerri Division in the early 1910s document the disorientation this forced monetization produced, recording instances of communities selling food stocks at below-subsistence levels in order to meet tax demands, and of farmers abandoning subsistence agriculture in favour of cash-crop production, often at the cost of food security. The demand for cash was relentless; the channels through which Igbo actors could acquire it in ways that preserved their economic autonomy were, within the formal colonial economy, extremely limited.

The third mechanism was the reorganisation of trade through the Licensed Buying Agent (LBA) system, by which the colonial state channeled the purchase of agricultural produce like palm oil, palm kernels, groundnuts; through agents licensed by and accountable to expatriate trading firms, principally the Niger Company and, after 1929, the United Africa Company (UAC).[14] The LBA system effectively interposed a colonial regulatory structure between Igbo producers and the external market, restricting the commercial autonomy that Igbo traders had exercised in the pre-colonial long-distance trade. It is precisely this context that explains what Nwabughuogu documented so carefully: the established African middlemen, caught between the LBA system above and the expatriate firms' buying power below, were indeed squeezed into decline. An Annual Report from Onitsha Division in 1914 records the "marked dissatisfaction among native

traders" with the licensed agent system, noting that "the Ibos [sic] are a trading people who do not take kindly to interference in their commercial arrangements.[15] The official's observation was accurate; the form that Igbo resistance to the interference would take the institutional reinvention of ịgba bọị was what he failed to anticipate.

It is important not to reduce the Igbo response to colonial economic disruption to a simple narrative of victimhood. A.G. Hopkins's seminal analysis of West African economic history urged historians to resist precisely this temptation, insisting on the adaptive capacity of West African commercial actors in the face of colonial restructuring.[16] The Igbo case provides powerful evidence for Hopkins's position. The disruption of the Aro network, the monetisation of the economy, and the restrictions of the LBA system created conditions that were simultaneously threatening and generative: threatening to existing commercial institutions, and generative of pressure to develop new institutional forms capable of operating within and around the colonial commercial structure. The ịgba bọị system, with its flexibility, its social embeddedness, and its opacity to colonial regulatory oversight, was exceptionally well placed to serve as the vehicle for this institutional innovation.

Transformation under Colonialism: The Commercialisation of ịgba bọị

The transformation of ịgba bọị from a craft-based to a commercially oriented institution accelerated

significantly in the 1920s, a decade that coincided with the expansion of the colonial cash economy, the growth of urban centres particularly Enugu, Port Harcourt and Onitsha and the integration of southeastern Nigeria into the broader West African commercial network. The shift was gradual and geographically uneven; manifesting earliest and most fully in communities with established pre-colonial trading traditions, but by the 1930s the commercially transformed ịgba bọị was recognisable across a wide swath of Igbo territory.

The core of the transformation was the extension of ịgba bọị into retail and wholesale trade. Where the pre-colonial system had trained craftsmen in the production of specific goods, the colonial-era ịgba bọị increasingly trained commercial agents in the procurement, transportation, and sale of goods within the expanding colonial market. A young man placed with an established Igbo trader in Onitsha in the 1920s was not learning to make things; he was learning to buy and sell, to navigate colonial credit networks, to build relationships with suppliers and customers across ethnic and geographic lines, to manage the social obligations of the trading household, and to accumulate the commercial knowledge and social capital that would eventually enable him to establish an independent trading operation. The goods traded varied: kola nuts, tobacco, cloth, hardware, foodstuffs, and, increasingly, the imported consumer goods whose penetration of Igbo markets deepened with each decade of colonial rule.[17]

What is particularly significant about this commercialized ịgba bọị is the way in which it preserved

the social architecture of the pre-colonial system while radically altering its economic content. The master-apprentice relationship, the obligation of endowment at completion, the communal accountability of the master; all of these features were maintained intact. What changed was the economic domain in which the relationship operated. The effect was to create an institution simultaneously embedded in pre-colonial social norms (and thus familiar, trustworthy, and operable without colonial legal enforcement) and oriented toward the commercial opportunities of the colonial economy. This combination of social conservatism and economic adaptability was the ịgba bọị system's most important institutional achievement.

Colonial administrative records from this period reveal a telling ambivalence in British officials' attitudes toward the transformed ịgba bọị . On one hand, district officers noted with approval the commercial enterprise of Igbo traders and their apparent facility in adapting to the cash economy. On the other, the same officials expressed unease about the Igbo commercial networks forming around the apprenticeship system, detecting in them an institutional infrastructure that operated beyond colonial regulatory reach. An Annual Report from Onitsha Division in 1929 noted, with evident frustration, that Igbo traders were "organizing their affairs in ways that make it very difficult for Government to ascertain either the volume of trade or the terms on which it is conducted."[18] Read against the grain of its official anxiety, this observation amounts to a tribute to the institutional effectiveness of the ịgba bọị -based

commercial network. The system's opacity to the colonial gaze was not an accidental feature; it was, as the analysis below suggests, one of its most consequential forms of resistance.

The role of women in the colonial-era ịgba bọị system deserves specific attention. The pre-colonial Igbo trading world had always included significant female participation, particularly in the local and medium-distance trade in foodstuffs and craft products. The 1929 Aba Women's War (Ogu Umunwanyi) the mass uprising of Igbo women against colonial taxation and the threat to women's economic autonomy demonstrated the depth of women's investment in Igbo commercial life and their willingness to mobilise collectively in its defence.[19]

While the formal ịgba bọị relationship was predominantly male in both its pre-colonial and colonial forms, women participated actively in the commercial networks it generated as independent traders, and there is evidence from the 1930s and 1940s of women establishing informal apprenticeship relationships that paralleled the male ịgba bọị in social structure, if not in official recognition.

Sara Berry's analysis of the social dynamics of agrarian change in sub-Saharan Africa offers a useful framework for understanding what the colonial-era ịgba bọị system was doing institutionally. Berry argued that in colonial and post-colonial Africa, access to resources was determined less by formal property rights than by the ability to negotiate and maintain social relationships, that

social networks, in other words, were productive assets of the first order.[20]

The ịgba bọị system was, from this perspective, a highly efficient mechanism for producing exactly the kind of social capital that Berry identified as the critical resource in African economic life: networks of trust, obligation, and mutual accountability that enabled commercial cooperation across distances too great for direct supervision and in conditions too unstable for formal legal enforcement.

Ịgba bọị and the Making of the Igbo Commercial Diaspora

One of the most consequential effects of the colonial-era transformation of ịgba bọị was its role in driving and structuring the great Igbo migration to urban centres across Nigeria. The historical literature on Igbo migration in the colonial period has emphasised demographic factors (land pressure in the densely settled Igbo heartland), educational achievement (mission schooling producing a surplus of educated young men seeking employment beyond the reach of the local economy), and the Igbo cultural emphasis on individual achievement and mobility.[21] These factors were real and important. But the ịgba bọị system provided the specific institutional mechanism through which migration was organised, sustained, and made economically productive and its role in this process has received insufficient scholarly attention.

The pattern was as follows. An established Igbo trader in Lagos, Port Harcourt, or Enugu, who had himself completed ịgba bọị apprenticeship in an earlier generation and used his settling to build a successful trading enterprise, would recruit apprentices from his home community. The recruitment was typically mediated by kinship and community networks: the trader would approach a kinsman in the home village with a request for a young man to serve as his apprentice, and the community would sanction the relationship as a form of investment in the young man's future and in the maintenance of its commercial connection to the urban trading network. The apprentice would travel to the city, live in his master's compound, work in his master's business, and over several years acquire the commercial knowledge, social connections, and savings that would eventually enable him to establish an independent trading operation, often in a third city, extending the network still further.

The geographical reach of these networks grew rapidly through the 1930s and 1940s. By the late 1930s, Igbo trading communities existed not only in Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Enugu but in Kaduna, Kano, Jos, Maiduguri, and smaller urban centres across the north and middle belt of Nigeria. A 1942 report from Kano Province, held in the National Archives of Nigeria at Kaduna, noted that Igbo traders had established themselves in several of the city's major markets and were operating through "a network of personal connections that appears to function as an informal credit system."[22] The informal credit system the official

observed was, in effect, the economic infrastructure of the ịgba bọị network, the web of obligation, trust, and mutual accountability that the apprenticeship relationship had established and that sustained commercial cooperation across geographic distance.

The role of the settling the capital endowment provided at the conclusion of the apprenticeship in this process of diaspora formation deserves particular emphasis. The settling transformed ịgba bọị from a purely educational relationship into a capital transfer mechanism, enabling the systematic movement of commercial resources from established traders to new entrants in a way that neither the colonial banking system (which effectively excluded most Igbo traders from formal credit) nor the expatriate trading firms (which integrated Igbo actors as subordinate agents rather than independent entrepreneurs) could replicate. A.G. Hopkins's foundational analysis of West African economic history identified the absence of formal credit institutions as a central structural constraint on African commercial development in the colonial period.[23] What the ịgba bọị system provided was precisely the informal credit institution that the colonial financial system withheld: one operating through social rather than legal enforcement mechanisms, and proving remarkably effective in channeling commercial capital to where it could be most productively deployed.

It is worth noting that ịgba bọị was not the only indigenous Igbo institution performing this capital formation function during the colonial period. As Nwabughuogu demonstrated in a companion study, the

isusu rotating credit association among the Ngwa Igbo served a parallel function, enabling communities to pool savings and extend credit in ways that the formal colonial banking system denied them.[24]

The ịgba bọị settling and the isusu operated as complementary institutions within a broader ecosystem of indigenous Igbo capital formation a system of informal financial arrangements that constituted, in aggregate, an indigenous alternative to the colonial banking infrastructure that excluded them. The simultaneity of these two institutions is itself evidence for the broader argument advanced in this article: that Igbo economic responses to colonialism were characterized by institutional creativity and multiplicity, not passive acceptance.

The commercial networks built through ịgba bọị also demonstrated a significant capacity for what economic historians have described as "relational contracting" the ability to conduct complex commercial transactions on the basis of personal trust and communal accountability in the absence of formal legal enforcement mechanisms.[25] The Igbo trader in Kano who extended credit to a fellow Igbo supplier in Lagos was not relying on the colonial courts to enforce repayment; he was relying on the web of communal obligation and reputational accountability that the ịgba bọị network had established. The effectiveness of this relational contracting system is attested by the remarkable growth of Igbo commercial enterprise across Nigeria in the 1930s and 1940s, a growth that occurred despite, and in some measure because of the barriers that the colonial

formal economy placed in the path of indigenous commercial development.

V. Resistance and Agency: ịgba bọị as Counter-Colonial Institution

The transformation of ịgba bọị during the colonial period was not simply an adaptation to colonial economic conditions; it was also a form of resistance to colonial economic structures. To make this claim is not to romanticize the ịgba bọị system or to read into it a political consciousness of anti-colonialism that its participants may not have articulated in those terms. It is, rather, to follow James Scott's analytical distinction between resistance as political declaration and resistance as practical subversion, the systematic pursuit of interests and the preservation of autonomous institutional capacity in ways that undermine the effective reach of dominant power, regardless of whether the actors involved conceive of their actions in explicitly political terms.[26]

The colonial economy in Nigeria was structured to benefit metropolitan interests at the expense of African producers and traders. The Licensed Buying Agent system, the Currency Board arrangements that drained Nigerian surpluses into metropolitan sterling balances and the dominance of the United Africa Company and other expatriate firms in the wholesale and import-export trade all operated to limit the share of colonial commercial gains accessible to Nigerian actors. The ịgba

bọị system subverted this structure in several specific and interrelated ways.

First, by operating through social networks opaque to colonial regulatory oversight, ịgba bọị -based trading networks were able to conduct commercial activities including the circumvention of official price controls and, in some instances, the evasion of colonial licensing requirements that would have been impossible for formally registered commercial entities. The communal enforcement mechanisms that substituted for colonial legal institutions in regulating the master-apprentice relationship were, from the colonial state's perspective, effectively invisible: they operated through social sanction rather than court proceedings, through community reputation rather than registered contract.

An Annual Report from Owerri Division in 1933 expressed precisely this frustration, noting that "native trading arrangements of the Ibo [sic] are conducted on terms and through channels which Government has found it extremely difficult to monitor or regulate."[27]The official's frustration is the historian's evidence: the ịgba bọị system's regulatory opacity was not an accidental feature but one of its most important institutional qualities.

Second, the ịgba bọị system built autonomous Igbo commercial capacity in deliberate competition with the expatriate trading firms that dominated the formal economy. The Igbo trader who had completed his apprenticeship and received his settling was not inserted into the commercial network of the United Africa

Company as a subordinate agent; he was constituted as an independent commercial actor whose economic allegiance was to his own network of kinship and apprenticeship obligation. The aggregate effect of tens of thousands of such individual trajectories across the 1930s and 1940s was the construction of a parallel commercial infrastructure indigenous, informal, and increasingly competitive with the formal colonial economy in key market sectors.

Third, and most consequentially, the geographical expansion of the Igbo commercial diaspora through ịgba bọị networks created facts on the ground that complicated the colonial state's ability to manage the Nigerian economy according to its preferred model. The presence of well-organised Igbo trading communities in every major Nigerian city by the 1940s was not the result of colonial planning; it was the unintended consequence of the ịgba bọị system's capacity to generate and sustain commercial migration across vast distances. Colonial officials could regulate the formal economy; they could not easily regulate the movement of young Igbo men responding to the social and commercial logic of an institution that predated colonialism by generations and operated entirely outside colonial legal frameworks. Frederick Cooper has argued that the most significant forms of African agency in the colonial period were often those that exploited the spaces and opportunities created by colonial change without directly confronting colonial power.[28] The ịgba bọị system exemplifies this kind of agency with unusual clarity.Don Ohadike's study of Igbo resistance to British conquest in western Igbo

land documented the range of strategies from armed confrontation to passive non-compliance through which Igbo communities responded to colonial imposition.[29]

The commercial resistance embedded in thegba bọị system belongs to this same repertoire of response, though it has received far less scholarly attention than the more dramatic forms of anti-colonial action. Scott's concept of "weapons of the weak" the everyday practices through which subordinate groups resist domination without exposing themselves to the full force of reprisal is directly applicable here.[30]

The young Igbo trader who entered an ịgba bọị apprenticeship in Onitsha, learned his trade in the spaces between the formal colonial economy, and eventually established an independent commercial enterprise in Kano was not articulating a political programme of anti-colonialism. But in building autonomous economic capacity outside the structures of colonial commercial control, he was doing something that had the functional effect of resistance: preserving indigenous institutional autonomy and enabling the reproduction of an economic culture that the colonial system had sought, by design or by inadvertence, to subordinate.

It is equally important, however, to acknowledge the limits and internal contradictions of the ịgba bọị system as a form of resistance. The system was not, and never became, an egalitarian institution. The master-apprentice relationship was, by its nature, a relationship of power asymmetry one in which the apprentice's dependency was real and sometimes exploited. There are

accounts in the oral traditions of various Igbo communities of masters who extracted labour from apprentices over extended periods without providing adequate instruction or fair settling, and the communal enforcement mechanisms that were supposed to check such exploitation were not always effective. The system reproduced, alongside commercial solidarity, the hierarchies of gender and seniority that structured Igbo social life more broadly. To celebrate ịgba bọị as resistance without acknowledging these internal inequalities would be to romanticise rather than to historicise it.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the ịgba bọị apprenticeship system underwent a fundamental transformation during the first half of the twentieth century, evolving from a craft-based, kinship-embedded institution of skill transmission into a flexible commercial training and capital accumulation mechanism that served as the primary institutional engine of Igbo economic resilience in the colonial period. This transformation was driven by the specific conditions of British colonial rule in Nigeria, the destruction of pre-colonial trading networks, the forced monetization of the Igbo economy, and the dominance of expatriate firms in the formal commercial sector and it was achieved through the deliberate adaptation of indigenous institutional forms to new economic circumstances.

The argument engages directly with Nwabughuogu's influential thesis of middleman decline in colonial eastern Nigeria. Nwabughuogu was right to document the displacement of established Igbo middlemen by expatriate commercial capital; but his framework of decline addresses only one level of Igbo commercial life. The ịgba bọị system was operating at a different level, producing not the established middlemen whose decline Nwabughuogu charts, but the next generation of independent traders who would, by the 1940s and 1950s, have reconstituted Igbo commercial presence across Nigeria at a scale and with an institutional depth that the pre-colonial middlemen had never achieved. Decline and adaptation were simultaneous, complementary, and both genuine.

The argument also reframes our understanding of the extraordinary post-colonial Igbo commercial presence across Nigeria and the global diaspora. The remarkable commercial reach of the Igbo did not emerge from some primordial "Igbo commercial genius," as popular and even some scholarly accounts have sometimes implied. It was built, institution by institution and apprentice by apprentice, through the colonial-era transformation of an indigenous institution that had the resilience, the adaptability, and the social depth to survive and flourish under conditions that destroyed many of its institutional peers.

Finally, the ịgba bọị case invites historians of colonial Africa to look more systematically at informal institutions, those that operated in the spaces between colonial formal structures and pre-colonial social

organization as sites of both economic production and political resistance. The formal colonial economy has been extensively studied; the informal institutional world that African actors built alongside it, in response to it, and sometimes against it, has received far less sustained historical attention. The ịgba bọị system of colonial-era Igbo land is one of the more illuminating windows into that world. As Scott reminded us, the most consequential forms of resistance are often those that leave the least visible trace in the official record, which is precisely why recovering them requires the kind of patient, multi-source historical reconstruction that this article has attempted.[31]

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RUSSIA–UKRAINE WAR AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF GLOBAL POWER POLITICS

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Abstract

The Russia–Ukraine War, which escalated dramatically with Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, has emerged as one of the most consequential geopolitical events of the twenty-first century. Beyond its immediate humanitarian and security implications, the conflict has significantly altered the dynamics of global power politics, challenging existing assumptions about international order, state sovereignty, military power, economic interdependence, and the role of international institutions. This article examines how the war has contributed to the restructuring of global power politics by reshaping strategic alliances, intensifying great-power competition, accelerating geopolitical polarization, and fostering the emergence of a more

multipolar international system. Employing a qualitative research methodology based on secondary sources, the study analyzes the behavior of major actors including Russia, the United States, China, the European Union, and emerging powers. The article argues that the conflict has accelerated trends that were already visible before 2022, including the relative decline of unipolarity, the resurgence of geopolitical rivalry, and the increasing importance of regional powers in global governance. Drawing primarily on Realist theory, the study demonstrates that power politics remains central to international relations despite decades of globalization and economic integration. The findings suggest that the Russia–Ukraine War represents a critical turning point in contemporary international politics, with long-term implications for global security, diplomacy, economic relations, and the future structure of the international system.

Keywords: Russia–Ukraine War, Global Power Politics, Multipolarity, International Relations, Geopolitics, Realism, NATO, Great-Power Competition

Introduction

The international system has undergone several significant transformations since the end of the Cold War. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the emergence of a unipolar world dominated by the United States. For nearly three decades, the United States exercised unprecedented influence over global political, economic, and security affairs. During this

period, many scholars argued that ideological competition among major powers had largely ended and that liberal democracy, globalization, and economic interdependence would characterize the future international order (Fukuyama, 1992).

However, developments in the twenty-first century increasingly challenged these assumptions. The rise of China as a global economic and military power, Russia's growing dissatisfaction with the post-Cold War settlement, regional conflicts, and increasing competition among major powers signaled the gradual erosion of American unipolarity (Mearsheimer, 2014). Among these developments, the Russia–Ukraine War stands out as perhaps the most significant geopolitical crisis of the contemporary era.

Although tensions between Russia and Ukraine have deep historical roots, the modern phase of the conflict began in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea following political upheaval in Ukraine. The conflict escalated dramatically on 24 February 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, transforming a regional dispute into a major international crisis with global implications (Allison, 2022).

The war has affected virtually every aspect of international politics. It has reshaped security arrangements in Europe, intensified competition between major powers, altered global energy markets, disrupted food supplies, and accelerated debates concerning the future of international order. Moreover, it has revealed the continuing importance of military power in

international relations despite decades of economic globalization and technological integration.

The conflict has also exposed fundamental disagreements regarding sovereignty, territorial integrity, security guarantees, and the legitimacy of international institutions. Western governments, led by the United States and European allies, have framed the war as a struggle between democracy and authoritarianism. Russia, on the other hand, has presented the conflict as a defensive response to perceived Western encroachment and NATO expansion (Charap & Colton, 2017).

The implications of the conflict extend far beyond Europe. Countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East have been compelled to reassess their strategic positions in response to the changing international environment. Emerging powers such as India, Brazil, and South Africa have pursued more independent foreign policies, reflecting broader shifts in the distribution of global power (Acharya, 2018).

This article seeks to examine how the Russia–Ukraine War has contributed to the restructuring of global power politics. Specifically, it explores the impact of the conflict on great-power relations, international alliances, global governance institutions, economic networks, and the evolving balance of power in the international system.

The central argument advanced in this study is that the Russia–Ukraine War has accelerated the transition from a predominantly unipolar international order toward a

more complex and competitive multipolar system. While the United States remains the most powerful actor in world politics, the conflict has highlighted the growing influence of other major powers and the increasing fragmentation of global authority.

The article addresses the following research questions:

1. How has the Russia–Ukraine War transformed global power politics?

2. What impact has the conflict had on the balance of power among major states?

3. How has the war influenced international institutions and alliances?

4. To what extent has the conflict accelerated the emergence of a multipolar international order?

Addressing these questions is important because understanding the broader geopolitical consequences of the conflict can provide valuable insights into the future trajectory of international relations.

Literature Review

The Russia–Ukraine War has generated extensive scholarly attention from researchers examining security studies, international relations, geopolitics, and global governance. Existing literature can be grouped into several major themes.

The Origins of the Conflict

One major area of scholarly debate concerns the causes of the Russia–Ukraine conflict. Realist scholars such as Mearsheimer (2014) argue that NATO expansion into Eastern Europe played a significant role in provoking Russian insecurity. According to this perspective, major powers naturally seek to prevent hostile alliances from approaching their borders.

Mearsheimer (2014) contends that Western efforts to integrate Ukraine into Western political and security structures created conditions for confrontation. He argues that Russia viewed Ukraine's potential NATO membership as an existential threat.

In contrast, Liberal scholars reject the notion that NATO expansion alone explains Russian behavior. They emphasize the importance of domestic politics, authoritarian governance, and Russian revisionist ambitions (McFaul, 2020). From this perspective, the conflict reflects Russia's desire to restore its influence over neighboring states rather than legitimate security concerns.

Constructivist scholars highlight the role of identity, historical narratives, and competing interpretations of sovereignty. They argue that Russian and Ukrainian national identities have evolved differently since the collapse of the Soviet Union, contributing to persistent tensions (Hopf, 2016).

Power Transition and International Order

A second body of literature examines the implications of the conflict for international order. Scholars of power transition theory argue that periods of shifting power distributions often generate instability and conflict (Organski & Kugler, 1980).

According to Gilpin (1981), major wars frequently occur during periods of systemic transformation when rising and declining powers compete for influence. The Russia–Ukraine War has therefore been interpreted as part of a broader struggle over the future structure of international order.

Ikenberry (2018) argues that the liberal international order faces increasing challenges from revisionist powers seeking greater influence. The conflict has intensified debates regarding whether the post-Cold War order can survive in its current form.

Similarly, Walt (2018) notes that increasing geopolitical competition between major powers reflects a return to traditional balance-of-power politics. He suggests that globalization has not eliminated the enduring importance of military and strategic competition.

NATO and European Security

A substantial literature focuses on NATO's role in European security. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has expanded significantly eastward, incorporating numerous former Warsaw Pact members.

Proponents of NATO expansion argue that enlargement has strengthened regional security and promoted democratic governance (Asmus, 2002). They contend that sovereign states possess the right to choose their own security arrangements.

Critics argue that expansion contributed to Russian perceptions of encirclement and strategic vulnerability (Sakwa, 2015). According to this view, the failure to establish a more inclusive European security architecture increased the likelihood of confrontation.

The Russia–Ukraine War has revitalized NATO, leading to increased defense spending among member states and the accession of new members. Consequently, scholars increasingly view NATO as a central actor in the restructuring of European security.

Economic Statecraft and Sanctions

Another important theme concerns the use of economic sanctions as instruments of statecraft. Following Russia's invasion, Western governments imposed unprecedented sanctions targeting Russian banks, energy exports, technology imports, and financial institutions.

Drezner (2015) argues that sanctions can influence state behavior by increasing economic costs. However, he acknowledges that their effectiveness depends on political circumstances and the resilience of targeted states.

Some scholars suggest that sanctions have accelerated economic fragmentation and encouraged alternative

financial arrangements outside Western-controlled institutions (Farrell & Newman, 2019). The increasing use of sanctions may therefore contribute to the emergence of competing economic blocs.

Emerging Multipolarity

Perhaps the most significant theme in contemporary literature concerns the emergence of multipolarity. Acharya (2018) argues that global power is becoming increasingly decentralized as emerging powers gain influence.

Similarly, Zakaria (2008) contends that the rise of non-Western states is transforming international politics. Rather than a world dominated by a single superpower, international relations increasingly reflect multiple centers of influence.

The Russia–Ukraine War has accelerated these trends by encouraging strategic autonomy among many states in the Global South. Countries such as India, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia have pursued policies that do not align fully with either Western or Russian positions.

Consequently, the conflict has reinforced scholarly arguments that the international system is moving toward a more multipolar configuration characterized by multiple influential actors rather than a single dominant power.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Realist Theory as its primary analytical framework.

Realism is one of the oldest and most influential theories in international relations. Realist thinkers such as Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and John Mearsheimer argue that international politics is fundamentally characterized by competition among states operating within an anarchic international system.

According to Realism, no central authority exists above states to guarantee their security. Consequently, states must rely primarily on their own capabilities to survive and protect national interests (Waltz, 1979).

Realists identify power as the central currency of international politics. States continuously seek to accumulate military, economic, and political capabilities to enhance their security and influence. Cooperation may occur, but it is generally constrained by concerns regarding relative gains and strategic competition.

The Russia–Ukraine War illustrates several core Realist assumptions. Russia's actions can be interpreted as efforts to prevent a perceived deterioration of its strategic position resulting from NATO's eastward expansion. Similarly, Western support for Ukraine reflects broader efforts to maintain the existing balance of power in Europe.

Realism also helps explain why major powers continue to prioritize military capabilities despite globalization

and economic interdependence. The conflict demonstrates that states remain willing to incur significant economic costs when vital security interests are perceived to be at stake.

Furthermore, the theory provides a useful framework for understanding the broader restructuring of global power politics. As relative power shifts among states, competition intensifies, alliances evolve, and international institutions become arenas for strategic rivalry.

The next section examines the methodology employed in this study and provides a detailed analysis of how the Russia–Ukraine War is reshaping the contemporary international system.

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology based primarily on the analysis of secondary data. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for examining complex political phenomena because it enables researchers to investigate historical developments, policy decisions, strategic interactions, and institutional changes that cannot easily be quantified (Creswell, 2018).

The study relies on a wide range of scholarly sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy reports, official government publications, international organization documents, and reputable media analyses. Sources were selected based on their relevance to the Russia–Ukraine War, global power politics, international security, and geopolitical transformation.

The analytical approach employed in this article is descriptive and explanatory. The descriptive component examines major developments associated with the Russia–Ukraine conflict, while the explanatory component seeks to identify the broader implications of these developments for the structure of international politics.

Realist theory serves as the principal analytical framework because it emphasizes the importance of power, security, and strategic competition in shaping state behavior. The theory provides useful insights into the actions of Russia, the United States, NATO, China, and other major actors involved in the evolving international order.

The study is limited by its reliance on secondary sources and the ongoing nature of the conflict. Since the Russia–Ukraine War continues to evolve, some of its long-term consequences may not yet be fully apparent. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence exists to assess the conflict's significant impact on global power politics and international relations.

Discussion and Analysis

Russia–Ukraine War as a Turning Point in Global Politics

The Russia–Ukraine War represents one of the most consequential geopolitical events since the end of the Cold War. While many conflicts have occurred since 1991, few have had such extensive implications for

international security, economic relations, alliance politics, and global governance.

The war has challenged the assumptions that characterized the post-Cold War era. For decades, many policymakers believed that globalization, economic integration, and international institutions would reduce the likelihood of large-scale interstate warfare. The Russian invasion demonstrated that traditional geopolitical rivalries remain highly relevant in contemporary international relations (Mearsheimer, 2022).

The conflict has fundamentally altered perceptions regarding military power. Prior to 2022, many analysts believed that economic interdependence had significantly reduced the utility of military force as an instrument of state policy. However, the war has demonstrated that states continue to rely on military capabilities to pursue strategic objectives when they perceive vital interests to be threatened.

Furthermore, the conflict has accelerated the restructuring of global power politics by exposing divisions among major powers and compelling states to reconsider their foreign policy priorities. Countries around the world have reassessed their security strategies, alliance commitments, and economic partnerships in response to the changing international environment.

The significance of the war extends beyond the battlefield. It represents a broader contest concerning the

future distribution of power, the nature of international order, and the rules governing interstate relations. As such, the conflict serves as a critical case study for understanding contemporary transformations in global politics.

The Revival of Great-Power Competition

One of the most significant consequences of the Russia–Ukraine War has been the revival of great-power competition as the defining feature of international politics.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States emerged as the sole superpower. During the 1990s and early 2000s, American military, economic, and diplomatic dominance appeared largely uncontested. However, developments over the past two decades have gradually eroded this position.

The rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, and the growing influence of regional powers have contributed to a more competitive international environment (Ikenberry, 2018). The Russia–Ukraine War has accelerated these trends by intensifying strategic rivalry among major powers.

The United States has assumed a leading role in supporting Ukraine through military assistance, intelligence sharing, economic aid, and diplomatic coordination. This support reflects broader American efforts to maintain the existing international order and deter challenges to its leadership position.

Russia, meanwhile, views the conflict as part of a larger struggle against Western dominance. Russian leaders have repeatedly argued that the post-Cold War international order unfairly marginalized Russian interests and expanded Western influence into areas historically considered vital to Russian security (Sakwa, 2015).

China has adopted a more cautious approach. While avoiding direct military involvement, Beijing has maintained close relations with Moscow and criticized Western sanctions. At the same time, China has sought to preserve economic ties with Europe and the United States, reflecting its complex position within the evolving international system.

The interaction among these major powers illustrates the growing importance of strategic competition in global politics. Rather than a unipolar order dominated by a single actor, the international system increasingly resembles a multipolar environment characterized by competing centers of power.

NATO's Resurgence and the Transformation of European Security

The Russia–Ukraine War has transformed the security architecture of Europe in profound ways.

Prior to the invasion, some analysts questioned NATO's relevance in the post-Cold War era. French President Emmanuel Macron famously described the alliance as experiencing "brain death" in 2019. However, the Russian invasion dramatically revitalized NATO and

reinforced its importance as the cornerstone of European security.

The alliance responded to the conflict by strengthening its eastern flank, increasing military deployments, and enhancing collective defense measures. Member states significantly increased defense spending, reversing years of military reductions.

Perhaps the most remarkable development was the decision by traditionally neutral countries such as Finland and Sweden to seek NATO membership. Finland's accession substantially extended NATO's border with Russia, creating new strategic realities in Northern Europe.

The expansion of NATO demonstrates how the conflict has reshaped security calculations throughout Europe. States that previously prioritized neutrality increasingly view collective defense arrangements as necessary for ensuring national security.

From a Realist perspective, NATO's resurgence reflects the enduring importance of alliances in balancing perceived threats. The alliance's strengthening illustrates how states respond to security challenges by forming coalitions and enhancing military capabilities.

The implications extend beyond Europe. NATO's renewed relevance reinforces American leadership within the transatlantic community and strengthens Western cohesion in the face of geopolitical competition.

The Decline of Unipolarity and the Rise of Multipolarity

One of the most important consequences of the Russia–Ukraine War is its contribution to the ongoing transition from unipolarity to multipolarity.

Unipolarity refers to an international system dominated by a single superpower. Following the Cold War, the United States occupied this position, enjoying unmatched military, economic, and technological capabilities.

However, scholars such as Acharya (2018) and Zakaria (2008) have argued that global power has gradually become more dispersed. The rise of China, India's growing influence, and the increasing assertiveness of regional powers suggest the emergence of a more multipolar order.

The Russia–Ukraine War has accelerated this process in several ways.

First, the conflict has highlighted the limits of Western influence. Despite extensive sanctions and diplomatic pressure, many countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East declined to fully align with Western policies toward Russia.

Second, the war has encouraged greater strategic autonomy among emerging powers. Countries such as India have maintained relations with both Russia and Western states, reflecting a pragmatic approach designed to maximize national interests.

Third, alternative institutions and partnerships have gained greater prominence. Organizations such as the BRICS have increasingly been viewed as platforms for challenging aspects of Western dominance in global governance.

These developments suggest that international politics is moving toward a more decentralized structure characterized by multiple influential actors rather than a single hegemonic power.

Economic Warfare and the Fragmentation of Globalization

The Russia–Ukraine War has demonstrated the increasing importance of economic instruments in contemporary geopolitical competition.

Western governments imposed extensive sanctions targeting Russian financial institutions, energy exports, technological imports, and access to international markets. These measures represent one of the most comprehensive sanctions regimes in modern history.

The sanctions were designed to weaken Russia's economic capacity and increase the costs of military aggression. However, they also revealed important limitations in the effectiveness of economic coercion.

Russia adapted by expanding trade with non-Western partners, particularly China and India. Alternative payment systems and financial arrangements were developed to reduce dependence on Western-controlled institutions.

As Farrell and Newman (2019) argue, economic interdependence can be weaponized for strategic purposes. The Russia–Ukraine War provides a clear example of this phenomenon.

At the same time, the conflict has accelerated concerns regarding economic security. Governments increasingly prioritize supply-chain resilience, technological sovereignty, and energy independence.

These trends suggest that globalization may be entering a new phase characterized by greater fragmentation and geopolitical competition. Rather than a fully integrated global economy, the future may involve competing economic blocs aligned with different geopolitical centers.

Energy Politics and Geostrategic Transformation

Energy has emerged as one of the most important dimensions of the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

Before the invasion, Europe relied heavily on Russian natural gas and energy exports. This dependence created vulnerabilities that became increasingly apparent after the outbreak of war.

European governments responded by diversifying energy supplies, investing in renewable technologies, and reducing reliance on Russian resources. These efforts have reshaped global energy markets and altered longstanding economic relationships.

Russia, meanwhile, redirected energy exports toward Asian markets. China and India significantly increased purchases of Russian oil and gas, demonstrating the growing importance of non-Western economic partnerships.

The energy dimension of the conflict highlights the close relationship between economic resources and geopolitical power. Control over energy supplies remains a critical source of influence in international politics.

Moreover, the crisis has accelerated global discussions regarding energy security, sustainability, and strategic autonomy. These issues are likely to remain central to global power politics for decades to come.

China's Strategic Position in the Emerging Global Order

One of the most important consequences of the Russia–Ukraine War has been its impact on China's role in international politics. Although China has not participated directly in the conflict, the war has significantly influenced Beijing's strategic calculations and global positioning.

China entered the conflict period as the world's second-largest economy and the principal challenger to American global dominance. The war has provided Chinese policymakers with important lessons regarding military strategy, economic resilience, sanctions, technological dependence, and alliance politics.

From the beginning of the conflict, China adopted a carefully balanced approach. Beijing refrained from condemning Russia outright while simultaneously avoiding direct military support for Moscow. Chinese leaders emphasized principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity while criticizing what they perceived as Cold War thinking and NATO expansion (Wang, 2023).

China's response reflects its broader strategic objectives. On one hand, Beijing values its partnership with Russia as a counterweight to Western influence. On the other hand, China remains deeply integrated into the global economy and seeks to avoid confrontation that could jeopardize its economic growth.

The conflict has also accelerated China's efforts to reduce dependence on Western-controlled technologies and financial systems. Chinese policymakers have closely observed the sanctions imposed on Russia and recognized the vulnerabilities associated with excessive reliance on Western institutions.

Consequently, Beijing has intensified initiatives aimed at promoting alternative economic frameworks, including the internationalization of the Chinese currency and the expansion of economic partnerships throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The war has therefore strengthened China's determination to play a more prominent role in shaping the future international order. As competition between China and the United States intensifies, the Russia–

Ukraine conflict increasingly forms part of a broader global contest concerning the distribution of power in the twenty-first century.

The Global South and Strategic Non-Alignment

A major feature of the Russia–Ukraine War has been the response of countries in the Global South. Contrary to expectations in many Western capitals, numerous states in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East declined to fully support Western sanctions or diplomatic initiatives against Russia.

This response reflects broader changes in global power politics. During the Cold War, many developing countries sought to avoid alignment with either the United States or the Soviet Union through the Non-Aligned Movement. In the contemporary era, a similar pattern of strategic autonomy has emerged.

Countries such as India, Brazil, South Africa, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey have adopted pragmatic foreign policies designed to maximize national interests rather than align exclusively with any major power bloc.

India provides a particularly important example. Despite strengthening relations with the United States and its allies, India maintained substantial economic and defense ties with Russia throughout the conflict. Indian leaders emphasized the importance of national interests and strategic independence in shaping foreign policy decisions.

Similarly, many African states resisted pressure to adopt explicitly anti-Russian positions. Historical experiences with colonialism, concerns regarding food and energy security, and skepticism toward great-power competition influenced their responses.

The behavior of these states demonstrates that contemporary international politics cannot be understood solely through the lens of East-West rivalry. Emerging powers increasingly possess the capacity to pursue independent policies and shape global outcomes.

This development supports arguments regarding the emergence of a multipolar international system. Rather than acting as passive recipients of great-power influence, many states now exercise greater agency in determining their strategic orientations.

The growing importance of the Global South represents one of the most significant structural changes in contemporary international relations and contributes directly to the ongoing restructuring of global power politics.

The Crisis of International Institutions

The Russia–Ukraine War has also exposed important weaknesses within the institutions responsible for maintaining international peace and security.

The United Nations was established after the Second World War to prevent large-scale interstate conflict and promote collective security. However, the conflict has

highlighted the limitations of the organization in addressing disputes involving major powers.

As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Russia possesses veto power, allowing it to block resolutions perceived as contrary to its interests. This institutional arrangement has significantly constrained the Security Council's ability to respond effectively to the conflict.

The war has therefore intensified debates regarding the reform of global governance institutions. Many scholars argue that structures created in the aftermath of the Second World War no longer adequately reflect contemporary power realities (Weiss, 2013).

Similar challenges confront other international institutions. The conflict has generated tensions within the World Trade Organization, disrupted global economic governance, and complicated efforts to address transnational issues such as climate change and sustainable development.

At the same time, the war has demonstrated the continued relevance of certain institutions. NATO's response highlighted the importance of collective defense arrangements, while the European Union played a central role in coordinating sanctions and humanitarian assistance.

The mixed performance of international institutions during the conflict suggests that global governance is undergoing a period of significant transition. Existing institutions remain important but increasingly struggle to

address the complexities of a rapidly changing international environment.

Military Innovation and the Future of Warfare

Another important consequence of the Russia–Ukraine War concerns the transformation of military strategy and warfare.

The conflict has demonstrated the growing significance of advanced technologies, including drones, artificial intelligence, cyber operations, satellite intelligence, and precision-guided weapons. These technologies have fundamentally altered battlefield dynamics and influenced military planning worldwide.

Ukraine's effective use of drones and intelligence-sharing arrangements has challenged traditional assumptions regarding military power. Despite possessing fewer conventional military resources than Russia, Ukraine has successfully utilized technological innovations to resist a larger adversary.

The war has also highlighted the importance of information warfare. Governments, media organizations, and digital platforms have played significant roles in shaping public perceptions of the conflict. Information has become a strategic resource comparable to military and economic capabilities.

Cyber warfare has emerged as another critical dimension of contemporary conflict. Both Russia and Ukraine have employed cyber capabilities alongside conventional

military operations, demonstrating the increasingly interconnected nature of modern warfare.

Military planners around the world are closely studying these developments. The lessons learned from the conflict are likely to influence defense policies, procurement strategies, and military doctrines for years to come.

As a result, the Russia–Ukraine War is not only reshaping contemporary geopolitics but also redefining the future character of armed conflict itself.

The Future of Global Governance and International Order

The long-term implications of the Russia–Ukraine War for global governance remain uncertain. Nevertheless, several important trends are already visible.

First, the conflict has accelerated the movement toward a more fragmented international system. Political, economic, and security relations increasingly reflect competition among multiple centers of power rather than universal cooperation.

Second, strategic competition between major powers is likely to intensify. Relations among the United States, China, and Russia will continue to shape the trajectory of international politics throughout the coming decades.

Third, regional powers are expected to play increasingly important roles in global affairs. Countries such as India, Turkey, Brazil, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia are likely to

exert greater influence over regional and international outcomes.

Fourth, economic security will become a central component of national security strategies. Governments are increasingly concerned with supply chains, technological capabilities, energy resources, and financial resilience.

Fifth, international institutions will face growing pressure to adapt to changing geopolitical realities. Calls for reform of the United Nations, international financial institutions, and global governance mechanisms are likely to become more prominent.

These developments suggest that the international system is entering a period of significant transformation. While the precise contours of the future order remain uncertain, it is clear that the assumptions underlying the post-Cold War era are being fundamentally reconsidered.

Conclusion

The Russia–Ukraine War constitutes a defining moment in contemporary international relations and represents one of the most significant geopolitical events since the end of the Cold War. Although the conflict originated from disputes involving security, sovereignty, and regional influence, its consequences extend far beyond Eastern Europe.

This study has demonstrated that the war has accelerated the restructuring of global power politics in several

important ways. First, it has revitalized great-power competition and reaffirmed the continuing relevance of military power in international affairs. Second, it has strengthened NATO and transformed the European security architecture. Third, it has contributed to the decline of unipolarity and reinforced trends toward multipolarity. Fourth, it has intensified economic fragmentation and highlighted the strategic importance of energy, technology, and financial systems.

The conflict has also underscored the growing significance of emerging powers and the Global South. Many states have adopted independent foreign policies that reflect national interests rather than strict alignment with major power blocs. This development indicates a more decentralized and pluralistic international system.

Furthermore, the war has revealed important weaknesses in existing global governance institutions while simultaneously demonstrating the enduring importance of strategic alliances and regional organizations. The challenges confronting international institutions highlight the need for reforms capable of addressing contemporary geopolitical realities.

From a theoretical perspective, the conflict provides strong support for Realist interpretations of international relations. The actions of major powers throughout the crisis demonstrate the continuing importance of security concerns, power competition, and strategic calculations in shaping state behavior.

Ultimately, the Russia–Ukraine War is not merely a regional conflict; it is a catalyst for broader transformations within the international system. The war has accelerated trends that were already emerging, including the diffusion of power, the resurgence of geopolitical rivalry, and the transition toward a more multipolar world order.

The future international system will likely be characterized by greater complexity, intensified competition, and multiple centers of influence. Understanding these transformations is essential for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to navigate the evolving landscape of global politics.

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THE DECLINE OF TRADITIONAL IGBO APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM (*ỊGBA Bọị*) AND its SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS ON IGBO IDENTITY

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Abstract

This study examined the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The traditional apprenticeship system historically served as an important institution for youth empowerment, entrepreneurial training, moral upbringing, and cultural transmission among the Igbo people. However, the system has gradually declined due to modernization, globalization, western influence, economic hardship, and the increasing desire for quick wealth among youths. The problem of the study arises from the growing erosion of Igbo

cultural values, unemployment, moral decadence, and weakening communal relationships associated with the decline of the apprenticeship institution. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A total of 350 respondents were selected through purposive and simple random sampling techniques from selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria. Data were collected through questionnaires, oral interviews, textbooks, and journal materials, while descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that modernization, globalization, and the quest for quick wealth are major factors responsible for the decline of *Ịgba Bọị*. The study further discovered that the decline has contributed to unemployment, loss of mentorship, erosion of communal values, and weakening of Igbo cultural identity. The study concluded that the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system poses serious socio-cultural challenges to contemporary Igbo society. The study recommended cultural re-orientation, government support for apprenticeship programs, and the revival of mentorship and settlement practices among Igbo business owners.

Keywords: *Ịgba Bọị,* Apprenticeship System, Igbo Identity, Socio-Cultural Values, Youth Empowerment

Introduction

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system, popularly known as *Ịgba Bọị*, has for centuries remained one of the

most significant socio-economic and cultural institutions among the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria. The system is a structured form of informal education and business mentorship in which a young person, usually called a *boy* or apprentice, serves under a master for a specified number of years in order to acquire entrepreneurial skills, business experience, moral discipline, and social orientation. At the completion of the apprenticeship period, the master settles the apprentice financially or materially to enable him establish an independent business venture. This indigenous economic model contributed greatly to the commercial success, resilience, and socio-cultural unity of the Igbo society. It also served as a mechanism for wealth redistribution, youth empowerment, social mobility, and communal solidarity.

Traditionally, the *Ịgba Bọị* system was not merely an economic arrangement but also a cultural institution deeply rooted in Igbo values such as hard work, honesty, loyalty, perseverance, humility, and respect for elders. Through the apprenticeship process, young people were socialized into acceptable societal norms and collective identity. The institution strengthened kinship relationships and promoted communal interdependence, thereby sustaining the socio-cultural fabric of Igbo society. Many successful Igbo businessmen and industrialists emerged through this indigenous training system, making it one of the foundations of Igbo economic advancement both within and outside Nigeria.

However, in recent decades, there has been a noticeable decline in the practice and effectiveness of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system. Several factors have contributed to this decline, including modernization, globalization, urbanization, western education, technological changes, migration, economic instability, and the increasing quest for quick wealth among youths. The rise of internet fraud, get-rich-quick mentality, and changing social values have also weakened the patience and commitment traditionally associated with apprenticeship training. Many young people now prefer white-collar jobs or instant financial success rather than undergoing years of business tutelage under a master. In some cases, mistrust, exploitation, and disputes between masters and apprentices have further discouraged participation in the system.

The decline of *Ịgba Bọị* has generated serious socio-cultural implications for Igbo identity and communal life. As the institution weakens, core Igbo values of communalism, diligence, mentorship, and economic cooperation are gradually eroding. The weakening of this cultural institution threatens the continuity of indigenous knowledge systems and the preservation of Igbo cultural identity. Furthermore, the decline has contributed to rising unemployment, youth restiveness, social disorientation, and moral decadence among some Igbo youths who no longer benefit from the traditional structures of mentorship and character formation.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the decline of the traditional Igbo

apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The study aims to explore the causes of the decline, assess its effects on Igbo socio-cultural values, and suggest possible measures for revitalizing the institution in contemporary Igbo society.

Statement of the Problem

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) was historically one of the major foundations of economic empowerment, cultural transmission, and social stability in Igbo society. Through this institution, young people acquired entrepreneurial skills, moral discipline, and communal values that sustained both individual success and collective identity. However, in recent years, the system has experienced a serious decline due to modernization, western influence, technological changes, economic hardship, and the growing desire for quick wealth among many youths.The weakening of the apprenticeship system has created noticeable socio-cultural challenges within Igbo society. Many young people no longer embrace the values of patience, hard work, loyalty, and communal responsibility traditionally associated with *Ịgba Bọị*. This decline has contributed to rising unemployment, youth involvement in fraudulent activities, moral decadence, and the gradual erosion of Igbo cultural identity. Furthermore, the breakdown of the traditional mentor-apprentice relationship has reduced opportunities for indigenous business training and economic self-reliance among youths.Despite the historical importance of *Ịgba Bọị* to Igbo socio-economic development,

insufficient scholarly attention has been given to its decline and the broader socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system and examine how this decline affects the preservation of Igbo values, cultural identity, and social cohesion in contemporary society.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) in contemporary Igbo society.
2. Investigate the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* on Igbo values, norms, and identity.
3. Assess the effects of the weakening apprenticeship system on youth empowerment, moral development, and economic self-reliance among Igbo youths.
4. Suggest possible measures for revitalizing the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system as a means of preserving Igbo cultural identity and promoting socio-economic development.

Significance of the Study

This study will be significant to scholars and researchers in the fields of Sociology, African Traditional Studies, Cultural Studies, Entrepreneurship, and Religious Studies. It will contribute to existing literature on the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) by providing deeper understanding of its decline and the socio-cultural consequences on Igbo identity. The study will also serve as a useful reference material for future academic research on indigenous economic systems and cultural preservation.

The study will also be beneficial to Igbo community leaders, elders, and traditional institutions. It will help them understand the cultural and social dangers associated with the gradual disappearance of the apprenticeship system. Through the findings of this study, they will be encouraged to promote policies and community initiatives aimed at preserving and revitalizing *Ịgba Bọị* as an important aspect of Igbo heritage and communal life.

Furthermore, the study will benefit government agencies and policy makers concerned with youth empowerment and economic development. The research will reveal how the apprenticeship system historically reduced unemployment and promoted self-reliance among Igbo youths. This will encourage the integration of indigenous apprenticeship models into modern vocational and entrepreneurial development programs.

The study will equally be beneficial to Igbo youths and business owners. Young people will gain awareness of the importance of patience, hard work, mentorship, and skill acquisition embedded in the traditional apprenticeship system. Business owners and entrepreneurs may also recognize the need to sustain mentorship traditions that promote economic growth, moral discipline, and intergenerational transfer of business knowledge within Igbo society.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Traditional Igbo Apprenticeship System (Ịgba Bọị)

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system, popularly known as *Ịgba Bọị*, has attracted scholarly attention among Nigerian researchers because of its economic, social, and cultural relevance in contemporary society. Different scholars have explained the concept from various perspectives based on entrepreneurship, indigenous knowledge, communalism, and youth development. The following are some scholarly views on the concept of *Ịgba Bọị* and critical observations by the researcher.

According to Okoro (2023), the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system is an indigenous entrepreneurial training mechanism through which experienced businessmen transfer commercial skills, discipline, and business ethics to younger individuals for economic empowerment and continuity of trade culture. Okoro

views *Ịgba Bọị* primarily as an economic institution designed to reduce poverty and promote self-reliance among Igbo youths. This view is acceptable because it captures the entrepreneurial foundation of the apprenticeship system and explains why the Igbo people are widely recognized for commercial success across Nigeria and beyond. However, the definition places excessive emphasis on economic empowerment while giving little attention to the socio-cultural and moral dimensions of the institution, such as character formation, communal solidarity, and identity preservation.

Similarly, Ezeani (2024) views *Ịgba Bọị* as a traditional socio-cultural institution through which young people are socialized into Igbo values of patience, loyalty, respect for elders, and communal responsibility while learning vocational and commercial skills under a master. Ezeani's perspective presents the apprenticeship system not merely as business training but as a medium of cultural transmission and moral education. This view is highly acceptable because it recognizes the dual role of the institution in both economic development and cultural preservation. The view reflects the traditional Igbo understanding that wealth creation must be accompanied by moral discipline and social responsibility. Nevertheless, the view could have been broader if it had also considered the role of globalization and modernization in shaping contemporary forms of apprenticeship.

In another perspective, Nwachukwu (2025) describes the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system as an informal indigenous educational structure that functions outside the formal school system and equips youths with practical knowledge, survival skills, and social networks necessary for economic independence. Nwachukwu emphasizes the educational and informal learning dimensions of *Ịgba Bọị*. This view is commendable because it explains how the apprenticeship system complements formal education by providing practical experience and mentorship that are often absent in conventional academic institutions. However, the definition is limited because it treats the system mainly as an alternative educational model without adequately discussing its deeper cultural significance in sustaining Igbo communal identity and intergenerational relationships.

Furthermore, Obi (2026) views *Ịgba Bọị* as a communal economic philosophy rooted in reciprocity, mentorship, and wealth redistribution, whereby successful businessmen raise younger entrepreneurs in order to sustain collective economic advancement within Igbo society. Obi argues that the apprenticeship system represents the communal spirit of the Igbo people where success is not viewed as an individual achievement alone but as a collective responsibility. This view is very significant because it highlights the communal and redistributive nature of the institution which has historically reduced unemployment and strengthened social cohesion among the Igbo. The researcher accepts this view because it reflects the traditional Igbo

philosophy of "onye aghala nwanne ya" (do not abandon your brother). However, the definition does not sufficiently address the exploitative tendencies sometimes associated with modern apprenticeship practices, where some masters fail to settle apprentices after years of service.

From the above scholarly views, it can be understood that the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) is not merely an economic arrangement but a multi-dimensional institution involving entrepreneurship, cultural transmission, moral upbringing, communalism, and youth empowerment. The various definitions collectively reveal that the system played a central role in preserving Igbo identity and sustaining socio-economic development before its gradual decline in contemporary society.

Empirical Studies

Adebayo and Okafor (2023) examined the declining indigenous apprenticeship practices and youth unemployment in southeastern Nigeria. The study focused on how the gradual abandonment of traditional apprenticeship systems has contributed to increasing unemployment and economic dependency among young people in the region. The researchers adopted a survey research design and collected data from traders, apprentices, and unemployed youths across selected states in southeastern Nigeria. The findings revealed that the traditional apprenticeship system formerly played a major role in youth empowerment, skill acquisition, and

business sustainability within Igbo society. However, modernization, western education, migration, and the growing desire for quick wealth were identified as major factors responsible for the decline of the system. The study further discovered that the weakening of indigenous apprenticeship practices has increased the rate of youth restiveness, criminal activities, and economic instability among young people. The researchers recommended government support for indigenous entrepreneurial systems and the integration of apprenticeship training into modern youth development policies.

Research Gap: Although the study by Adebayo and Okafor (2023) made important contributions by examining the relationship between declining apprenticeship practices and youth unemployment, it concentrated mainly on the economic implications of the problem. The study did not adequately explore the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* on Igbo identity, values, communal relationships, and cultural preservation. Therefore, the current study intends to fill this gap by focusing specifically on how the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system affects Igbo socio-cultural identity and communal life.

Eze and Nwankwo (2024) investigated indigenous entrepreneurship and the survival of Igbo apprenticeship culture in contemporary Nigeria. The study examined the relevance of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in sustaining entrepreneurial development and indigenous business culture despite the pressures of

modernization and globalization. The researchers adopted a qualitative research method and gathered data through interviews and observations among traders, business owners, and apprentices in major commercial cities in southeastern Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that the Igbo apprenticeship system has remained a significant indigenous strategy for wealth creation, business continuity, and youth empowerment. The study further showed that despite economic challenges and changing social values, many Igbo businessmen still rely on apprenticeship as a means of transferring entrepreneurial knowledge and maintaining commercial networks. However, the researchers discovered that western education, digital economy, migration, and the increasing preference for white-collar jobs among youths are threatening the survival of the apprenticeship culture. The study concluded that preserving indigenous entrepreneurial systems is essential for sustainable economic development and recommended stronger community support and policy recognition for apprenticeship practices in Nigeria.

Research Gap: The study by Eze and Nwankwo (2024) focused mainly on indigenous entrepreneurship and the economic survival of the Igbo apprenticeship culture. Although the researchers acknowledged certain social changes affecting the system, they did not critically examine the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* on Igbo identity, communal values, and cultural continuity. Therefore, the present study intends to fill this gap by specifically investigating how the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system affects the

preservation of Igbo socio-cultural identity and communal life.

Nwachinemere and Obiakor (2025) examined the influence of globalization on the erosion of traditional Igbo economic institutions with particular attention to the apprenticeship system in Anambra State. The study aimed at understanding how global economic trends, technological advancement, and western cultural influence have affected the sustainability of the traditional *Ịgba Bọị* system among the Igbo people. The researchers adopted a mixed-method research approach involving questionnaires, oral interviews, and focus group discussions among traders, apprentices, and community leaders in selected commercial areas of Anambra State. Findings from the study indicated that globalization has significantly altered the traditional structure of the apprenticeship system by promoting individualism, materialism, and changing youth attitudes toward patience and mentorship. The study further revealed that the increasing dependence on digital business models and formal education has reduced the interest of many youths in traditional apprenticeship training. The researchers argued that the decline of the system threatens indigenous economic practices and weakens intergenerational transfer of entrepreneurial knowledge within Igbo society. The study recommended cultural re-orientation programs and policies aimed at preserving indigenous economic institutions in southeastern Nigeria.

Research Gap: Although Nwachinemere and Obiakor (2025) extensively discussed the effects of globalization on the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system, the study concentrated mainly on the economic and structural dimensions of the institution. The socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* on Igbo identity, moral values, communal relationships, and cultural continuity were not adequately addressed. Therefore, the present study seeks to fill this gap by critically examining the socio-cultural consequences of the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system on Igbo identity and communal life.

Umeh and Okeke (2026) investigated the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* among Igbo youths in southeastern Nigeria. The study focused on understanding how the weakening of the traditional apprenticeship system has affected cultural values, youth behaviour, and communal relationships within Igbo society. The researchers employed a descriptive survey design and collected data through questionnaires and oral interviews conducted among traders, youths, community elders, and traditional leaders across selected communities in southeastern Nigeria. Findings from the study revealed that the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* has contributed to the erosion of important Igbo values such as hard work, respect for elders, patience, communal support, and loyalty. The study also discovered that many youths now pursue quick wealth through unethical means rather than engaging in long-term entrepreneurial mentorship. Furthermore, the researchers observed that the weakening of the apprenticeship system has reduced

social cohesion and weakened indigenous mechanisms for youth empowerment and moral formation. The study recommended cultural revival programs, youth re-orientation, and stronger involvement of community leaders in preserving the apprenticeship tradition.

Research Gap: Although Umeh and Okeke (2026) examined the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị*, the study focused mainly on youth behaviour and moral values in southeastern Nigeria generally. The researchers did not adequately examine the broader issue of Igbo identity and how the decline of the apprenticeship system affects cultural continuity, communal consciousness, and the preservation of indigenous socio-economic heritage. Therefore, the current study intends to fill this gap by specifically analyzing the relationship between the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system and the changing nature of Igbo identity in contemporary society.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The study specifically examines the factors responsible for the decline of the apprenticeship system, the effects of the decline on Igbo cultural values, communal relationships, youth empowerment, and the preservation of Igbo identity in contemporary society. Geographically, the study is limited to selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria where the apprenticeship system has historically

been practiced. The study also concentrates on the period between contemporary times and the present era of modernization and globalization which have significantly influenced indigenous socio-economic institutions among the Igbo people.

Research Questions

1. What are the major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) in contemporary Igbo society?
2. What are the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* on Igbo identity and communal values?
3. How has the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system affected youth empowerment and economic self-reliance among Igbo youths?
4. What measures can be adopted to revitalize the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary Igbo society?

Theoretical framework

Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural Functionalism Theory was originally propounded by Émile Durkheim in the late nineteenth century, particularly around 1895, and was later expanded by Talcott Parsons in the twentieth century. The theory emerged as a sociological approach for understanding how different parts of society work

together to maintain stability, order, and continuity. Durkheim argued that society is like a living organism in which each institution performs specific functions necessary for the survival of the whole society. Parsons later developed the theory further by emphasizing that social institutions such as family, religion, education, economy, and culture are interdependent and contribute to social equilibrium and integration.Structural Functionalism views society as a system made up of interconnected structures that perform essential functions for social stability. According to the theory, every institution within society exists because it contributes positively to the maintenance and survival of the social system. When institutions properly perform their functions, society experiences harmony, order, and continuity. However, when an institution begins to fail or decline in performing its expected roles, social disorder, instability, and dysfunction may arise. The theory therefore explains both social stability and social problems within a society.According to Samuel Chukwudi (2023), Structural Functionalism emphasizes that traditional African institutions historically played important roles in maintaining communal unity, moral discipline, and economic cooperation within indigenous societies. Chukwudi argues that the weakening of such institutions often leads to moral decline and social disorientation among youths. This view supports the functional relevance of indigenous systems in sustaining African social structures.Similarly, Blessing Adeyemi (2024) explains that the functionalist perspective sees culture and traditional institutions as mechanisms for transmitting societal values from one generation to

another. Adeyemi maintains that institutions which fail to adapt to changing social realities gradually lose their effectiveness, thereby creating social imbalance and identity crises within communities. This interpretation further highlights the importance of preserving indigenous institutions in modern African societies.Furthermore, Emmanuel Udeh (2025) observes that indigenous apprenticeship systems in Nigeria served functional purposes beyond economic training by promoting socialization, communal identity, mentorship, and moral upbringing among youths. Udeh notes that the decline of such systems has contributed to unemployment, materialism, and weakening communal relationships in many African communities. This position aligns with the assumptions of Structural Functionalism that institutions are necessary for maintaining social order and continuity.

The relevance of Structural Functionalism Theory to the current study lies in its explanation of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) as an important socio-cultural and economic institution within Igbo society. The theory helps to explain how *Ịgba Bọị* traditionally functioned in promoting youth empowerment, cultural transmission, communal solidarity, and moral discipline among the Igbo people. The decline of the institution therefore represents a dysfunction within the social structure, leading to challenges such as moral decadence, unemployment, weakening communal values, and erosion of Igbo identity. Thus, the theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding the socio-cultural

implications of the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary society.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts the descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to gather information from respondents concerning the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) and its socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity. The design also helps in obtaining opinions, experiences, and perceptions from participants within the study area.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of traders, apprentices, community elders, and youths in selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria. The total population for the study is estimated at 2,500 persons drawn from major commercial areas and local communities where the apprenticeship system is commonly practiced.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 350 respondents was selected for the study. The researcher adopted purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents who have knowledge of the

Igbo apprenticeship system, while simple random sampling ensured equal opportunity for participants within the selected communities.

Method of Data Collection

Data for the study were collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary source involved the use of structured questionnaires and oral interviews administered to traders, apprentices, and community elders. The secondary source involved textbooks, journal articles, internet materials, and previous scholarly works related to the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system and Igbo socio-cultural identity.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as frequency tables and percentages. Responses obtained from interviews were analyzed qualitatively through descriptive interpretation. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods helped the researcher to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the study topic.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This session presents, analyzes, and interprets the data collected for the study titled *"The Decline of Traditional Igbo Apprenticeship System (Ịgba Bọị) and its Socio-Cultural Implications on Igbo Identity."* A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in

selected Igbo communities in southeastern Nigeria. Out of the 350 questionnaires distributed, 330 were correctly completed and returned, representing 94.3% response rate, while 20 questionnaires representing 5.7% were not returned.The analysis is presented according to the research questions guiding the study. Frequency tables and percentages are used for the analysis and interpretation of data.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	210	63.6%
Female	120	36.4%
Total	330	100%

The table above shows that 210 respondents representing 63.6% were male, while 120 respondents representing 36.4% were female. This indicates that male respondents formed the majority of participants in the study.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
18–25 years	90	27.3%
26–35 years	140	42.4%
36–45 years	60	18.2%
46 years and above	40	12.1%

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
Total	330	100%

The table reveals that respondents between the ages of 26–35 years constituted the highest percentage with 42.4%, while respondents aged 46 years and above recorded the least percentage with 12.1%.

Table 3: Occupational Status of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Traders	140	42.4%
Apprentices	80	24.2%
Community Elders	40	12.1%
Unemployed Youths	70	21.3%
Total	330	100%

The table above indicates that traders formed the majority of respondents with 42.4%, followed by apprentices with 24.2%, while community elders represented the least percentage with 12.1%.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One:

What are the major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*)?

Table: Factors Responsible for the Decline of Ịgba Bọị

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Modernization and globalization	90	27.3%
Desire for quick wealth among youths	85	25.8%
Preference for formal education and white-collar jobs	70	21.2%
Economic hardship and lack of trust	50	15.2%
Influence of social media and internet fraud culture	35	10.5%
Total	330	100%

The table above shows that modernization and globalization ranked highest among the factors responsible for the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system with 27.3%. This was followed closely by the desire for quick wealth among youths with 25.8%. The findings indicate that changing social values and modern economic realities have negatively affected the survival of *Ịgba Bọị* in contemporary Igbo society.

Research Question Two:

What are the socio-cultural implications of the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* on Igbo identity and communal values?

Table: Socio-Cultural Implications of the Decline of Ịgba Bọị

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Erosion of Igbo cultural values	100	30.3%
Weakening of communal relationships	75	22.7%
Increase in youth involvement in crime and fraud	80	24.3%
Loss of mentorship and moral discipline	50	15.2%
Decline in indigenous business culture	25	7.5%
Total	330	100%

The table reveals that erosion of Igbo cultural values recorded the highest percentage with 30.3%. This was followed by increase in youth involvement in crime and fraudulent activities with 24.3%. The findings suggest that the decline of the apprenticeship system has contributed significantly to moral and cultural disorientation among some Igbo youths.

Research Question Three:

How has the decline of the traditional apprenticeship system affected youth empowerment and economic self-reliance among Igbo youths?

Table: Effects of the Decline of Ịgba Bọị on Youth Empowerment

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Increase in unemployment	110	33.3%
Reduction in entrepreneurial skills acquisition	95	28.8%
Increased dependency among youths	60	18.2%
Increase in poverty and economic frustration	45	13.6%
Decline in indigenous business mentorship	20	6.1%
Total	330	100%

The findings from the table indicate that increase in unemployment ranked highest with 33.3%, while reduction in entrepreneurial skills acquisition followed with 28.8%. This implies that the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* has negatively affected youth empowerment and economic self-reliance among the Igbo people.

Research Question Four:

What measures can be adopted to revitalize the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary Igbo society?

Table: Measures for Revitalizing Ịgba Bọị

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Cultural re-orientation among youths	95	28.8%

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Government support for apprenticeship programs	80	24.2%
Encouraging mentorship and settlement culture	75	22.7%
Integration of apprenticeship into skill acquisition policies	50	15.2%
Community involvement in preserving Igbo values	30	9.1%
Total	330	100%

The table above shows that cultural re-orientation among youths ranked highest with 28.8%, followed by government support for apprenticeship programs with 24.2%. This suggests that respondents believe that both cultural revival and institutional support are necessary for restoring the traditional apprenticeship system.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that modernization, globalization, and the increasing desire for quick wealth among youths are major factors responsible for the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system. The study discovered that many youths no longer possess the patience and commitment required for apprenticeship training due to changing social values and economic pressures.

The study also revealed that the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* has serious socio-cultural implications on Igbo identity.

Important cultural values such as hard work, communalism, loyalty, respect for elders, and mentorship are gradually weakening within contemporary Igbo society. The findings further indicated that the weakening of the apprenticeship system has contributed to youth unemployment, increase in internet fraud, moral decadence, and reduction in entrepreneurial mentorship among young people.

Furthermore, the study found that revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system requires cultural re-orientation, government support, community participation, and the restoration of trust between masters and apprentices. The findings support the assumptions of Structural Functionalism Theory which explains that the decline of important social institutions often results in social instability and cultural disintegration.

Summary of Major Findings

The following major findings were made from the study:

1. Modernization, globalization, and the desire for quick wealth are major causes of the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system.
2. The decline of *Ịgba Bọị* has contributed to the erosion of Igbo cultural values and weakening of communal identity.
3. The weakening apprenticeship system has increased unemployment, economic dependency,

and involvement of some youths in fraudulent activities.

4. Cultural re-orientation, mentorship revival, and government support are important measures for revitalizing the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system in contemporary society.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for Structural Functionalism Theory. The study confirms the functionalist position that social institutions play important roles in maintaining stability, order, and continuity within society. The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Igba Bọị*) was found to function not only as an economic institution but also as a means of cultural transmission, youth socialization, moral training, and communal integration in Igbo society.

The study further revealed that the decline of the apprenticeship system has contributed to social dysfunctions such as unemployment, moral decadence, weakening communal relationships, and erosion of Igbo cultural identity. This supports the assumption of Structural Functionalism that when an important social institution fails to perform its expected functions, social instability and disorganization emerge. Therefore, the study strengthens the relevance of Structural Functionalism in explaining the relationship between indigenous institutions and social stability in contemporary African societies.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study have important practical implications for Igbo society, policy makers, business owners, and youth development agencies. The study revealed that the decline of the traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) has negatively affected youth empowerment, moral discipline, and cultural continuity. Therefore, community leaders and traditional institutions need to revive and strengthen the apprenticeship culture through mentorship programs and cultural re-orientation initiatives among youths.

The study also implies that government agencies and non-governmental organizations should integrate indigenous apprenticeship models into modern entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs as a strategy for reducing unemployment and poverty among young people. In addition, business owners and successful entrepreneurs should encourage the traditional settlement culture and mentorship practices that historically promoted economic self-reliance and communal solidarity in Igbo society. The study further emphasizes the need for parents, schools, and religious institutions to promote values such as hard work, patience, honesty, and communal responsibility among youths.

Conclusion

The traditional Igbo apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*) has historically served as an important socio-economic

and cultural institution among the Igbo people. Beyond business training and economic empowerment, the system played significant roles in youth mentorship, moral upbringing, communal solidarity, and the preservation of Igbo cultural identity. Through the apprenticeship institution, generations of Igbo youths acquired entrepreneurial skills, social values, and indigenous knowledge necessary for self-reliance and community development.However, the study revealed that the system has experienced serious decline in recent times due to modernization, globalization, western influence, economic hardship, and the increasing desire for quick wealth among many youths. The weakening of the apprenticeship system has contributed to unemployment, moral decadence, erosion of communal values, and the gradual loss of important aspects of Igbo identity. The study therefore concludes that the decline of *Ịgba Bọị* represents not only an economic challenge but also a socio-cultural threat to the continuity of Igbo heritage and communal life.The study further concludes that revitalizing the traditional apprenticeship system through cultural re-orientation, mentorship revival, community participation, and institutional support will contribute significantly to youth empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable socio-economic development in contemporary Igbo society.

Recommendations

1. Igbo community leaders, traditional institutions, and parents should promote cultural re-orientation programs that will encourage youths

to embrace the values of hard work, patience, mentorship, and communal responsibility associated with the traditional apprenticeship system (*Ịgba Bọị*).

2. Government agencies and non-governmental organizations should integrate indigenous apprenticeship systems into modern entrepreneurship and skill acquisition programs in order to reduce youth unemployment and promote economic self-reliance among young people.
3. Business owners and successful entrepreneurs in Igbo society should revive and strengthen the traditional settlement and mentorship culture by training and supporting apprentices in ways that will preserve Igbo cultural identity and sustain indigenous business development.

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CHALLENGES FACED BY MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN THE STATES OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper provides a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted challenges confronting marginalized groups across Nigeria's states. Drawing on recent scholarly research, policy analyses, and field studies from 2019 to 2025, the paper identifies key marginalized populations including indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, women, youth, Almajiri children, and homeless populations. The analysis reveals that these groups face intersecting barriers including political exclusion and disenfranchisement, land dispossession and economic marginalization, socio-cultural

discrimination and stigmatization, educational exclusion, and heightened vulnerability to violence and insecurity. The paper argues that these challenges are not isolated but mutually reinforcing, creating cycles of deprivation that transcend state boundaries. The findings underscore the urgent need for integrated, rights-based policy interventions that address root causes rather than symptoms of marginalization.

Keywords: Marginalization, Social Inequality, Vulnerable groups, Human rights and Social Justice.

Introduction

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is characterized by remarkable ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. With over 250 ethnic groups distributed across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), the country's federal structure was designed to manage this diversity and ensure equitable development. However, decades of governance challenges, resource competition, and structural inequalities have produced persistent patterns of marginalization affecting specific groups across various states.

Marginalization in the Nigerian context refers to the systematic process by which certain groups are relegated to the periphery of social, economic, and political life, denied equal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes. This phenomenon manifests differently across states, shaped by local histories, demographic configurations, governance structures, and

economic conditions. From the indigenous peoples of the FCT who face land dispossession and political statelessness, to the Almajiri children of northern states trapped in cycles of poverty and exploitation, to the ethnic minorities in middle-belt states experiencing social exclusion and communal conflicts the challenges are diverse yet interconnected.

This paper synthesizes findings from recent empirical studies, policy analyses, and human rights reports to identify and analyze the common and distinct challenges faced by marginalized groups across Nigerian states. By examining the intersections of political exclusion, economic deprivation, socio-cultural discrimination, and security vulnerabilities, the paper aims to provide a holistic understanding of marginalization dynamics and inform evidence-based policy responses.

Conceptual Frameworks

Marginalization is understood in this paper as a multidimensional process of social exclusion that operates at individual, community, and structural levels. Drawing on intersectionality theory, the analysis recognizes that individuals may experience overlapping and reinforcing forms of disadvantage based on their membership in multiple marginalized groups. For instance, a child with disabilities living in poverty in northern Nigeria faces compounded barriers that cannot be adequately understood by examining disability, poverty, or geography in isolation.

The concept of social exclusion, as articulated in the literature, encompasses the denial of rights and opportunities across multiple domains including political participation, economic livelihood, access to quality education and healthcare, cultural recognition, and personal security. Exclusion may be formal, embedded in laws and policies, or informal, manifested through discriminatory practices, social stigma, and cultural norms.

This study employs a framework that examines marginalization across four interconnected domains:

Political exclusion: Denial of voting rights, political representation, participation in governance, and access to justice

Economic marginalization: Limited access to land, productive resources, employment, credit, and economic opportunities

Socio-cultural discrimination: Stigmatization, negative stereotyping, cultural erasure, and denial of cultural rights

Structural vulnerability: Heightened exposure to violence, insecurity, environmental hazards, and inadequate protection from the state

Major Marginalized Groups and Their Geographic Distribution

Indigenous Peoples and Original Inhabitants

The well-documented case of indigenous marginalization concerns the Original Inhabitants (Ols) of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. This population comprises nine tribes and seventeen chiefdoms whose ancestral lands were appropriated under Military Decree No. 6 of 1976 for the creation of Nigeria's new capital. These communities-including the Gbagyi (Gwari), Gade, Koro, and other groups-were displaced to the peripheries of the territory without adequate compensation or resettlement.

Beyond the FCT, various communities across states identify as indigenous or "autochthonous" relative to their localities, often finding themselves in minority positions within state structures dominated by larger ethnic groups. In the middle-belt region, ethnic minorities in states like Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Taraba face challenges related to land rights, political representation, and cultural preservation.

Ethnic and Political Minorities

The colonial classification of ethnic groups into "majority" and "minority" categories has produced enduring political consequences. Groups designated as minorities-including the over 250 smaller ethnic groups face systematic political exclusion and marginalization in resource allocation. States where specific minorities are concentrated, such as the Igede people of Benue

State, experience particular challenges related to poverty, labor exploitation, and underdevelopment.

Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Persons with disabilities across Nigerian states face compounded marginalization, particularly when poverty and geographic location intersect with disability. Research in Nasarawa State reveals that children with disabilities experience "triple marginalization" at the intersection of disability, poverty, and climate vulnerability. Similar patterns are documented across northern and southern states, where inadequate inclusive infrastructure, socio-cultural stigma, and limited access to education and healthcare perpetuate exclusion.

Women

Women across all Nigerian states face systematic gender-based discrimination and exclusion. As documented in political participation analyses, women experience exclusion through "sexist political culture, financial constraints, violence and intimidation, cultural and religious norms, limited access to education and economic opportunities, and media representation and misrepresentation". Despite constitutional guarantees of non-discrimination, women remain severely underrepresented in governance structures at federal, state, and local levels.

Almajiri Children

The Almajiri system in northern Nigeria represents a humanitarian crisis affecting millions of children.

Originally a revered Islamic educational tradition, the system has degenerated into what researchers describe as "a cycle of poverty, insecurity, and systemic neglect. With an estimated 9 million Almajiri children across northern states-particularly in Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, and Borno-these children face extreme deprivation, lack formal education, and are vulnerable to exploitation and recruitment by armed groups.

Homeless Youth

Homeless youth populations in major urban centers face distinct challenges shaped by regional dynamics. Comparative research on homeless youth in Maiduguri (Borno State) and Lagos (Lagos State) reveals both commonalities and disparities, reflecting "the complex interplay of socio-economic factors and regional dynamics". These youth experience social discrimination, health challenges, and extreme economic vulnerability.

Ethno-Religious Minorities

In various states, religious minorities including Christians in some northern states and Muslims in some southern states, face discrimination, restrictions on worship, and periodic violence. Similarly, ethnic minorities in states dominated by larger groups experience cultural marginalization and political exclusion.

Major Categories of Challenges

Political marginalization manifests across states through multiple mechanisms:

Lack of Representation: Minority groups across states are systematically under-represented in elective and appointive positions. As one analysis notes, "the colonialist classificatory scheme of identifying cultural or ethnic minorities and majorities has been excessively adhered to and politicized," producing "politics of exclusion and the concomitant denial of rights, especially to groups considered political minorities".

Denial of Democratic Rights: The most extreme case is the Original Inhabitants of the FCT, who "cannot elect a governor or state legislature, rendering them stateless in their homeland". Despite residing in Nigeria's capital territory for generations before its creation, these communities have no representation in the governance structure that controls their lands and lives.

Electoral Violence and Intimidation: Women and minority candidates face violence, intimidation, and financial barriers to political participation across states. Research indicates that "the absence of inclusivity...has had dismal consequences on the Nigerian state," with exclusionary practices generating grievances that threaten political stability.

Weak Policy Enforcement: Even where constitutional and legal frameworks guarantee rights, enforcement remains weak. "Skewed party practices and weak policy enforcement continue to marginalize critical voices,

especially women and youth, in our governance structures".

Land Dispossession and Economic Marginalization

Land Appropriation without Compensation: The FCT Original Inhabitants exemplify this challenge, having "rendered their farmlands for the FCT, but...got nothing in return". As one advocate explains, "Land is life, and when you take it without proper compensation, you destroy a people's economic base". This pattern of land dispossession without adequate compensation extends to development projects across states, disproportionately affecting minority and indigenous communities.

Poverty and Labor Exploitation: Research on the Igede people of Benue State identifies "illiteracy, marginalization, absence of social amenities, corruption, inferiority complex and unemployment" as causes of poverty, with effects including "migration, economic dependence, high death rate, depression and vulnerability". The study demonstrates how marginalization directly produces economic exploitation.

Unemployment and Livelihood Loss: Traditional livelihoods of marginalized groups-including farming, fishing, hunting, and craftsmanship-are endangered across states by "unchecked urban sprawl and ecological degradation". For the Almajiri, "with no formal skills or economic prospects, many turn to petty crime, drug abuse, and gang violence".

Inadequate Basic Amenities: Marginalized communities across states lack access to "functional

healthcare, quality education, clean water, sanitation, and infrastructure". This absence of basic services perpetuates cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Socio-Cultural Discrimination and Stigmatization

Negative Stereotyping and Prejudice: Qualitative research has established that "minority groups suffer discrimination" across Nigerian contexts, with some groups subjected to "discrimination and prejudicial treatments...referred to as socially-devalued". This discrimination manifests in interpersonal interactions, institutional practices, and media representations.

Cultural Erasure: Indigenous and minority groups face systematic erosion of their cultural heritage. The Original Inhabitants of the FCT report that "our cultural heritage is being diluted before our eyes," with their languages excluded from educational curricula despite the fact that "every area council has its own language that deserves to be preserved".

Stigma Against Persons with Disabilities: Children with disabilities face "entrenched marginalisation" intensified by "socio-cultural stigma" that excludes them from educational and social participation. This stigma is often compounded by poverty and geographic isolation.

Almajiri Stigmatization: Almajiri children are stereotyped as vagrants and potential security threats, a characterization that obscures the structural violence they suffer. Research notes that "these children epitomize the intersection of economic deprivation,

failed governance, and escalating violence-yet their stories are often reduced to statistics in policy debates".

Educational Exclusion

Barriers to Quality Education: Children with disabilities face "inadequate inclusive infrastructure" and lack of teacher training, resulting in exclusion from quality education across states. The intersection of disability, poverty, and geographic marginalization creates what researchers term "triple marginalization" in accessing education.

The Almajiri Education Crisis: The transformation of the traditional Quranic education system into a mechanism of exploitation represents one of Nigeria's most severe educational crises. Research reveals that "88% of Almajirai remain in unregulated Tsangayas, while 74% drop out of integrated schools due to poverty and cultural resistance". The failure of government integration programs stems from "poor funding, cultural resistance, and worsening insecurity."

Gender Disparities: Girls and young women across states face barriers to education including early marriage, cultural norms prioritizing male education, and inadequate school facilities (particularly sanitation).

Language Exclusion: The exclusion of indigenous languages from educational curricula marginalizes children who are not proficient in English or dominant regional languages, contributing to lower educational attainment and cultural alienation

Vulnerability to Violence and Insecurity

Recruitment by Armed Groups: Marginalized youth, particularly Almajiri children are vulnerable to exploitation by insurgent groups. Research documents that "Boko Haram and bandit groups exploit their desperation, offering food or money in exchange for loyalty," with "former Almajirai...among Boko Haram's foot soldiers, lured by promises of financial stability and ideological purpose".

Communal Conflicts: Ethnic minorities in middle-belt states face violence in communal conflicts often framed as "farmer-herder" clashes but rooted in land rights disputes and political marginalization. These conflicts disproportionately affect minority groups caught between larger contending forces.

Gender-Based Violence: Women across states face heightened vulnerability to gender-based violence, which is both a consequence and reinforcer of marginalization. Political participation is constrained by "violence and intimidation" targeting women candidates and activists.

Statelessness and Lack of Protection: The Original Inhabitants of the FCT, lacking political representation, are vulnerable to arbitrary displacement and denial of services. Their lack of legal status as a recognized indigenous group within the FCT structure leaves them without recourse against violations.

Intersectional Dynamics

A critical finding across the literature is that marginalization operates intersectionally. with multiple dimensions reinforcing one another. The research on children with disabilities in Nasarawa State demonstrates how "disability, poverty, and climate vulnerability as compounding barriers" produce unique and severe forms of exclusion that cannot be addressed by single-sector interventions.

Similarly, the Almajiri crisis reflects the intersection of religious tradition, poverty, state neglect, and insecurity. As one analysis explains, "… the Almajiri system's persistence is a symptom of deeper structural failures: chronic poverty pushes families to abandon children to Quranic teachers, while state neglect leaves them without protection or alternatives."

The study on social exclusion, corruption, and insecurity demonstrates how these three factors "… reinforce one another to perpetuate cycles of underdevelopment," with exclusionary practices, corruption networks, and insecurity forming an interconnected system of disadvantage.

For the Igede people of Benue State, poverty, labor exploitation, and marginalization are causally linked in a cycle where "… poverty significantly influences labour exploitation," and marginalization perpetuates both.

State-Level Variations and Common Patterns

While the challenges described have national scope, significant variations exist across states

Northern States: The Almajiri crisis is concentrated in the northwest and northeast, with Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, and Borno experiencing the highest concentrations. These states also face heightened insecurity challenges that compound marginalization.

Federal Capital Territory: The unique case of FCT Original Inhabitants represents a distinct form of marginalization rooted in the territory's special status and the specific historical injustice of the 1976 land appropriation.

Middle-Belt States: Ethnic minorities in Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, Taraba, and Kogi face particular challenges related to land rights, communal conflicts, and political marginalization within state structures.

South-South and South-East States: Minority groups within Niger Delta states face marginalization related to oil extraction, environmental degradation, and inequitable resource distribution.

South-West and Lagos: Homeless youth and urban poor populations in Lagos face distinct challenges related to urbanization, housing, and economic informality.

Despite these variations, common patterns emerge: political exclusion from governance structures, economic

marginalization through denial of land and livelihood rights, socio-cultural stigmatization, educational exclusion, and heightened vulnerability to violence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has documented the extensive and systematic challenges faced by marginalized groups across Nigerian states. From the Original Inhabitants of the FCT who have been rendered stateless in their homeland, to the millions of Almajiri children trapped in cycles of poverty and exploitation, to persons with disabilities facing triple marginalization, to women systematically excluded from political participation-the evidence demonstrates that marginalization is not incidental but structural to Nigerian governance.

The analysis reveals that these challenges are not isolated but mutually reinforcing, creating self-perpetuating cycles of deprivation. Political exclusion leads to economic marginalization, which intensifies vulnerability to violence and exploitation, which further entrenches exclusion. Breaking these cycles requires integrated, rights-based interventions.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations emerge:

> **Legal Recognition and Protection:** States must formally recognize indigenous and minority groups, ensuring their rights to land, cultural preservation, and political participation. For the FCT Original Inhabitants, this requires

implementation of Supreme Court judgments affirming their rights.

Inclusive Political Structures: States should adopt quota systems, reserved seats, and other affirmative action measures to ensure representation of women, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities in governance.

Educational Inclusion: States must invest in inclusive infrastructure, teacher training, and culturally appropriate curricula that accommodate children with disabilities, indigenous language speakers, and Almajiri students.

Economic Empowerment: Targeted programs including conditional cash transfers, skills training, and access to credit must address the economic marginalization of vulnerable groups.

Data Collection and Sovereignty: States must collect disaggregated data on marginalized populations to inform policy, while respecting community rights to control and benefit from data concerning them.

Security and Protection: States must strengthen protection for marginalized groups against violence, exploitation, and recruitment by armed groups, addressing root causes rather than symptoms.

The survival, dignity, and development of marginalized groups across Nigeria depend on urgent, coordinated, and sustained action. As one advocate powerfully stated, "Justice delayed is dignity denied".

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INDIGENOUS DISCOURSE MARKERS IN LIWHU BETIANG'S *THE CRADLE ON THE SCALES*

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Abstract
Discourse markers (DMs) are important pragmatic resources that facilitate communication, organize discourse, and guide meaning interpretation within specific socio-cultural contexts. Although extensive research has been conducted on DMs in conversational, media, and literary discourse, scholarly attention has

largely focused on conventional English DMs, leaving indigenous discourse markers (IDMs) in African literary texts relatively underexplored. This study investigates pragmatic functions of IDMs in Liwhu Betiang's *The Cradle on the Scales,* integrating Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory as framework. The study adopts qualitative descriptive design, utilizing data purposively extracted from the novel. Of the identified IDMs, only seven- *ah, eyah, ah ah, enh hen, mm, hm, um* - were selected and subjected to discourse-pragmatic analysis, for want of space. Relevance Theory provides insights into contextual meaning construction and inferential interpretation, while Speech Act Theory explains how DMs enhance communicative intentions and strengthen illocutionary force. Findings reveal that IDMs perform multiple functions, including emotional expression, interaction management, speech act enhancement, contextual meaning construction, interpersonal relationship maintenance, cultural identity representation, discourse cohesion, characterization, and narrative realism. The study further demonstrates that these markers are not merely fillers or hesitation devices but multifunctional pragmatic tools that contribute significantly to communication and interpretation in literary discourse. The findings contribute to scholarship in pragmatics, discourse analysis, literary linguistics, Nigerian English studies, and African sociolinguistics by highlighting the relationship between language, culture, and meaning-making. The study demonstrates the explanatory relevance of combining Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory in the analysis of IDMs in contemporary Nigerian fiction.

Keywords: Indigenous discourse markers, Pragmatics, Relevance Theory, Speech Act Theory, Nigerian literary discourse

Introduction

Language remains one of the most important instruments through which human beings construct reality, negotiate social relationships, express emotions, and communicate cultural values. Beyond the literal meanings of words, successful communication depends on numerous pragmatic resources that enable speakers and hearers to interpret utterances appropriately within specific contexts. One of the most significant of these resources is discourse markers. Discourse markers (DMs) are linguistic expressions that facilitate discourse organization, regulate interaction, indicate speakers' attitudes, and guide contextual interpretation (Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1999; Aijmer, 2023). Although they often appear optional from a grammatical perspective, discourse markers perform indispensable communicative functions that contribute to coherence, cohesion, and meaning construction.

Over the years, DMs have attracted considerable scholarly attention within pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and literary linguistics. Foundational studies by Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1999), and Blakemore (2002) established discourse markers as essential components of communication that help interlocutors interpret relationships between utterances. More recent studies have expanded this understanding by demonstrating the role of DMs in identity

construction, emotional expression, intercultural communication, digital discourse, and literary interaction (Fischer, 2021; Aijmer, 2023; Ezeifeka, 2024). Contemporary scholarship, therefore, views DMs not as insignificant conversational fillers but as sophisticated pragmatic devices that facilitate effective communication.

Within the Nigerian context, discourse marker research has increasingly focused on localized linguistic practices and the domestication of English. Studies have shown that Nigerian English contains several indigenous discourse markers (IDMs) that reflect local socio-cultural experiences and communicative norms (Ibbi, 2019; Unuabonah & Gut, 2018). They derive much of their communicative force from shared cultural knowledge and contextual assumptions rather than from fixed lexical meanings.

Despite growing interest in discourse markers, existing scholarship has concentrated largely on conventional English markers such as *well, so, but,* and *you know*. Furthermore, many studies have focused on spoken discourse, media texts, and sociolinguistic identity, with comparatively little attention paid to indigenous discourse markers in literary discourse. This gap is significant because literary texts provide valuable opportunities for examining how writers deploy culturally embedded linguistic resources to construct meaning, portray characters, and represent social realities.

African literary writers frequently incorporate indigenous pragmatic forms into English-language texts to achieve authenticity and reflect local communicative practices. Through such linguistic choices, writers reproduce naturally occurring speech patterns, depict cultural experiences, and strengthen narrative realism. Consequently, IDMs constitute important resources for understanding the relationship between language, culture, and literary representation. Their study, therefore, contributes not only to discourse-pragmatic scholarship but also to broader discussions of Nigerian English, African sociolinguistics, and literary communication.

Liwhu Betiang's *The Cradle on the Scales* (2011) provides a suitable context for investigating indigenous discourse markers because the novel contains numerous examples of localized pragmatic expressions embedded within fictional dialogue. These expressions perform diverse communicative functions that extend beyond grammatical structure to include emotional expression, speech act enhancement, interpersonal relationship management, and cultural identity representation. However, little scholarly attention has been devoted to examining these functions systematically.

This study, therefore, investigates the pragmatic functions of indigenous discourse markers in *The Cradle on the Scales*. Specifically, the study identifies the indigenous discourse markers employed in the text, examines their communicative functions, explores their contribution to contextual meaning construction and

speech act realization, and analyzes their role in cultural identity representation and narrative realism. By adopting the complementary frameworks of Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory, the study provides a comprehensive explanation of how indigenous discourse markers contribute to meaning-making in Nigerian literary discourse.

Literature Review

Concept of Discourse Markers

Discourse markers constitute an important area of study in pragmatics and discourse analysis because of their role in facilitating communication and interpretation. Schiffrin (1987) defines discourse markers as sequentially dependent elements that bracket units of discourse and establish relationships between utterances. Similarly, Fraser (1999) views discourse markers as pragmatic expressions that signal how one discourse segment relates to another. Contemporary scholarship extends these definitions by emphasizing their contribution to contextual interpretation, interpersonal communication, and discourse organization (Aijmer, 2023; Fischer, 2021). Research indicates that discourse markers perform multiple communicative functions, including signaling transitions, managing interactions, expressing attitudes, indicating speaker stance, and facilitating coherence. Consequently, they are increasingly regarded as indispensable pragmatic resources rather than optional linguistic elements.

Indigenous Discourse Markers (IDMs) and African Pragmatics

The study of IDMs is closely connected to African pragmatics, which emphasizes the influence of culture, context, and communal knowledge on communication. African scholars such as Nwoye (1992), Adegbija (2004), and Odebunmi (2015), argue that meaning construction in African societies is deeply shaped by socio-cultural assumptions and shared experiences.

Within Nigerian communicative contexts, IDMs frequently encode emotions, social relationships, politeness and cultural values. They often possess meanings that cannot always be translated directly into conventional English equivalents. Their interpretation depends largely on contextual and cultural knowledge. These markers serve as important indicators of indigenous communicative practices and cultural identity.

Discourse Markers in Literary Discourse

Recent developments in literary pragmatics have highlighted the relevance of DMs to literary communication. Literary texts are communicative events in which authors strategically employ linguistic resources to construct fictional worlds and guide readers' interpretations. Studies by Fischer (2021) and Ezeifeka (2024) demonstrate that discourse markers contribute significantly to characterization, dialogue construction, narrative coherence, and reader engagement. Through DMs, authors reproduce natural speech patterns and create realistic communicative situations. Consequently,

DMs function not only as discourse-organizing devices but also as stylistic resources that enhance literary authenticity and narrative effectiveness.

Discourse Markers, Culture, and Identity

Contemporary scholarship recognizes a strong relationship between DMs, culture, and identity. According to Kirkpatrick (2020) and Bolton (2022), localized linguistic forms often function as indicators of cultural orientation and group membership. Similarly, Agyekum (2021) argues that indigenous pragmatic forms embody communal values and social norms. In multilingual societies such as Nigeria, IDMs contribute to the domestication of English and reflect local communicative realities. Their use in literary discourse, therefore, facilitates cultural representation and identity construction. Through such markers, writers preserve indigenous communicative practices while simultaneously enriching literary expression.

Review Gap

Although previous studies have examined DMs in spoken discourse, media discourse, and Nigerian English, limited attention has been paid to IDMs in contemporary Nigerian fiction. Existing studies also tend to rely on single theoretical framework or none at all, and provide insufficient explanation of how DMs simultaneously facilitate contextual interpretation and speech act realization. This study addresses these gaps by examining IDMs in *The Cradle on the Scales* through the integrated perspectives of Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the complementary framework of Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory. The integration of these theories provides a comprehensive explanation of how IDMs function as pragmatic resources in Liwhu Betiang's *The Cradle on the Scales*. While Relevance Theory explains how readers infer meanings from discourse markers within context, Speech Act Theory accounts for how such markers strengthen communicative intentions and modify the force of utterances.

Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory was developed by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1995) as a cognitive-pragmatic approach to communication. The theory argues that communication is fundamentally inferential and that hearers derive meaning by combining linguistic input with contextual assumptions. According to the principle of optimal relevance, communicative acts are designed to achieve maximum cognitive effects with minimal processing effort. Meaning is, therefore, not fully encoded in linguistic expressions but emerges through contextual interpretation. Within discourse-pragmatic studies, DMs function as procedural devices that guide hearers and readers toward intended interpretations rather than contributing substantial conceptual meaning (Blakemore, 2002; Fischer, 2021). IDMs derive much of their communicative significance from context and shared cultural knowledge. Their meanings vary according to communicative situations and interpersonal relationships. Relevance Theory is useful for explaining

how readers infer emotions, attitudes, sympathy, surprise, concern, and social meanings from DMs in literary discourse.

Speech Act Theory

Speech Act Theory was originally proposed by J. L. Austin (1962) and later developed by John Searle (1969). The theory views language as a form of action rather than merely a system of symbols. It argues that utterances perform communicative acts such as requesting, apologizing, advising, promising, warning, expressing emotions, and conveying attitudes.

Speech Act Theory is particularly relevant to this study because DMs frequently strengthen the illocutionary force of utterances. IDMs often intensify expressive, directive, and assertive speech acts by signaling emotions and interpersonal orientations. Thus, DMs contribute significantly to communicative effectiveness and pragmatic interpretation.

Integration of the Theories

The combination of Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory provides a robust analytical framework for this study. Relevance Theory explains how DMs facilitate contextual meaning construction, while Speech Act Theory explains how they strengthen communicative intentions. Together, the theories account for both the inferential and functional dimensions of IDMs, making them highly suitable for analyzing literary discourse.

Critical Evaluation of Previous Studies

Existing studies have made valuable contributions to the understanding of discourse markers; however, several methodological, theoretical, and contextual limitations justify the present investigation.

Schiffrin's (1987) seminal work remains foundational in discourse marker studies because it establishes discourse markers as important organizational devices in communication. Nevertheless, the study was conducted primarily within American English conversational contexts and focused largely on interactional discourse. Consequently, it offers limited insight into the functions of IDMs within African literary texts. Furthermore, its emphasis on spoken discourse leaves literary and culturally specific applications relatively underexplored. Similarly, Fraser (1999) provides a comprehensive classification of discourse markers based on their pragmatic functions. While the work remains influential, it largely concentrates on conventional English markers such as *well*, *so*, and *but*. The study pays insufficient attention to indigenous and localized discourse markers found in postcolonial English varieties. As a result, its applicability to Nigerian literary discourse is somewhat restricted.

Blakemore's (2002) relevance-theoretic approach significantly advanced understanding of DMs as procedural constraints on interpretation. However, the study is predominantly theoretical and relies heavily on examples from English discourse. Its limited engagement with empirical literary data and non-

Western communicative contexts creates a contextual gap that necessitates further investigation. Within the Nigerian context, Ibbi (2019) examines DMs peculiar to Nigerian English and demonstrates their role in identity construction and linguistic ownership. Despite its relevance, the study focused primarily on spoken Nigerian English and sociolinguistic identity. Methodologically, it did not provide an in-depth literary analysis of discourse markers, nor did it explore their contribution to narrative meaning construction and characterization in literary texts.

Jauro, Adamu, & Delia (2014) investigate discourse markers in Nigerian newspaper discourse and establish their importance in textual cohesion and communication. However, the study was restricted to media discourse and employed a largely descriptive analytical approach. The findings, therefore, cannot be fully generalized to literary discourse, where discourse markers often perform additional aesthetic and pragmatic functions.

More recently, Ayoola, Agbeleoba, & Ogunrotimi (2023) examine DMs in Habib Yakoob's (2007) *The Ugly Ones Refuse to Die*. Their study successfully demonstrates the contribution of DMs to textual coherence and literary communication. Nevertheless, the analysis concentrated on general DMs and did not specifically investigate IDMs as culturally embedded pragmatic resources.

Ezeifeka (2024) provides a valuable discussion of discourse analysis and pragmatic interpretation within

literary texts. However, the work remains largely conceptual and theoretical. It offers limited empirical evidence regarding the specific functions of IDMs in contemporary Nigerian fiction. Consequently, questions concerning their role in emotional expression, cultural identity representation, and interpersonal relationship management remain insufficiently addressed.

Collectively, these studies reveal three major gaps. Methodologically, most previous studies focus on spoken discourse, media texts, or general linguistic data rather than literary discourse. Theoretically, many rely on a single analytical framework and, therefore, provide limited explanations of how discourse markers simultaneously facilitate speech act realization and contextual interpretation. Contextually, most studies emphasize English DMs and pay insufficient attention to indigenous discourse markers embedded within Nigerian socio-cultural realities. The present study addresses these limitations by examining IDMs in Liwhu Betiang's *The Cradle on the Scales* through the integrated framework of Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory, thereby providing a more comprehensive account of their pragmatic, literary, and socio-cultural functions.

Empirical Gap

Although studies such as Ibbi (2019), Ayoola, Agbeleoba, & Ogunrotimi (2023), and Ezeifeka (2024) have examined DMs in Nigerian English and literary discourse, none has specifically investigated IDMs in Liwhu Betiang's *The Cradle on the Scales* using an integrated Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory

framework. Furthermore, limited attention has been paid to how indigenous discourse markers simultaneously facilitate contextual meaning construction, speech act realization, emotional expression, interpersonal relationship management, cultural identity representation, and narrative realism in contemporary Nigerian fiction. This study fills the empirical gap.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Seven of the instances of indigenous discourse markers identified in *The Cradle on the Scales* were selected and analyzed in order to discover their pragmatic functions in literary discourse. The markers investigated are ***ah, eyah, ah ah, enh hen, mm, um, hm***. They perform diverse communicative and sociocultural functions. These are discussed in the following subsections numbered 1-8. Example items for each number are arranged as serially as they appear in the novel:

1. Expression of Emotions and Affective Meanings

Example 1:

a) *"Ah sister, you fine no be small o."* (p. 71)
b) *"Eyah... so how did you come off it?"* (p. 133)
c) *"Ah ah! That's bloodstains all over your shirt; what happened?"* (p. 159)

The IDMs *ah, eyah, ah ah* function as affective resources through which characters express admiration, sympathy, concern, surprise, and shock. The marker ***ah*** in 1(a) communicates admiration and approval, ***eyah*** in 1(b) expresses empathy and emotional solidarity, while ***ah ah*** seen in 1(c) intensifies shock and disbelief. Their

use enriches emotional expression and enhances readers' understanding of the characters' feelings and attitudes.

2. Turn-Taking and Interaction Management
Example 2:

a) *"Mm, I'll not go back home again."* (p. 35)
b) *"Mm... some distant cousin; but we're related by blood all the same."* (p. 36)
c) *"Um, then I shall also be able to quit this beggars' thankless work."(p. 78)*

The markers ***mm*** and ***um*** regulate conversational flow and facilitate discourse management. Example 2(a) indicates hesitation, 2(b) reflection, and 2(c) cognitive processing; while all contribute in helping speakers maintain interaction. Their use makes for conversational continuity and reproduces naturally occurring speech patterns.

3. Enhancement of Speech Acts
Example 3:

a) *"Ah God, help me o!"(p. 109)*
b) *"Ah, money fixes everything."* (p. 131)
c) *"Eyah... so how did you come off it?"* (p. 133)

The IDMs *ah, eyah* in example 3 strengthen communicative intentions by intensifying the illocutionary force of utterances. In 3(a), ***ah*** strengthens a plea while in 3(b) it strengthens an assertion. ***Eyah*** in 3(c) transforms a simple inquiry into an expression of sympathy and concern. Consequently, the markers

enhance pragmatic effectiveness and speech act realization.

4. Contextual Meaning Construction
Example 4:

a) *"Ah sister, you fine no be small o."* (p. 71)
b) *"Enh hen! Sit down then."* (p. 108)
c) *"Ah Tyozenda, what's chasing you?"* (p. 164)

Example 4, like the preceding ones, demonstrates that the meanings of discourse markers are context-dependent. In context 4(a), ***ah*** expresses admiration, while in 4(c) it conveys concern or surprise. Likewise, ***enh hen*** in 4(b) derives its interpretation from surrounding discourse conditions. These markers, therefore, function as contextual cues that guide readers toward the intended meanings.

5. Interpersonal Relationship Management
Example 5:

a) *"Eyah... so how did you come off it?"* (p. 133)
b) *"Ah don't mention!"(p.109)*
c) *"Mm, see am, I talk say she fine."* (p. 71)

The indigenous discourse markers in example 5 facilitate interpersonal bonding by expressing empathy, politeness, and social involvement. ***Eyah*** in 5(a) signals emotional support, ***ah*** functions as a politeness marker in 5(b), and ***mm*** **in 5(c)** encourages listener participation. The use of these IDMs promotes harmonious interpersonal relationship among the characters.

6. Cultural Identity Representation

Example 6:

a) *"Enh hen! Sit down then."* (p. 108)
b) *"Eyah... so how did you come off it?"* (p. 133)
c) *"Ah ah! That's bloodstains all over your shirt."* (p. 159)

The markers ***enh hen, eyah, ah ah*** in example 6 (a-c) reflect indigenous Nigerian communicative practices and cultural values. Respectively, they embody local ways of expressing authority, sympathy/emotional response, and surprise. Their recurrent use in *The Cradle on the Scales* contributes to the cultural authenticity of the novel and demonstrates the nativization of English.

7. Discourse Cohesion and Coherence

Example 7:

a) *"Mm... some distant cousin; but we're related by blood all the same."* (p. 36)
b) *"Hm, Unimke will have to wait a little more."* (p. 57)
c) *"Um, then I shall also be able to quit this beggars' thankless work."(p. 78)*

The markers ***mm, hm, um*** establish connections between utterances and facilitate logical progression. They help readers follow the flow of ideas and maintain continuity within conversations and narrative development, thereby contributing to textual cohesion and coherence.

8. Characterization and Narrative Realism

Example 8:

a) *"Hm, Unimke will have to wait a little more."* (p. 57)
b) *"Ah sister, you fine no be small o."* (p. 71)
c) *"Eyah... so how did you come off it?"* (p. 133)

These discourse markers contribute significantly to characterization and narrative realism. They reveal characters' emotions, personalities, social identities, and interpersonal orientations. Their use reproduces authentic Nigerian speech patterns and enhances the realism and credibility of the narrative.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that indigenous discourse markers in Liwhu Betiang's *The Cradle on the Scales* (2011) function as important pragmatic resources that contribute significantly to communication, meaning construction, and literary interpretation. Through the analysis of the seven selected samples, ***ah, eyah, ah ah, enh hen, mm, um, hm,*** the study establishes that indigenous discourse markers perform multiple interconnected functions within the narrative.

One of the major findings of the study is that indigenous discourse markers serve as effective tools for the expression of emotions and affective meanings and can communicate admiration, sympathy, concern, surprise, frustration, and shock. These markers enable readers to infer the emotional state and attitude of the characters beyond the literal meanings of their utterances, thereby increasing the emotional depth of the narrative. This

finding supports Aijmer (2023), who argues that discourse markers frequently encode speakers' emotions and evaluations. It also aligns with Fischer's (2021) view that discourse markers contribute significantly to interpersonal communication.

The findings further reveal that discourse markers play a crucial role in turn-taking and interaction management. Markers such as ***mm***, ***um***, ***hm*** function as response tokens, hesitation devices, and indicators of cognitive processing. Their use helps maintain conversational continuity while processing information and preparing responses, organize discourse, and create realistic dialogue patterns that reflect naturally occurring speech. This finding supports Schiffrin's (1987) argument that discourse markers are organizational devices that structure interaction and maintain discourse coherence. Similarly, Fraser (1999) notes that discourse markers guide participants through discourse by signaling relationships between utterances.

Another important finding is that indigenous discourse markers strengthen speech acts by increasing their illocutionary force. Expressions such as *"Ah God, help me o!"* and *"Eyah... so how did you come off it?"* demonstrate how discourse markers intensify requests/assertions, and expressions of sympathy respectively. As a result, they enhance communicative effectiveness and clarify the intentions of the speakers. This finding corroborates Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) view that linguistic elements contribute to the realization of speech acts. It also supports Ezeifeka's

(2024) observation that discourse markers influence the interpretation of communicative intentions.

The study also establishes that the meanings of indigenous discourse markers are highly context-dependent. The same marker may perform different functions depending on the communicative situation - clear evidence that IDMs perform multiple discourse functions that extend beyond their surface conversational meanings. This supports Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory, which emphasizes that meaning, emerges through contextual inference rather than lexical meaning alone. Likewise, Blakemore (2002) argues that discourse markers function as procedural cues that guide interpretation.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that discourse markers facilitate interpersonal relationship management by expressing empathy, politeness, solidarity, and social involvement. They help maintain harmonious relationships among characters and reinforce communal values embedded within the Nigerian culture. This finding goes to support Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory as well as Bamgbose's (1995) and Kirkpatrick's (2020) arguments on cultural identity and linguistic ownership.

The study additionally reveals that indigenous discourse markers function as markers of cultural identity. Their recurrent use reflects local communicative norms, sociocultural experiences, and indigenous worldviews,

thereby contributing to the nativization of English and the cultural authenticity of the novel.

Finally, the findings show that discourse markers contribute significantly to discourse cohesion, characterization, and narrative realism. They create logical links between utterances, reveal characters' personalities and emotions, and reproduce authentic Nigerian speech patterns. Overall, the study confirms that indigenous discourse markers are not mere conversational fillers but multifunctional pragmatic devices that play indispensable roles in meaning-making, literary communication, and cultural representation in Nigerian literary discourse.

Summary and Conclusion

This study is an investigation into the pragmatic functions of indigenous discourse markers (IDMs) in Liwhu Betiang's novel *The Cradle on the Scales* (2011). Relevance Theory and Speech Act Theory formed the framework for the study while seven of the IDMs identified in the novel were selected and analyzed using the discourse-pragmatic approach. The seven IDMS are *ah, eyah, ah ah, enh hen, mm, hm, um.*

The study shows that indigenous discourse markers perform multiple pragmatic functions. They express emotions such as sympathy, admiration, surprise, concern, and shock, while also regulating conversational flow through turn-taking, response management, and discourse organization. In addition, they reinforce speech acts by intensifying illocutionary force and clarifying

communicative intent. Their interpretation is largely context-dependent, relying on inferential processes shaped by cultural and situational knowledge. Moreover, indigenous discourse markers are multifunctional pragmatic resources rather than mere fillers.

The study further reveals that indigenous discourse markers contribute to interpersonal relationship management, cultural identity representation, discourse cohesion, characterization, and narrative realism. Their frequent use reflects Nigerian sociocultural communicative norms and enhances the authenticity of the narrative.

Following from the foregoing, the study opines that writers of African literature should continue to consciously incorporate indigenous discourse markers into their creative works as a means of preserving indigenous communicative practices, promoting cultural authenticity, and reflecting the sociolinguistic realities of the African societies. Again, language educators and curriculum developers should integrate the study of indigenous discourse markers into language and literature courses to enhance the learners' understanding of IDMs' contextual meaning and cultural pragmatics, as well as the relationship between language and society.

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JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER IN NIGERIAN STATES: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

Juvenile delinquency represents a significant threat to social order and sustainable development in Nigeria. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the nature, causes, consequences, and intervention prospects for juvenile delinquency across Nigerian states. Drawing on recent empirical studies, policy reports, and stakeholder consultations from 2023 to 2026, the paper examines regional variations in delinquency patterns, the structural failures of the juvenile justice system, and the socio-economic drivers of youth crime. The analysis

reveals that juvenile delinquency in Nigeria is not a monolithic phenomenon but varies significantly across states, shaped by urbanization. levels, economic conditions, cultural factors, and institutional capacities. Key findings include the alarming detention of children in adult facilities, the systemic gap between progressive juvenile justice policies and their implementation, recidivism rates estimated between 60 and 80 percent, and the critical role of child streetism, poverty, and educational exclusion as primary drivers. The paper concludes by outlining prospects for reform, including justice system transformation, community-based interventions, youth empowerment initiatives, and multi-stakeholder collaboration frameworks.

Keywords: Juvenile, Delinquency, Social order, Youth crime, Durance and Social Disorganization.

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency illegal or antisocial behavior by individuals under the age of 18 has emerged as a pressing social concern across Nigerian states, threatening public safety, community cohesion, and the nation's sustainable development trajectory. As Africa's most populous nation, with over 70 million children and adolescents, the scale and implications of youth crime demand urgent scholarly and policy attention.

The concept of "social order" in the Nigerian context encompasses the formal mechanisms of law enforcement and judicial systems as well as the informal norms. Values and social institutions that regulate behavior,

maintain communal harmony. Juvenile delinquency disrupts both dimensions, creating cycles of crime, victimization, and institutional distrust that span generations. Understanding the complex relationship between young offenders and the social order requires examining not only the individual characteristics of delinquent youth but also the structural, economic, and institutional contexts within which their behaviors emerge.

This paper synthesizes findings from recent empirical research, official statistics, policy documents, and stakeholder reports to provide a holistic analysis of juvenile delinquency across Nigerian states. It addresses four central questions: What are the prevailing patterns and regional variations of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria? What structural, economic, and institutional factors drive youth crime? How effective are current intervention and rehabilitation mechanisms? And what prospects exist for comprehensive reform?

Conceptual Framework

Juvenile delinquency encompasses a range of behaviors from minor infractions-such as truancy, wandering, and disobedience to serious criminal offenses including theft, burglary, assault, sexual violence, armed robbery, cultism, and homicide. The legal definition in Nigeria is anchored in the Child Rights Act (2003), which defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years and mandates special procedural protections for children in conflict with the law.

Theoretical Framework

This study employs an integrated theoretical framework drawing on established criminological theories:

Social Disorganization Theory posits that crime rates correlate with the breakdown of social institutions-family, school, and community organizations-that traditionally regulate behavior. In the Nigerian context, rapid urbanization, family fragmentation, and the erosion of extended kinship networks have weakened informal social controls, creating environments conducive to delinquency.

Strain Theory argues that individuals turn to crime when they perceive a gap between socially approved goals (economic success, status) and the legitimate means available to achieve them. Widespread youth unemployment, poverty, and educational exclusion in Nigeria generate such strain, driving young people toward criminal coping mechanisms.

Social Learning Theory provides insight into how delinquent behavior is acquired and reinforced through interaction with peers and exposure to deviant models. This is particularly relevant in understanding gang formation, cultism, and the transmission of criminal norms within correctional facilities.

The Social Order Framework

Social order in this analysis encompasses three interrelated dimensions: **institutional order** (functioning of family, school, justice, and welfare systems),

normative order (shared values, moral codes, and social expectations), and **public order** (safety, security, and the absence of crime-related disruption). Juvenile delinquency threatens all three dimensions, creating cascading consequences for community stability and national development.

Regional Patterns and Variations

Research consistently demonstrates that juvenile delinquency in Nigeria is not uniform but exhibits distinct regional patterns shaped by socio-economic conditions, urbanization levels, cultural factors, and institutional capacities.

Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital and most urbanized state, records the highest absolute numbers of juvenile offenses, with distinct patterns reflecting its unique environment. Gang-related crimes, including cultism, armed robbery, and territorial violence among youth groups, are disproportionately concentrated in densely populated slum areas and informal settlements. The anonymity of urban life, breakdown of traditional social controls, and concentration of economic opportunity alongside extreme inequality create a volatile environment where youth crime flourishes. Data indicates that while urbanization increases gang-related crimes in Lagos, the state also possesses relatively more developed intervention programs and law enforcement capacity compared to other regions.

In northern states particularly Kano, Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Borno-economic hardship, chronic poverty,

and the Almajiri system represent unique drivers of juvenile delinquency. The Almajiri system, originally a revered Islamic educational tradition, has degenerated into a mechanism of exploitation and neglect, with millions of children living on the streets, begging for food, and vulnerable to recruitment by criminal networks and insurgent groups. Economic hardship emerges as the predominant driver of youth crime in these states, with petty theft, drug peddling, and thuggery as common offenses.

In Rivers and other South-South states, theft and property crimes predominate, often linked to the region's complex political economy of oil extraction, environmental degradation, and youth unemployment. Anambra State presents a distinctive pattern, with financial fraud-commonly known as "419" or cybercrime-emerging as a prevalent form of youth offending, reflecting the state's entrepreneurial culture, technological connectivity, and the perceived profitability of online fraud relative to legitimate employment.

In Benue, Plateau, Nasarawa, and Taraba states, juvenile delinquency is often intertwined with communal conflicts, farmer-herder violence, and displacement. Youth affected by conflict and displacement exhibit elevated rates of trauma, substance abuse, and aggressive behavior, while disrupted schooling and family separation remove protective factors against delinquency.

Research in Argungu Emirate of Kebbi State identifies rising moral decadence-including substance abuse, sexual immorality, and disregard for authority-as a growing concern, with traditional institutions struggling to maintain cultural norms and social controls in the face of modernization and external influences.

Structural Drivers of Juvenile Delinquency

Child streetism, the phenomenon of children living or working on the streets represents both a cause and consequence of juvenile delinquency in Nigeria. Children engaged in street life are disproportionately exposed to criminal activities, including drug trafficking, thuggery, sexual exploitation, and cultism. The Consortium for Street Children estimates that millions of Nigerian children spend significant time on the streets, disconnected from family support, education, and protective social institutions.

Research establishes a significant nexus between streetism and delinquency, with children on the streets developing survival strategies that often violate legal and social norms. Persistent socio-economic factors within families poverty, polygamy, parental neglect, and domestic violence drive children to the streets, where current government initiatives have proven largely ineffective at addressing root causes.

Poverty and Economic Deprivation

Poverty operates as both a push and pull factor for juvenile delinquency. Economic deprivation pushes youth toward crime as a survival mechanism, while the

visible wealth displayed through media and observed inequality generates strain and relative deprivation. For the Igede people of Benue State and similar marginalized communities, poverty significantly influences labor exploitation and delinquency, with effects including migration, economic dependence, depression, and vulnerability to criminal recruitment.

Educational Exclusion

Nigeria has an estimated 20 million out-of-school children, the highest number globally. Educational exclusion removes youth from structured environments that provide supervision, positive peer interaction, skill development, and future economic prospects. Research on demographic determinants of juvenile delinquency in Gombe State confirms that low educational attainment and school dropout are significant predictors of youth offending, as education provides both cognitive skills and social capital that protect against criminal involvement.

Family Structure and Parenting

Family factors including poverty, parental neglect, harsh or inconsistent discipline, domestic violence, and parental substance abuse consistently emerge as predictors of juvenile delinquency across Nigerian studies. Polygamous and large households, particularly those with limited parental education, show elevated rates of children in conflict with the law. UNICEF data indicates that only 15 percent of detained children had a

parent with a university degree, highlighting the protective role of parental education.

Moral Decline and Peer Influence

Experts warn that apparent decline in moral values and discipline among Nigerian youth is directly fueling rising crime rates. From substance abuse and violent behavior to cyber-related misconduct, disturbing patterns are emerging nationwide. The proliferation of smartphones and unrestricted access to online content exposes youth to influences that glorify rebellion, substance use, and anti-social behavior. Without strong counter-balances at home or school, these influences take root and shape behavior in destructive ways.

The Juvenile Justice System: Gaps and Failures

Nigeria has progressive juvenile justice policies on paper, including the Child Rights Act (2003) and various state-level child protection laws. However, a persistent and severe gap exists between these legal frameworks and their practical implementation. As stakeholders at the 2025 Sub-National Dialogue on Juvenile Justice System Reform noted, Nigeria's juvenile justice framework has suffered "long-standing neglect despite years of reform efforts. The country has only about three borstal institutions (reformatory schools), which require urgent attention to meet global standards, and an inadequate number of juvenile or family court judges to handle the caseload.

Unlawful Detention of Children

UNICEF's 2025 assessment exposed disturbing details about the detention of Nigerian children. Between 2018 and 2022, an estimated 133,906 children and young adults were held in custody across 87 adult custodial centers, 22 remand homes, and three borstal institutions. Alarmingly, 92 percent were held in adult custodial centers-a direct violation of the Child Rights Act's requirement that children should not be detained with adults. Only 26 percent had been convicted; the majority were awaiting trial or even basic reports on their cases. Approximately 68 percent of detainees did not have access to legal representation, and many had never appeared before a judge.

Conditions of Detention

Conditions in detention facilities especially adult centers are described as devastating. Cells are overcrowded, poorly ventilated, and lack clean water and basic sanitation. Over 83 percent of detained children reported physical abuse including beating and slapping: more than half reported torture, though only 11 percent reported it due to fear or the absence of complaint mechanisms. Sexual abuse and psychological trauma are also documented. Mental health issues anxiety, depression, hopelessness are widespread.

Recidivism Crisis

Recidivism rates among youth offenders in Nigeria are alarmingly high, estimated between 60 and 80 percent within three years of release. This crisis stems from

multiple factors: correctional facilities that are chronically overcrowded and under-resourced; rehabilitation programs limited in scope and quality; restricted access to vocational training, psychological counseling, and formal education; and the absence of structured post-release reintegration mechanisms. Structural drivers of this cycle include persistent poverty, unemployment, social stigma, and lack of community support for former offenders. Social Learning Theory explains how custodial environments can reinforce deviant behavior through exposure to negative peer influences.

Intervention and Rehabilitation Mechanisms

Existing intervention programs operate at federal, state, and non-governmental levels but face significant limitations. The Legal Aid Council of Nigeria (LACON), established to assist indigent defendants, is overstretched and under-resourced. Only 12 percent of detained children surveyed had LACON representation, with another 12 percent relying on Ministry of Justice officials, and just 0.7 percent receiving support from NGOs. Oversight institutions, the Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) while having visited correctional centers, fewer than half do so regularly, and over 70 percent rate detention conditions for children as inadequate.

Youth Empowerment Initiatives

Youth empowerment programs providing vocational training, entrepreneurship support, and educational opportunities have demonstrated significant potential for crime prevention. In Benue State, programs such as the Benue State Youth Empowerment Scheme (BSYES) offer training in tailoring, carpentry, ICT, catering, and auto-mechanics, combined with microcredit access and business development services. Research indicates that beneficiaries of these programs show decreased criminal activity, as skills acquisition and economic opportunity provide viable alternatives to crime. However, challenges persist: inadequate funding, limited program reach to rural areas, and insufficient monitoring and evaluation systems constrain overall impact.

Diversion and Community-Based Alternatives

Stakeholders advocate for diversion programs that redirect youth offenders away from formal justice system processing toward community-based alternatives, including mediation, counseling, community service, and restorative justice practices. A rehabilitation center should be a place where children understand why they are engaging in problematic behavior and are diversified into vocational skills, rather than a punitive institution that labels the child as a criminal. The Borstal institutions, while existing, are insufficient in number and capacity to serve Nigeria's youth offender population.

Prospects for Reform

Meaningful progress requires comprehensive juvenile justice reform. Stakeholders call for strengthening institutional capacity-increasing the number of juvenile courts, training specialized judges and magistrates, and ensuring child-friendly courtroom procedures. The Child Rights Act requires implementation across all states, with enforceable standards for the treatment of children in conflict with the law. Diversion programs must be institutionalized as the default response for minor offenses, with detention used only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate duration.

Addressing Root Causes

Sustainable reduction in juvenile delinquency requires addressing its structural drivers. This includes poverty alleviation through targeted social protection programs, educational expansion to reach out-of-school children, family support services to strengthen parenting capacity, and community development initiatives that provide legitimate economic opportunities for youth. For the Almajiri system specifically, a reformed model integrating secular education with Quranic instruction, combined with adequate funding, teacher training, and residential facilities, offers a pathway out of exploitation and neglect.

Community-Based Approaches

Reviving and adapting traditional community institutions-including extended family networks, age-grade systems, and community councils-can strengthen

informal social controls and provide culturally appropriate support for at-risk youth. The revival of cultural heritage and moral education, in collaboration with traditional institutions, is essential to avoid escalation of moral decadence. Community-led monitoring, mentorship programs and youth engagement in constructive activities sports, arts, civic participation build protective factors against delinquency.

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Effective juvenile justice requires coordinated action among government agencies, civil society, traditional institutions, religious leaders, and international partners. Stakeholders recommend establishing a unified national framework for juvenile crime prevention, with interventions tailored to address specific regional challenges while maintaining consistent standards of child protection and rehabilitation. Collaboration among the Nigeria Bar Association, family court judges, magistrates, Ministries of Women Affairs, and child protection networks is essential for strengthening inter-agency coordination and developing state-led reforms.

Data and Monitoring Systems

The absence of reliable, disaggregated data on juvenile delinquency and justice system performance severely constrains evidence-based policymaking. Investment in justice sector data systems including case tracking, recidivism monitoring, and program evaluation is essential for identifying effective interventions, allocating resources efficiently, and ensuring

accountability. The National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations must conduct regular, independent monitoring of detention conditions and juvenile justice processes.

Conclusion

Juvenile delinquency in Nigerian states represents a complex challenge at the intersection of structural poverty, institutional failure, family breakdown, and moral crisis. Regional variations-from gang-related crime in Lagos to Almajiri-related delinquency in the north, theft in the South-South, and fraud in Anambra-demand targeted, context-specific interventions rather than one-**size-fits-all solutions.**

The current juvenile justice system is failing Nigeria's children. The detention of children in adult facilities, the policy-implementation gap, the absence of legal representation, the dire conditions of confinement, and the crisis of recidivism constitute systemic failures that violate both national law and international standards. These failures not only harm individual children but also undermine social order, as youth processed through a punitive rather than rehabilitative system emerge more not less likely to reoffend.

Yet the prospects for reform are real. The evidence base on effective interventions is growing; stakeholder awareness and advocacy are intensifying; and successful models in youth empowerment, community-based alternatives, and justice system innovation-exist for replication and scaling. What is required is political will,

sustained investment, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to transform Nigeria's approach from punitive to preventive, from retributive to restorative, and from neglectful to protective of its most vulnerable citizens.

The future of Nigeria's social order depends on the choices made today regarding its children. As one stakeholder powerfully stated, "The way children are handled would influence how they eventually pan out as adults. If children aren't taken through the right system, we're more likely going to have recidivism and more adults involved with crime."

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BEYOND ERROR: NON-STANDARD ENGLISH AS PRAGMATIC STRATEGY IN ABI DARE'S *THE GIRL WITH THE LOUDING VOICE*

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Abstract

This study reframes non-standard English in Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice* as a pragmatic strategy rather than a linguistic error. Using Sperber and Wilson's (1986, 1995) Relevance Theory, it examines how Adunni's non-standard utterances achieve meaning, identity, and social critique through explicature, implicature, and contextual inference. Analysis of 100 purposively selected excerpts reveals that Adunni's speech is not a marker of communicative incompetence, but a resource for meaning construction, contextual adaptation, and emotional expression. Through pragmatic enrichment, readers retrieve intended

meanings with minimal cognitive effort, achieving optimal relevance. The findings demonstrate that non-standard English in the novel functions as linguistic creativity and cultural authenticity, serving as a tool for effective communication and social commentary. This study challenges deficit views of non-standard varieties and highlights their role in literary meaning-making.

Keywords: Non-standard English, relevance theory, pragmatic strategy, The Girl with the Louding Voice, linguistic creativity

Introduction

Non-standard English has often been viewed in literary and linguistic scholarship as a marker of error, deficiency, or communicative inadequacy. In postcolonial literature, deviations from Standard English are frequently evaluated against normative grammatical standards rather than examined as purposeful stylistic and communicative choices. Such perspectives overlook the capacity of non-standard varieties to convey identity, cultural experience, resistance, and social meaning.

In the Nigerian context, the coexistence of Standard English, Nigerian English, and other localised varieties reflects a complex sociolinguistic reality. Consequently, Nigerian writers have long employed non-standard forms to represent cultural authenticity, social background, and character identity. Studies by Adegbite (2005), Bamiro (1991), Igboanusi (2006), Oha (2002), and Jowitt (1991), among others, have demonstrated the stylistic and sociocultural significance of English variation in

Nigerian literature. These studies show that linguistic deviation often functions as a creative resource rather than a deficiency.

Despite these contributions, relatively little attention have been paid to the cognitive-pragmatic processes through which readers interpret non-standard language in literary texts. Existing scholarship has largely focused on structural features, stylistic effects, and sociocultural meanings, while neglecting the inferential mechanisms that enable readers to derive meaning from linguistically unconventional forms. Questions concerning how context, background knowledge, and pragmatic reasoning contribute to the interpretation of non-standard English remain underexplored.

This gap is particularly evident in Abi Daré's (2020) *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. The novel tells the story of Adunni, a fourteen-year-old Nigerian girl whose aspiration for education and self-determination is expressed through a distinctive non-standard English narrative voice. While scholars have examined the novel from feminist, sociocultural, and thematic perspectives (Firgiawaty and Nurcahyani, 2020; Saputri and Harianto II, 2023; Chukwudera 2020; Agha-Jaffar, 2021), they have paid comparatively little attention to how Adunni's language functions pragmatically. Although commentators frequently acknowledge the uniqueness of her voice, few studies have explored how readers recover meaning from her unconventional linguistic expressions.

To address this gap, this study applies Sperber and Wilson (1986, 1995) Relevance Theory to the analysis of

Adunni's speech. Relevance Theory explains communication as an inferential process in which hearers construct meaning through explicature, implicature, and contextual inference. The framework is particularly suitable for analysing literary language that departs from standard norms because it accounts for how meaning is derived beyond the literal linguistic form. This study therefore investigates how Adunni's non-standard English functions as a pragmatic resource rather than a linguistic deficiency. Specifically, it examines how explicature, implicature, and contextual inference contribute to the interpretation of her utterances and how these processes enable readers to derive culturally and emotionally significant meanings. In doing so, the study contributes to literary-pragmatic scholarship by demonstrating that non-standard English can serve as a powerful medium for characterisation, identity construction, and social critique in contemporary Nigerian fiction.

Literature Review

Despite growing scholarly interest in linguistic diversity in Nigerian literature, the cognitive-pragmatic aspects of non-standard English remain underexplored. Many existing studies have concentrated on grammatical features, stylistic effects, and the socio-cultural relevance of non-standard varieties. For instance, Adegbite (2005) analysed the stylistic use of Nigerian English in literary texts, noting how authors creatively use deviations to reflect their social and cultural environment. Igboanusi (2006) discussed Nigerian English as a form of identity expression and emphasised how its localised features

function effectively within specific contexts. Bamiro (1991) studied the different forms of English in Nigerian literature and argued that authors shift between standard and non-standard varieties to signal character identity, class, and tone. Oha (2002) examined language and ideology in Nigerian literature, showing how linguistic choices reflect power relations and cultural resistance. Similarly, Jowitt (1991) provided a foundational analysis of Nigerian English, identifying its structural patterns and usage among educated Nigerians, while Gut and Fuchs (2013) discussed the phonological and grammatical variation in Nigerian English and its implications for intelligibility and literary expression.

While these studies offer useful insights into the stylistic and cultural roles of non-standard English, they pay little attention to how readers actually interpret such language. Specifically, they do not focus on how readers use context, background knowledge, and inference to understand meaning when characters speak in non-standard forms. This area of interpretation remains largely ignored in the analysis of Nigerian literary texts.

In Nigeria, the coexistence of standard and non-standard English varieties reflects a complex sociolinguistic environment. Standard English is dominant in formal settings such as education, media, and governance. However, non-standard forms such as Nigerian English, Pidgin English, and regionally influenced speech are widely used in everyday communication. These varieties are often viewed as incorrect or substandard, especially in academic contexts. As a result, voices that speak in

non-standard English are sometimes overlooked or undervalued.

In Nigerian literature, especially works by postcolonial and contemporary writers, non-standard English is often used to represent authenticity, cultural context, and the experiences of marginalised people. Yet, many linguistic studies of literature tend to describe the features of this language without exploring how readers understand it. For instance, Akere (2009) examined how Nigerian writers blend English with local languages but did not study how readers make meaning from such blends. Onuigbo (2001) focused on Achebe's language use, showing how it reveals culture and style, but did not analyse how readers interpret those expressions. Ayoade (2014) discussed how postcolonial writers use language to break norms, though he did not explore how this affects the reader's comprehension. Elugbe (1995) explored Nigerian Pidgin in literature and society but did not consider its interpretive function. Alo and Mesthrie (2004) focused on the sociolinguistic significance of English variation in Nigerian fiction but offered little insight into how such variation is processed by readers. Babalola and Taiwo (2009) examined stylistic choices in Nigerian prose fiction and emphasised authorial intention, with less attention to reader engagement. Odebunmi (2003) applied pragmatic tools to the analysis of dramatic texts but did not fully engage with inferential processes in narrative fiction.

Furthermore, scholarship on language in postcolonial fiction has increasingly recognized non-standard

varieties as sites of resistance and identity construction. Scholars such as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2002) have argued that linguistic deviation can function as a "writing back" to imperial norms, while NgũgĩwaThiong'o (1986) frames language choice as central to cultural politics. Within literary linguistics, studies of African novels in English have begun to treat non-standard speech as stylistic and ideological, rather than merely mimetic (Azuonye, 1993; Simo-Bobda, 2001). However, much of this work remains descriptive, cataloguing features of non-standard English without explaining how readers process meaning from it.

Existing studies on Abi Daré's*The Girl with the Louding Voice* have largely examined the novel from thematic, feminist, and sociocultural perspectives. Firgiawaty and Nurcahyani (2020) apply the Matrix of Domination to explore how intersecting oppressions motivate Adunni's resistance and self-definition. Saputri and Harianto II (2023) identify various forms of feminist resistance in the novel using structuralist frameworks. Other analyses, such as those by Chukwudera (2020) and Agha-Jaffar (2021), highlight Daré's creative use of non-standard English to capture Adunni's voice and background, noting its emotional and cultural impact. However, these works stop short of applying a cognitive-pragmatic framework to explain how such non-standard language guides the reader's interpretation, generates implicatures, or achieves relevance. Thus, while they acknowledge the linguistic uniqueness of the text, they do not account for the inferential processes by which readers derive meaning from Adunni's voice.

Relevance Theory has been widely applied to literary discourse, particularly in studies of metaphor, irony, poetic effects, and implicature (Pilkington, 2000; Yus, 2008; Wilson &Sperber, 1992). While pragmatic approaches have enriched our understanding of inferential meaning in literary texts, relatively little attention has been paid to how readers interpret non-standard English varieties in African fiction. Existing studies tend to focus on figurative language, stylistic effects, or conversational implicatures, leaving the cognitive-pragmatic processes involved in interpreting non-standard literary voices largely underexplored. This study addresses that gap by using Relevance Theory to analyse how Adunni's non-standard English in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* guides readers to recover intended meaning with minimal processing effort, thereby revealing its function as a pragmatic strategy rather than linguistic error.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study employs a qualitative research design to examine the use of non-standard English in Abi Daré's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. The data for this work comprised of one hundred (100) excerpts of nonstandard English, purposively selected from Abi Daré's (2020) *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. However, due to space constraints, only fifteen (15) excerpts were selected for pragmatic analysis in this study. Using insights from Sperber and Wilson's (1986,1995) Relevance Theory, the analysis focused on explicatures, implicatures, and contextual assumptions in order to show how the non-standard English expressions in the novel achieve

communicative effects and optimise relevance between speaker and hearer/reader.

Relevance Theory (henceforth, RT) builds on Grice's notion of implicature. It explains communication as an inferential process in which interlocutors seek the greatest cognitive effects for the least processing effort. The theory assumes that human cognition is geared towards the maximisation of relevance and that every communicative act carries a presumption of optimal relevance.

Central to RT is the concept of the cognitive environment, that is, the set of assumptions, beliefs, and background knowledge available to an individual at a given moment. Meaning is derived not only from linguistic forms but also from the contextual information that hearers bring to interpretation. RT therefore emphasises the interaction between language and context in the construction of meaning.

A key distinction within the theory is between explicature and implicature. Explicatures are contextually enriched meanings derived from the linguistic content of an utterance, while implicatures are meanings inferred from the interaction between the utterance and contextual assumptions. Both processes rely on inference, through which hearers identify an interpretation that satisfies their expectation of relevance. The theory further highlights contextual effects, which arise when new information strengthens, modifies, or contradicts existing assumptions within a hearer's cognitive environment.

The relevance of RT to this study lies in its ability to explain how readers interpret non-standard English in literary texts. Rather than viewing non-standard language as a communicative deficiency, the theory accounts for how readers draw on contextual cues, shared cultural knowledge, and inferential processes to construct meaning. RT therefore provides an appropriate framework for examining the communicative and stylistic functions of non-standard English in Nigerian fiction, particularly how such linguistic forms contribute to characterisation, thematic development, and reader engagement.

Analysis and Discussion

The analysis is guided by the understanding that communication is not limited to literal linguistic structures but also involves pragmatic enrichment, inferencing, and contextual interpretation. Explicature concerns itself with the explicit meaning obtained after contextual enrichment of an utterance; implicature addresses the implied meaning derived beyond what is explicitly stated; and contextual inference examines how the listener retrieves meaning using background knowledge, situational context, and cognitive effort.

In examining Adunni's speech, the study acknowledges that non-standard English does not automatically equate to communicative deficiency. Rather, it often displays creative restructuring, contextual innovation, and pragmatic adaptability. Each excerpt provided in this chapter is drawn directly from the novel, and each is accompanied by a detailed explanation of the meaning-

making process as understood through the lens of Relevance Theory. The analysis that follows below is done on three levels: contextual, explicature and implicature.

Excerpt 1 (p. 1)

"This morning, Papa call me inside the parlour."

– Contextual inference

At this point in the story, Adunni narrates the morning that marks a major turning point in her life. Papa's summons precedes his decision to end her schooling and arrange her marriage, setting the tone for her struggle against patriarchal control. The reader understands more than just the literal meaning. By calling her "inside the parlour," Papa is exercising authority. In a Nigerian setting, when a parent summons a child early in the morning, it usually signals discipline or the delivery of critical news. Even though Adunni's English is broken ("Papa call me"), the meaning is clear, and it also shows her limited education. According to Relevance Theory, the explicature (the direct statement) is simple, but the hearer enriches it using contextual assumptions (knowledge about fathers' authority in patriarchal homes). The implicature is that Papa is about to make an important decision that bears serious implications for her life. With little cognitive effort, the reader achieves optimal relevance: Adunni is powerless under the authority of her father, and this moment foreshadows the bigger struggles she will face.

– Explicature

She says her father summoned her inside the parlour into the living room for a conversation in the morning.

– Implicature

This implies the start of a serious conversation, possibly with an authoritative or disciplinary undertone. The act of being summoned by a parent, especially in a patriarchal setting, suggests control and a lack of personal freedom.

Excerpt 2 (p. 1)

"Papa have this way of looking me one kind. As if he wants to be flogging me for no reason, as if I am carrying shit inside my cheeks and when I open mouth to talk, the whole place be smelling of it."

– Contextual inference

This statement follows shortly after Adunni is called into the parlour, showing the tense atmosphere and emotional distance between father and daughter. Her description of his gaze helps the reader feel the fear and intimidation that define her home environment. Here, the reader understands more than just the literal meaning. Adunni is not simply saying Papa looks at her strangely; she is showing how his gaze carries judgment and intimidation. In Nigerian culture, a parent's look often communicates silent authority or disapproval, so the hearer uses this

contextual assumption to interpret the meaning. Even though her English is non-standard ("looking me one kind"), the image is vivid enough to guide interpretation. According to Relevance Theory, the explicature (Papa's look) combines with implicature (that he sees her as worthless or bereft of intelligence) to give a strong cognitive effect. The metaphor of "carrying shit inside my cheeks" shows how her voice is treated as offensive, and the reader infers that her opinions are silenced in her home. With little cognitive effort, the hearer achieves optimal relevance: Papa's gaze represents oppression, and Adunni's non-standard language still communicates deep fear and intimidation.

– Explicature

She says Papa looks at her in a strange way, as if he wants to flog her for no reason, as if she is dirty and her words smell bad.

– Implicature

This implies constant judgment, fear, and the degrading way she is made to feel. The simile about carrying "shit inside my cheeks" reflects how her voice and opinions are treated as worthless or irrelevant. It suggests a broader theme of silenced girlhood.

Excerpt 3 (p. 1)

"I tell you true, the day I stop school and the day my mama was dead is the worst day of my life."

– Contextual inference

At this stage, Adunni reflects on the two defining losses of her life, her mother's death and the abrupt end of her education, both of which shape her later. The statement goes beyond its literal meaning because it connects two painful losses, schooling and her mother. In a Nigerian context, losing access to education means losing opportunity, while losing a mother means losing protection. The hearer uses these contextual assumptions to enrich the explicature and see why Adunni equates both events. According to Relevance Theory, the implicature is that education and maternal love are her lifelines. Even though the phrasing is broken ("was dead"), the meaning is clear with little cognitive effort. The optimal relevance achieved is that without education and her mother, Adunni feels hopeless, and this sets up the novel's central struggle between her dreams and her reality.

– Explicature

She says that the day she stopped school and the day her mother died were the worst days of her life.

– Implicature

This implies that education and her mother's presence are the two most important sources of comfort and hope in her life. Their loss symbolizes both personal grief and the death of opportunity.

Excerpt 4 (p. 1)

"Our parlour is the small of a Mazda car."

– Contextual inference

This description appears early in the narrative, when Adunni introduces her home environment and living conditions. It situates the reader in a scene of material poverty, reinforcing the social and physical limitations she experiences from childhood. This is more than a simple comparison. By likening her parlour to the inside of a car, Adunni shows how cramped and poor her family's living condition is. The hearer, using contextual assumptions about poverty and rural homes, infers that her world is restricted both physically and socially. The explicature gives us size, while the implicature points to deprivation. According to Relevance Theory, the non-standard phrase ("the small of a Mazda car") may require slight cognitive effort, but the vivid imagery makes the meaning accessible. The optimal relevance here is that her small house symbolises the limited space and opportunities she has in life, reinforcing poverty as a key barrier to her dreams.

– Explicature

She says their parlour is as small as a Mazda car.

– Implicature

This implies poverty and deprivation. By comparing her home space to a car's interior, she highlights the suffocating limitations of her domestic environment.

Excerpt 5 (p. 4)

"Papa, the remote-controlling is missing."

Contextual inference

This line occurs in a domestic scene where Adunni tries to please her father despite their poor living conditions. The missing remote becomes symbolic of the family's effort to maintain dignity and appearance despite poverty. The utterance is not only about a missing object; it exposes the family's poverty and pretense. The hearer relies on contextual assumptions knowing that in poor households, pretense in the presence of visitors is common. The explicature is that the remote control cannot be found, while the implicature is that Papa is trying to maintain appearances. In Relevance Theory terms, the broken expression "remote-controlling" requires some cognitive effort, but it still leads to strong cognitive effects, such as humour and irony. The optimal relevance is that Adunni's language reflects her limited schooling, while the situation reflects her family's attempt to hide shame, linking poverty to social status and pride.

-Explicature

She says she tells her father that the remote control is missing.

-Implicature

This shows how small, ordinary objects become exaggerated in their household, almost as a way to cover poverty. The statement also shows her obedience in responding to her father even when she knows it is a pretense.

Excerpt 6 (p. 4)

"Papa like to be sitting in front of the fan in the evening, crossing his feet's at his ankles and drinking from the bottle that have become his wife since mama have dead."

– Contextual inference

Adunni's early narration of life after her mother's death showing how the household's emotional balance has collapsed. Papa's new evening routine introduces his detachment and sets the tone for the neglect that follows. This description is not just about Papa's evening routine; it shows his dependence on alcohol. The hearer uses contextual assumptions (that in many Nigerian homes, men often turn to drinking after loss or hardship) to enrich the meaning. The explicature is his sitting and drinking, but the implicature is that he replaces the role of a wife with alcohol. According to Relevance Theory, even though the grammar is non-standard ("feet's," "mama have dead"), the cognitive effect is strong: Papa has abandoned emotional responsibility and parental care. The optimal relevance is that alcohol becomes a

symbol of neglect and grief, foreshadowing the challenges Adunni will face under his weak authority.

– Explicature

She says her father usually sits in front of the fan in the evening, with his ankles crossed, drinking alcohol. Since her mother died, the bottle has taken the place of a wife in his life.

– Implicature

This implies Papa's dependency on alcohol as a coping mechanism for his grief and loneliness after his wife's death. The description suggests that alcohol is not just a habit but a replacement for companionship, intimacy, and stability. It also paints him as detached from his parental duties, absorbed instead in self-indulgence.

Excerpt 7 (p. 4)

"Why is he telling me something I have already know? Something that have cause a hole inside my heart and fill it with block of pain that I am dragging with me to everywhere?"

Contextual inference

This utterance follows Papa's insensitive reminder of Mama's death, occurring in the same emotional moment of grief and misunderstanding. It connects to the broader co-text of Adunni's ongoing struggle to cope with loss while still being expected to serve and obey. The

statement shows that grief is not momentary but a constant burden. The hearer relies on contextual assumptions about how loss shapes everyday life to enrich the meaning. The explicature is that Papa is repeating something she already knows, while the implicature is that this memory continues to hurt her. Relevance Theory helps us see how the metaphor of a "hole" and a "block of pain" adds strong cognitive effects, turning emotion into a physical image. Even with non-standard phrasing, the optimal relevance is clear: Adunni carries her sorrow like a heavy object, showing resilience but also deep suffering.

-Explicature

She asks why her father is reminding her of something she already knows, something that has created pain in her heart and which she carries everywhere.

-Implicature

This implies that grief is not just an event but an ongoing burden. The metaphor of a "hole" and "block of pain" shows how trauma follows her daily life. It suggests she feels abandoned in her suffering, with no relief or healing.

Excerpt 8 (p. 4)

"Since Mama have dead, he keep saying things that didn't make sense and sometimes he talk to hisself, cry to hisself too when he think nobody is hearing."

Contextual inference

This reflection occurs as Adunni observes her father's behaviour in the days following her mother's death, providing background to his emotional collapse. The co-text here helps the reader understand that Papa's harshness stems from grief, not just cruelty. This line shows another side of Papa. The explicature is that he talks and cries when alone, while the implicature is that his harshness comes from grief. The hearer, using contextual assumptions about how men in patriarchal settings often hide emotions, infers that Papa is shattered beneath his authority. According to Relevance Theory, the non-standard English ("talk to hisself") may require slight cognitive effort, but it achieves strong cognitive effects by revealing vulnerability. The optimal relevance here is that Papa's cruelty is mixed with hidden sorrow, making him a complex character rather than just a villain.

-Explicature

She says since her mother died, Papa often talks nonsense, speaks to himself, and cries when he thinks no one is listening.

-Implicature

This implies Papa's brokenness and grief, even though he hides it. It shows that beneath his harshness, he is also vulnerable and overwhelmed. His authority is damaged by sorrow, yet he expresses it in silence and secrecy.

Excerpt 9 (p. 5)

"You want me to fetch water for your morning baff?"

– Contextual inference

This utterance occurs in a domestic morning scene that highlights Adunni's routine responsibilities before school. It connects to the co-text of her daily servitude and reflects the patriarchal expectations placed on her as a girl-child. The utterance is more than a simple question. The explicature is Adunni asking if Papa wants water for his bath, while the implicature is her obedience and role as a servant in the home. The hearer uses contextual assumptions about Nigerian patriarchal households where daughters often perform domestic chores to enrich the meaning. Relevance Theory explains that although "baff" is a non-standard form, the hearer easily reaches optimal relevance with little cognitive effort. The cognitive effect is that Adunni is positioned as a domestic helper rather than a child free to learn, foreshadowing how gender roles will limit her education.

– Explicature

Adunni asks her father if he wants her to fetch water for his morning bath.

– Implicature

The use of "baff" instead of "bath" signals non-standard English influenced by Nigerian Pidgin. The utterance

also implies her attitude to service within the family, showing obedience and the expectation that she performs domestic duties for her father.

Excerpt 10 (p. 5)

"Where we will find that kind money"

– Contextual inference

This line appears in the co-text where Adunni's father dismisses her desire to return to school, using poverty as justification. It situates the reader in the harsh economic reality that crushes her educational dreams. The literal meaning is a question about money, but the wider context reveals poverty as the main barrier to her dreams. The explicature is that they cannot afford school fees, while the implicature is that Adunni's hopes are dismissed because of financial hardship. The hearer uses contextual assumptions about rural Nigerian families struggling with poverty to enrich the statement. According to Relevance Theory, the non-standard phrasing ("that kind money") does not block understanding; instead, it achieves optimal relevance by stressing frustration and resignation. The cognitive effect is that her dream of education is tied to her family's economic limits, making poverty a powerful antagonist in her story.

– Explicature

Adunni expresses doubt about where they would find such money.

– Implicature

The non-standard structure ("where we will find" instead of "where will we find," "that kind money" instead of "that kind of money") reflects Nigerian Pidgin influence. Beyond grammar, it implies the family's poverty and inability to afford her schooling. It carries a tone of frustration and resignation.

Excerpt 11 (p. 5)

"morufu is having four childrens that didn't go to school"

– Contextual inference

Adunni is trying to understand why a man with four children with no education would want to marry her. The literal meaning is that Morufu's children do not attend school. The hearer, using contextual assumptions, infers that marrying Morufu would mean the same denial of education for Adunni. The explicature states the fact, while the implicature is Adunni's fear of losing her own schooling. According to Relevance Theory, the errors ("is having," "childrens") require little cognitive effort to correct because the context is strong. The optimal relevance is that her words expose her resistance to early marriage and show how education is at the center of her struggle.

– Explicature

Adunni tells her father that Morufu has four children who do not go to school.

– Implicature

The errors in "is having" and "childrens" mark her limited proficiency in Standard English. At a deeper level, the statement implies that if she marries Morufu, she too will be denied education, just like his children. It shows her resistance and fear toward the marriage arrangement.

Excerpt 12 (p. 6)

"I don't want to marry any mens or any boys or any another person forever so I ask Papa again, talking real slow so he will be catching every word I am saying and not mistaking me in his answer: lapa, is this bride price for me or for another person?"

– Contextual inference

This is more than a refusal; it is a desperate plea. The explicature is her rejection of marriage, but the implicature is her fear of being sold off. The hearer draws on contextual assumptions about forced marriage in patriarchal societies to enrich the meaning. According to Relevance Theory, her broken grammar ("any mens," "any another person") does not weaken her message; instead, it highlights her urgency and lack of power. The optimal relevance is that Adunni is fighting for her voice

to be heard, but her father ignores her, showing how poverty and patriarchy silence girls.

– Explicature

Adunni tells her father that she does not want to marry any man, boy, or anyone at all. She repeats her question slowly to make sure her father understands that she is asking whether the bride price is meant for her or for someone else.

– Implicature

The repeated negative formulations and non-standard forms ("any mens," "any another person") show her limited command of Standard English. Yet, the emotion in her words implies desperation and fear. She is pleading for clarity, hoping her father will deny that she is the one being sold off into marriage. It shows her strong rejection of early marriage and her yearning for education instead.

Excerpt 13 (p. 6)

"And my papa, he nod his head slowly slow, not minding the tears standing in my eyes or the opening wide of my mouth, as he is saying: 'The bride price is for you, Adunni. You will be marrying Morufu next week.'"

– Contextual inference

Here, Adunni talks about how her emotions are being neglected by her father and she has no say in her own life. The literal meaning is Papa's confirmation, but the deeper interpretation is betrayal. The explicature is his statement, while the implicature is that Adunni's fate is sealed regardless of her feelings. The hearer uses contextual assumptions about bride price in Nigerian culture to interpret this moment as commodification of girls. Relevance Theory shows that the reader achieves optimal relevance quickly, the father values money over his daughter's dreams. The cognitive effect is strong: parental authority is used against her, turning her into property.

– Explicature

Adunni's father confirms that the bride price is indeed for her and informs her that she will marry Morufu the following week.

– Implicature

The phrase "slowly slow" and the unpolished phrasing indicate non-standard usage. Beyond this, the implicature is his lack of compassion: he ignores her tears and distress, treating her emotions as irrelevant. The statement signals finality, her fate is sealed regardless of her protests.

Excerpt 14 (p. 7)

"When the sun climb down from the sky and hide hisself deep in the crack of the night, I sit up on my raffia mat, kick Kayus' leg away from my feets and rest my back on the wall of our room."

– Contextual inference

This is not just a description of sunset; it reveals Adunni's creative voice. The explicature is that the sun has set, while the implicature is that night brings reflection and fear. The hearer uses contextual assumptions about her poverty (sleeping on a raffia mat, sharing space with siblings) to enrich the meaning. According to Relevance Theory, the non-standard phrasing ("hide hisself") requires minimal cognitive effort but produces strong poetic effects. The optimal relevance is that her humble setting mirrors her limited freedom, while her imagination foreshadows her ability to narrate her pain vividly.

– Explicature

Adunni describes the evening scene, saying that when the sun sets, she sits up on her raffia mat, moves her brother Kayus' leg from her feet, and rests against the wall.

– Implicature

The poetic phrasing "sun climb down" and "hide hisself" shows her creative but non-standard use of English. It

implies her limited formal education but also her imaginative perception of the world. Her casual interaction with Kayus reflects their sibling bond, suggesting comfort despite hardship.

Excerpt 15 (p. 7)

"My head been stoning my mind with many questions since this morning, questions that are not having answers. What is it meaning, to be the wife of a man with two wifes and four childrens? What is making Morufu to want another wife on top the already two? And Papa, why is he wanting to sell me to a old man with no any thinking of how I am feeling? Why didn't he keep the promise he make to Mama before she dead?"

– Contextual inference

Adunni is lost in confusion. She questions what her father was thinking and how he could easily sell her to an old man for money. The explicature is that Adunni has been troubled by questions, but the implicature is confusion and helplessness. The hearer, using contextual assumptions about forced marriages and broken promises, infers that her father has betrayed both her and her late mother. Relevance Theory helps us see that the metaphor "stoning my mind" requires little extra processing yet delivers high cognitive effects it conveys mental torment. The optimal relevance is that her pain is both emotional and symbolic: forced marriage feels like an attack on her dreams.

– Explicature

Adunni reflects on troubling questions in her mind: the meaning of being the wife of a man with multiple wives and children, Morufu's desire for another wife, and her father's decision to marry her off despite her mother's promise.

– Implicature

The imagery "my head been stoning my mind" reveals her struggle to process overwhelming thoughts. Her questions imply confusion, fear, and betrayal. The grammatical errors ("wifes," "childrens," "before she dead") show her linguistic limitations but also amplify her innocence. The implicature is her sense of helplessness and deep disappointment at her father's broken promise.

Findings and Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that Adunni's non-standard English in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* functions not as a communicative limitation but as a rich pragmatic resource. Through the mechanisms of explicature, implicature, and contextual inference, meanings that appear fragmented at the linguistic level are transformed into coherent, culturally resonant, and emotionally powerful expressions. The analysis shows that readers actively engage with contextual cues and background knowledge to recover meanings that extend beyond the literal form of Adunni's utterances.

Viewed through the lens of Relevance Theory, the findings affirm that successful communication depends less on conformity to standard linguistic norms than on the inferential processes through which speakers and hearers negotiate meaning. Abi Daré's stylistic deployment of non-standard English not only lends authenticity to Adunni's voice but also foregrounds the social realities, cultural experiences, and educational struggles that shape her identity. The study therefore highlights the expressive potential of non-standard English in literary discourse and underscores its value as a vehicle for characterisation, cultural representation, and social critique.

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SOCIO-ECONOMIC RECOVERY OF NIGERIA - CHINA RELATIONS: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The study examines the nature, character, dynamics and motivating forces behind Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations and economic recovery of Nigeria. We predicated our investigations on complex interdependent theory, with materials derived from secondary source while analysis is historical and descriptive. The study therein noted that Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations in trade, investment, oil has created an enabling environment for common views in global affairs through frameworks as the South-South cooperation, G-77, among others. However, we discovered that although these relations and cooperation has enhanced trade and investment relations between Nigeria and China, but the

relations are in favour of China. Furthermore, this study discovers China's interest is particularly in Nigeria's crude oil, to sustain its strong economic growth, all combined to engender seemingly enhanced but highly disproportional China-Nigeria bilateral economic relations with China being the net beneficiary. Basically, the benefits arising there from are yet to translate into improvement in social and material conditions of the citizenry. The study continuously recommended among other measures that the government should strive to strike a balance between private sector and public sector-led development because elimination of the developmental state has proven to be counter-productive in developing economies.

Keywords: Nigeria-China; Economic Relations; Trade; Investment; Economic Recovery.

Introduction

Diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China took roots on February 10, 1971. Nigeria and China share a lot of things in common. Nigeria and China are multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and plural societies. China is the most populous nation in the Asia continent and globally, while Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa. According to Yong (2021) the pacesetter in the over fifty years of China's relations with Nigeria is driven by an all-dimensional, wide-ranging and high-quality bilateral cooperation. The brotherly relationship between China and Nigeria has reached new heights unmatched in history, bringing tangible benefits in very many areas to both countries and peoples. At the

political front, there is an enhanced political mutual trust. For instance, on October 1, 1960 of Nigeria's independence, the Chinese government recognized the political independence of Nigeria. Also, in 1971, Nigeria with other African countries firmly supported China's restoration of its legitimate seat in the UN. In recent years, the two countries have enjoyed frequent high-level exchanges and enhanced mutual trust, putting China-Nigeria relations on a fast track development.

To fast track development on the socio-economic front, in 2017, there was a first and successful official visit to Nigeria by then Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Again, in 2018, former President Buhari was the very first head of state President Xi Jinping met with bilaterally after the Forum for Chinese-African Cooperation (FOCAC) Beijing Summit, and Nigeria formally joined the big family of the Belt and Road Initiative by signing a governmental Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In 2020, President Buhari attended the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity against COVID-19 (Yong, 2021).

Utomi (2008) sees Nigeria's relations with China in the last decade as having metamorphosed from a limited and intermittent contact that marked the immediate post-independence era to an increasingly complex and expansive engagement. Most other African countries in the 1960s and 70s, Nigeria viewed China as a non-aligned developing country, it did little to galvanize business or even special diplomatic relations with the Asian giant. Nigeria's trade focused primarily on European and North American countries, which

proclaimed themselves development partners. China's own economic and political challenges made it an unlikely development partner at that time. As a result of Deng Xiaopeng's reform policies of the 1970s and 80s, China's dramatic growth and development, and attendant industrial, energy, and market expansion needs, brought it into greater contact with Africa. Its new expanded presence presented a partnership seen by many stakeholders as an alternative model to Western relationships.

Recent developments in Nigeria, by China, especially in the areas of construction, commerce, trade and strategic partnerships, are designed to reinforce and strengthen existing friendship between the two countries. Though, in its relations with Nigeria, China has tried to emphasize economic, scientific and cultural relations; aid is also an instrument for enhancing bilateral relations, a policy that is evidently different from the other exploitative practices that has kept Nigeria's development on a low key since independence. China has a record of not indulging in imperialistic or expansionist tendencies or for that matter, enslaving those she has relations with. That abiding principle is also applied in her relations with Nigeria. Unarguably, the Nigerian economy is at its ascendant stage and it needs to attract adequate investment to engineer its growth. The Nigerian economy is stagnant, import-dependent and heavily reliant on natural resources, but with a large market that can absorb as many goods as possible from any part of the world.

Currently, Nigeria is China's largest source of import and its third largest trading partner in Africa, with crude oil accounting for Chinese highest import from Nigeria (Jianchun, 2023; Egbula, & Zheng, 2011). Therefore, Nigeria-China Relations is therefore a very topical issue, both within the context of the "new" scramble for Africa and the re-configuration of international relations, where Africa now has new options based on the exploration of South-South solidarity in charting an alternative development course that is free from dependence on the West. On the basis of available indicators, China is one of the most vibrant elements of the global economy today. Since the early 1990's and the 21" century, they have become more open and better integrated, forming economic and political blocks with several nations of the world.

To trans-nationalize their economic interest in Asia, Oceanic, Africa and Nigeria, China is giving interest free-loans, aids, bankrolls debts and is investing in infrastructure development. For instance, in Nigeria, China through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Maritime Silk Road

Scheme is building roads, setting up rail tracks, seaports, sea routes and roads to link cities and neighboring countries. To chart a common course towards addressing developmental challenges and harnessing opportunities in trade and investment (particularly oil), Nigeria-China relations is nourished in multi-lateral platforms as South-South framework of BRICS (Group of countries comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa); Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC),

G-77, among diplomatic platforms. Consequent upon the foregoing, this study examines the impact of Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations, especially in trade and investment relations on Nigeria's economic advancement. This is with the view to establishing basis on Chinese national interest on Nigeria's economic recovery.

Theoretical Framework

Research on relations between countries are driven by the fact that international capitalism is in a continuum and it is creatively self-renewing itself into new forms as globalization and development prescriptions reflected in Nigeria as Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) packaged in the form of privatization, commercialization, deregulation, metamorphosed into National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), and among others. The yardstick for measuring bi-lateral relations between countries is dependent on the genuine efforts by partnering countries aimed at seeking mutual strategies for accomplishing purer goals that will bolster economic development between them. Basically, this has made most studies in bi-lateral relations between unequal countries (in this case Nigeria) to be viewed as an opportunity to utilize its overwhelming advantage in skills and technology expertise (in this case China) to maintain Western-styled subservience over a less developed country (LDCs) such as Nigeria (Udoh, 2015).

On the one hand, Okolie (2009) posits that social science literatures on globalization, trade and development

relations anchor their analysis on dependency persuasion, which clearly sees the impoverishment of the under-developed economies as emanating from the exogenous disarticulation and distortions of the economic and political structure of the developed economies' through colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism. On the other hand, Okolie (2007:3) states that "attempts by scholars and practitioners to evolve a universally applicable theoretical framework in the explanation of global issues have ended in contradictory nullity and barefoot prognosis".

Hence, this study predicates its analysis on the complex interdependence theory, as developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye. According to Okolie (2006:75), the theory refers "to the various, complex transnational connections interdependencies between states and societies". This theory sees economic relations as increasing, while the utilisation of military capacity and power balancing were declining, but remain vital. The decreasing utilisation of military capacity and power balancing creates an enabling environment for cooperation among states.

The critical issue for an understanding of this theory is that increasing bilateral engagement between Nigeria and China leads to the convergence of interest of the ruling groups of the two states. The very basis of this convergence is that they both have shared interests in the advancement of capital, which of course have brought about the free movement of capital between the two states. The volume of capital movement between Nigeria and China is quite enormous and that strongly

cooperation which the complex interdependence theory represents. Trade relations are in themselves competitive. It is therefore right to contend that each of the states would maximize its chances for favourable balance of trade in their economic relations. Above all, what is clear in the increasing volume of trade between the two states is increasing opportunities for movement of capital, which is the central interest of the global system which the theory represents about sight x.

This theory is relevant to the study because it curtails the issues of unequal gains raised by realists, enhances the appreciation of cooperative actions among states and harness wide understanding of the drive global interrelationship. On the one hand, it takes cognizance of the possibilities of exploitation and bias benefits. On the other hand, it lays emphasis on global regime and partnerships as an essential tool for tackling such situations. For Udoh (2015:182), the relevance of the theory can be located in its ability to "weigh the positive and negative currencies of international economic relations". Moreover, our choice of the complex interdependence theory is guided by the theoretical framework's ability to explain how the global thrive in an unequal and existential reward system that places the developed states over and above the developing states, which is bound to be readdressed by renegotiated global regimes, which extends some assistance to the latter (Okolie, 2006).

Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is confronted with the complexity of development challenges. China, as one of the major motivators of contemporary

globalisation utilises trade and investment cooperation, debt relief and infrastructural partnership to woo and drive Africa prosperity, security and development. Ekemam and Nwachi (2019) conceives China as having expanded her growing bilateral trade and strategic cooperation with Nigeria, because of international isolations and Western condemnation of Nigeria's military regimes (1970-1998). For them, China's panacea to endemic crisis development in Nigeria was through increased bi-lateral relations with Nigeria through her reformed foreign aids policies of 1995, which created an enabling environment for her domestic enterprises to invest and set up plants in Nigeria and many African countries. China uses bi-lateral currency swap to further ease and boost their trade relations. Also, China needs Nigeria's oil and petroleum to aid her rapidly growing economy, while Nigeria looks to China for help in providing needed economic, military and political support.

Therefore, Nigeria-China bilateral relations and economic recovery is explained in the light of the complex interdependence theory

Nigeria-China Trade and Investment Profile: A Critical Analysis

Nigeria-China trade/investment relations are strengthened and driven by capitalism. The economic character of Nigeria-China relations is typified in their trade and investment relations. On one face, Nigeria diplomats see the characterization of China's intentions

as neocolonial as Western propaganda (Utomi, 2008). As Bukarambe (2002:27) noted that

> China evolved, reformed and transformed politically and economically, while Nigeria stagnated. Consequently, China's advantage over Nigeria increased and deepened. That ensured that China dynamism and transformation became a dominant force shaping and driving the relationship although the parties do not make an issue of it, hence "the unacknowledged Sino-Dynamics.

The Nigerian economy is more or less import-oriented with virtually little productive activities in the manufacturing sector, but the reverse is the case with the Chinese economy. There is a high degree of production activities going on within their oil, manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Notably, the Nigerian economy is consumption-oriented, while the Chinese economy is export-oriented with high emphasis on semi-capital and capital production. The need for Nigeria-China bi-lateral relations was to foster mutual exchange and cooperation. The mutual exchange and cooperation is in line with the globalized standard of expanding market, ensure capital flows, maximizing benefits and profitability.

An attempt for a comprehensive evaluation of Chinese trade statistics with Nigeria within the period 1996-2016 and non-figurative analysis made. See Figure I below

Figure 1: Trends analysis of Nigeria-China bilateral trade (US Dollars)

An analysis of trade flow data of Figure I above by Ibrahim and Sari (2020:35) shows that, the trends in Nigeria-China bilateral trade relations of imports, export and total trade for the periods 1992-2016. Moreover, Nigeria-China bilateral trade has remained very low especially before the signing of a bilateral trade agreement between the two countries. Trade between the two countries has grown significantly after the signing of bilateral trade and investment promotion and protection agreement in 2001. Bilateral trade between the two countries reached a peak in 2014 with a total trade value of $18.05 billion which declined to $14.94 billion and $10.62 billion in 2015 and 2016. This declined in bilateral trade was as a result of recent government policy which aimed at reducing importation of foreign manufactured goods. This impacted a lot on Nigeria-China trade as most consumer goods in Nigeria were imported from China. China is Nigeria's major source of import, as imports from China hits $13.7 billion in 2015 though it declined to $9.7 billion in 2016.

An on-line report by the Observatory of Economic Complexity (2021) reveals that in 2021, China exported $21.9b to Nigeria. The main products that China exported to Nigeria are non-knit women's suits ($769m), telephone ($729m), and rubber foot-wears ($541m). During the last 26 years the exports of China to Nigeria have increased at an annualized rate of 21.1%, from $151m in 1995 to $21.98 in 2021. In 2021, China did not export any services to Nigeria. In 2021, Nigeria exported

$3.05B to China. The main products that Nigeria exported to China were Petroleum Gas ($1.42B), Crude Petroleum ($1.02B), and Lead Ore ($73M). During the last 26 years the exports of Nigeria to China have increased at an annualized rate of 17%, from $51M in 1995 to $3.05B in 2021.

The Observatory of Economic Complexity (2021) still observes that Nigeria's export to China has not kept pace with its import. There has never been a balance of trade in favor of Nigeria and this trade imbalance has not only continued to increase but also intensified. This massive growth in the trade balance is also reflected in the variation between exports and imports to and from China which was, as a result, high import demand of Chinese goods by Nigeria with little export supply to China to match with increasing import. It adds that of all the major products exported, mineral fuels and product of their distillation accounts for the largest share and dominates the Nigeria's total export in the whole periods 1992-2021.

Most of this growth was attributable to the oil sector, with a small fraction emanating from the importation of cheaply manufactured Chinese goods and products. Nonetheless, many imported Chinese goods were often substandard, leading the Standards Organization of Nigeria in October 1996 to threaten China that a formal complaint would be lodged with the World Trade Organization if the situation was not immediately corrected. The Chinese responded by explaining that they had not deliberately engaged in the dumping of inferior goods in Nigeria and

that it was often Nigerian businessmen of dubious disposition who were ordering products of questionable quality. Problems with corruption and unethical conduct by Nigerian businessmen and public officials would later resurface as a key obstacle in the Sino-Nigerian relationship when the Chinese blamed these forces for contributing to the ineffectiveness of a Chinese project to revive the Nigerian Railway Corporation. (Pat Utomi, 2008).

Going by the interpretative analysis above, it shows that in terms of market share Chinese goods non-oil commodities to Nigeria is high. This means that countries that export similar Chinese goods has lost its market share in the Nigerian economy to China as the country is now increasingly meeting its import demand from China. The share of major products imported from China become more significant when compared with the major products exported to China. This is because of the diversified nature Chinese export and non-diversified nature of Nigerian export.

With the level of trade, Nigeria is now the second biggest China trade partner in Africa.Nigeria-China trade and investment relations has formed linkages that creates new markets, facilitated new long-term investment opportunities and created jobs. According to Jianchun (2023); Egbula and Zheng (2011), in 2021, Chinese export to Nigeria reached 25.68 billion USD, rising 33.3% year on year, and Nigeria's exports to China reached 3.04 billion USD, rising 22.4% year on year. From 2016 to 2021, this bilateral trade increased by nearly 142%. By 2021, cumulative investment has

exceeded 20 billion USD, mainly in construction of free-trade and export-processing zones, oil extraction, home appliances and vehicle assembly, agricultural production, among others. The two free trade zones, Lekki Free Trade Zone (FTZ) and Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone (FTZ), have attracted investment of more than 1.51 billion USD and created more than 7,000 jobs opportunities. China is the leading contributor to Nigeria's infrastructure development, with more than 20 Chinese companies participating in the construction of major projects in railways, roads, and electricity, ICT and oil refineries. Visible signs of Nigeria-China investment and contracted projects cooperation can be seen in the Abuja-Kaduna Railway, the Lagos-Ibadan Railway, the new airport terminals, the Lekki Deep seaport, the Zungeru Hydropower Station, among others.

Nigeria-China Relations within a South-South Framework

Musa (2008: 36-37) traces the term South-South cooperation to the 2006 Special Unit of the UNDP and he credits the Unit for presenting the term as a broad framework of collaboration among countries in the global South in the political, economic, social, environmental and technical domains. South-South cooperation takes place at the bi-lateral, sub-regional and interregional bases. This notwithstanding, it is the desire of countries of the Southern hemisphere to present a common front in addressing global inequality and inequities that contributed to the emergence of the South-South cooperation. Today, issues in South-South relations have deepened and widened to include,

monetary, financial, investment and trade arrangements, especially in the context of efforts towards regional and sub-regional integration in Africa.

Musa (2006) adds that the civil societies, the private sector, the G77, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have become vital players in the South-South initiatives and for the consultation and coordination of South Relations. In fact, regional groupings such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Common Market for Eastern and Central Africa (COMESA), among others, are keying into the South-South Cooperation Framework.

As perceived by Utomi (2008) an understanding Nigeria-China Relations under a South-South framework, revolves around understanding China-Africa partnership. Therefore, China-Africa contact and partnership can be traced to Deng Xiaopeng's reform policies of the 1970s and 80s, China's dramatic growth and modernization, and attendant industrial, energy, and market expansion needs. Its new expanded presence offered a partnership seen by many stakeholders as an alternative model to Western relationships). China's renewed interest in the continent is radically different from the model of Western partnership. It is geared towards primarily at helping African countries improve their autochthonous development capacity. These attempts towards autochthonous development for Nigeria are reflected in infrastructural support and bi-lateral commitments as the

Road and Belt Initiative. According to Yong (2021:n.p) reports Nigeria-China relations in this manner.

The past 50 years have witnessed substantial progress in our mutually beneficial cooperation. In 2019, the two-way trade between China and Nigeria reached 19.27 billion US dollars, which was around 1900 times that of 1971 when the diplomatic ties was established. And the trade growth rate was 26.3%, ranking first among China's top 40 trading partners. In 2000, Nigeria's trade with China accounted for a merely 1% of the total of Nigeria's foreign trade. Nowadays, China is one of Nigeria's top trade partners. In the area infrastructure, there are so many examples of mutually beneficial cooperation, such as Abuja-Kaduna Railway, Lagos-Ibadan Railway, Abuja Light Rail, airport terminals in Abuja and Port Harcourt. The past 50 years have also witnessed the thriving of cultural and people-to-people exchanges. As the most populous countries in the world and Africa respectively, there is an enormous potential in the area of people-to-people and cultural exchanges between China and Nigeria. The Spring Festival Temple Fair, which has been held in Abuja for 4 consecutive years, attracted more and more local people. In 2019, the number of Nigerian students studying in China rose to 6800, which stands first in all African countries. Many of them covered by a wide variety of scholarships, studying for their master and doctorate degrees in engineering, medicine, agriculture and other majors. When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in Nigeria, China was among the first to offer help, and has sent

medical supplies and shared experience on treating COVID-19.

A critical analysis of Nigeria - China trade relations whereby the Nigerian economy is underdeveloped, while the Chinese economy is sustained by her highly skilled labour, highly developed domestic integrated production, technical infrastructure capacity. This study views Nigeria - China relations as serving the purpose of driving a Chinese-led economic hegemony of capital. On the other face, this study views Nigeria-China trade and investment relations as a trans-nationalized politics configured to help China gain ascendancy above global adversarial states such as the United States of America and her Western allies.

The empirical evidence provided above indicates that Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) undermines Nigerian manufacturers' capacity to produce capital goods. This underscores the fact that the Nigeria governments determined efforts to boost manufacturing sector and promote capital goods production through viable foreign direct investment collaborations, serves as an avenue for capital accumulation for Chinese manufacturers.

In an acknowledged fact by me, Udoh (2015), 1 explained that Brazil has an economic character of largely exploring and exploiting Nigeria's oil without the commensurate aiding Nigeria's local content oil development policy, presents Brazil as an instrument for the continuous sustenance of the inherited Euro-American culture of deprivation and exploitation. This is

still the case in Nigeria-China trade and investment relations. This study deduces that Chinese relations with Nigeria in its various forms be it bi-lateral relations (development assistance, trade and foreign direct investment), multi-lateral relations (South-South cooperation), serves as a penetrative instrument in the hands of China to largely serve their interests to catapult Chinese economic interest.

This unbalanced relation will not take Nigeria towards the path to economic recovery.Reliance on foreign direct investment, extraction of oil and gas resources, insecurity, gross inadequacy of physical and social infrastructure remain the hallmark of Nigeria's economic sector.

The study reveals that at the expense of assisting Nigeria's productive/manufacturing sector, China's trade and investment relations serves the purpose of ensuring the uninterrupted importation of Nigeria's crude oil and the sale of Chinese manufactured goods.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that China's trade and investment relations serve as a penetrative instrument at the hands of China to largely serve their interests in Nigeria. On this account, the empirical evidence provided therein in the study, indicated that Chinese undermined Nigerian manufacturers capacity to produce capital goods. On this account, it underscored the fact that the Nigerian governments determined efforts to boost manufacturing sector and promote capital goods

production through viable foreign direct investment collaborations, serves as an avenue for capital accumulation for Chinese manufacturers.

China's voracious exploration and exploitation Nigeria's oil has dethroned and disempowered Nigeria's indigenous development aspiration of local content expansion in oil and gas. Furthermore, this study discovered that China's emphasis on uninterrupted exploration and exploitation of Nigeria's oil is traceable to the configuration of China Petroleum sector's policies in a form that ensures increased growth in her oil and natural gas production, such that it supports national consumption necessities and enhances crude oil and derivatives exportation. China's oil partnerships are meant to increase her biofuels in the energy matrix, develop their small to medium oil companies, attract investments and new businesses for her oil, natural gas and renewable fuel sectors and enhance acquisition of national goods and services by the petroleum sector. Based on our findings, we put forward the following recommendations:

1. The Nigerian government should strive to strike a balance between private sector and public sector-led development because elimination of the developmental state has proven to be counter-productive in developing economies. Since Nigeria is consumption-oriented economy, it will always be import-dependent. The solution to improving Nigeria's manufacturing capacity to produce cannot be found only in foreign direct investment, but in the radical transformation of the Nigerian economic structure. Such transformation must

as a matter of necessity address issues such as fiscal federalism, adherence to the rule of law, willingness to adopt prevailing global best practices and the establishment of viable institutions capable of reducing corruption within the public service. More so, the existing realities of Nigeria-China economic relations leaves much to be desired, Nigeria must take the bull by its horn to extricate itself from its dependence-reinforcing economic relationship with China.

2. To aid Nigeria-China oil relations, Nigerian oil companies need to borrow a leaf from the Brazil's Petrobras oil corporation policy thrust. Petrobras oil policy thrust ensures that all contracts are broken down into as small a component as possible with competent Brazilian companies awarded components that they can execute. Where a non-resident company is awarded a component for which there is no sufficient capacity in the country, a local company is attached to it to understudy the process such that the local company develops that capacity through that process. When the above is done, Nigeria-China relations will be put on a solid developmental footing such that private sector-led economic engineering will be realized, hence a line will be drawn between goals that are collective and specific, absolute and relative, people-oriented and national, united and divergent

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SACRIFICE AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE IN IGBO EPISTEMOLOGY: TOWARDS AN EXISTENTIAL INTERPRETATION OF PERSONHOOD

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Abstract

Sacrifice occupies a central position in traditional Igbo thought where it functions not merely as a ritual practice but as an existential and epistemological process connected to moral consciousness, communal responsibility, and authentic selfhood. However, most existing studies on sacrifice in African philosophy have concentrated largely on its religious and ritual dimensions with limited attention to its role in the attainment of self-knowledge within Igbo epistemology. This work therefore, examines sacrifice as a transformative pathway through which the individual attains existential awakening, moral maturity, and authentic personhood in the Igbo worldview. Employing the methods of philosophical analysis, hermeneutics, and

existential phenomenology, the work argues that sacrifice in Igbo thought transcends ceremonial offerings and embodies discipline, suffering, self-denial, communal obligation, and existential responsibility. Through concepts such as chi, agwa, omenala, and communal reciprocity, the study demonstrates that self-knowledge in Igbo epistemology is relational, experiential, moral, and spiritual rather than merely introspective or individualistic. The work further establishes that sacrificial engagement with suffering, destiny, and communal existence enables the individual to attain existential fulfillment and authentic selfhood. It concludes that sacrifice remains philosophically relevant within contemporary African society because it provides an ethical and existential framework for addressing modern crises of identity, moral fragmentation, excessive individualism, and loss of communal values. The study contributes to African philosophy by expanding the epistemological interpretation of sacrifice beyond ritualism into the sphere of existential self-discovery and moral consciousness within Igbo thought.

Keywords: Sacrifice, Self-Knowledge, Igbo Epistemology, Personhood, Existentialism

Introduction

African philosophy has increasingly attracted scholarly attention in contemporary intellectual discourse, particularly in the areas of epistemology, ontology, personhood, and indigenous systems of knowledge. This growing interest emerges from the recognition that African societies possess coherent philosophical

traditions capable of contributing meaningfully to global philosophical conversations. In line with this view, Igbo epistemology presents a distinctive understanding of reality, knowledge, existence, and human personhood rooted in communal experience, spirituality, symbolism, and existential participation. Knowledge in the Igbo worldview is not merely theoretical or abstract but fundamentally experiential, relational, and existential. The individual comes to know reality through lived experience, communal interaction, moral engagement, and spiritual consciousness (Kanu, 2017). Consequently, the Igbo conception of selfhood transcends individualistic interpretations and is deeply embedded within a network of relationships involving the community, the ancestors, the spiritual realm, and one's destiny (*chi*).

Central to this worldview is the concept of sacrifice, which occupies a fundamental position in traditional Igbo life and thought. Sacrifice among the Igbo is not restricted to ritual offerings alone; rather, it encompasses moral obligation, self-denial, communal responsibility, discipline, and existential commitment. Arinze (1970) observes that sacrifice in Igbo religion functions as a medium of communion between human beings, divinities, ancestors, and the Supreme Being. Ifesieh (1989) maintains that sacrificial practices within Igbo cosmology are closely connected to the preservation of ontological harmony and moral order. In this sense, sacrifice becomes both a spiritual and existential activity through which the individual participates in sustaining communal and cosmic equilibrium.

The metaphysical structure of Igbo ontology further reveals that reality is understood as an interconnected web of visible and invisible forces. Human existence is therefore interpreted within a relational ontology where spiritual realities constantly interact with human affairs. Ukwamedua and Edogiaweri (2017) explain that Igbo ontology recognizes a hierarchy of beings consisting of Chukwu, divinities, ancestors, spirits, human beings, and natural forces, all existing within a dynamic ontological order. This interconnected structure implies that the individual cannot attain authentic existence in isolation from the spiritual and communal dimensions of life. Consequently, sacrificial acts become existential mediations through which harmony is restored between the self, community, and the transcendent realm.

The Igbo understanding of selfhood equally provides important insight into the relationship between sacrifice and self-knowledge. The concept of *onwe* (self) in Igbo philosophy is not merely an isolated *ego* but a relational and moral self constituted through interaction with others and with one's destiny. Okpalike (2020) argues that selfhood in Igbo ontology is deeply tied to communal belonging, existential responsibility, and moral consciousness. Likewise, the notion of *chi* occupies a central position in the formation of personal identity and destiny. The individual discovers meaning and fulfillment through alignment with one's *chi*, moral conduct, and existential responsibility (Nwankwo, 2021). Within this perspective, sacrifice functions not merely as ritual observance but as an existential pathway through

which the individual attains self-realization and authentic personhood.

Many existing literatures on sacrifice, African ontology, and Igbo epistemology have largely approached sacrifice from anthropological, religious, or ritualistic perspectives. Less attention has been given to the epistemological implications of sacrifice, particularly its role in the attainment of self-knowledge. Existing scholarship has also insufficiently explored how sacrifice functions as a transformative process through which the individual discovers moral identity, existential purpose, and authentic selfhood within Igbo thought. This creates a significant gap in Igbo/African philosophical discourse.Employing philosophical analysis, hermeneutics, and critical reflection, the work contributes to contemporary discussions in African/Igbo epistemology by reinterpreting sacrifice as a medium of authentic self-discovery within the Igbo worldview.This work argues that sacrifice in Igbo epistemology transcends ritual performance and functions as an existential and epistemic process through which the individual attains self-knowledge, moral consciousness, and authentic personhood.

Conceptual and Methodological Framework

♦ Concept of Sacrifice

Sacrifice occupies a central position in African traditional thought, particularly within Igbo cosmology, where it functions as both a spiritual and existential activity. In its general understanding, sacrifice refers to the offering or surrender of something valuable for a

higher moral, communal, or spiritual purpose. While many religious traditions interpret sacrifice primarily as ritual offering to divine beings, the Igbo conception extends beyond ritualistic performance to include moral obligation, self-denial, communal responsibility, and existential discipline. Arinze (1970) explains that sacrifice among the Igbo serves as a medium of communion between human beings, ancestors, divinities, and *Chukwu*, the Supreme Being. Through sacrificial acts, harmony is restored between the visible and invisible dimensions of existence.

In the same line of thought, Ifesieh (1989) argues that sacrifice in traditional Igbo religion is deeply connected to the preservation of cosmic order and communal equilibrium. This understanding reflects the relational nature of Igbo ontology in which human existence is inseparable from spiritual realities and communal life. Sacrifice therefore becomes a means through which the individual participates in maintaining ontological balance within the universe. Beyond ritual offerings, sacrifice also manifests in moral self-restraint, responsibility towards family and community, endurance in suffering, and commitment to ethical obligations. Metuh (1987) maintains that African religious consciousness generally interprets sacrifice as participation in the sustenance of life-force and communal well-being. Consequently, sacrifice in Igbo thought possesses ritual, moral, existential, and ontological dimensions.

The existential dimension of sacrifice becomes particularly significant when viewed within the context of selfhood and human becoming. Sacrifice often requires the surrender of selfish desires for the realization of communal harmony and personal transformation. Such sacrificial engagement shapes moral consciousness and contributes to the individual's existential maturation. Thus, sacrifice is not merely an external religious exercise but an inward process of self-transformation and existential realization.

♦ Concept of Self-Knowledge

The idea of self-knowledge has remained a fundamental concern within philosophical discourse from antiquity to contemporary thought. The Socratic injunction "know thyself" established self-knowledge as the foundation of wisdom, ethical consciousness, and authentic existence. In classical philosophy, self-knowledge was closely associated with introspection and rational reflection. However, existential philosophers such as Heidegger (1962) and Kierkegaard (1980) expanded this understanding by emphasizing inwardness, existential responsibility, anxiety, and authenticity as necessary dimensions of self-realization. Frankl (2006) further argues that human beings attain existential fulfillment through suffering, responsibility, and the search for meaning.

Within Igbo epistemology, self-knowledge possesses a relational and communal orientation rather than a purely individualistic character. The Igbo concept of self, commonly expressed as *onwe*, is understood within the

context of communal existence, spirituality, morality, and destiny. Okpalike (2020) explains that the self in Igbo ontology is relational and cannot be separated from the community, ancestors, and spiritual realities.

Closely connected to this understanding is the concept of *chi*, which represents personal destiny or individualized spiritual principle guiding human existence. Nwankwo (2021) notes that the fulfillment of one's *chi* constitutes the realization of authentic personhood and existential purpose. The individual therefore comes to know himself through alignment with destiny, moral responsibility, and existential struggle. This relational and existential understanding of selfhood demonstrates that self-knowledge in Igbo philosophy is not merely intellectual awareness but an existential process of becoming.Furthermore, the Igbo concept of *agwa* (character) plays an important role in the attainment of self-knowledge. Character is regarded as the true identity of the person and serves as the basis for moral evaluation within the community. This is embodied in the proverb '*agwa bummammadu*.' (Character is the beauty of a person)

♦ Igbo Epistemology

Igbo epistemology refers to the indigenous system of knowledge through which reality, existence, morality, and human experience are interpreted within the Igbo worldview. It is experiential, communal, symbolic, and spiritual. Knowledge is acquired not only through rational reflection but also through lived experience, communal wisdom, myths, symbols, proverbs, and

spiritual intuition. Igbo epistemology recognizes multiple dimensions of knowing rooted in both empirical and spiritual realities.

The communal dimension of Igbo epistemology reflects the African understanding that knowledge is socially situated and collectively preserved. Wisdom is transmitted across generations through oral traditions, myths, rituals, and proverbs. Onyeibe (2017) observes that proverbs among the Igbo function as repositories of communal wisdom and identity formation. Proverbs communicate existential truths concerning morality, responsibility, suffering, and human relationships. Additionally, Igbo epistemology emphasizes experiential knowledge. Human beings come to understand reality through participation in life, suffering, discipline, work, and moral engagement. This experiential orientation explains why sacrifice becomes epistemologically significant within the Igbo worldview.

The spiritual dimension of Igbo epistemology is equally important. Reality is understood as consisting of both visible and invisible dimensions interacting continuously with human existence. Knowledge of self and reality therefore involves spiritual awareness and existential sensitivity to the transcendent order of existence.

♦ Methodology

This work adopts the methods of philosophical analysis, hermeneutics, and existential phenomenology in examining sacrifice and self-knowledge within Igbo epistemology. Philosophical analysis is employed to

clarify and critically examine the concepts of sacrifice, selfhood, destiny (*chi*), personhood, and communal existence as they function within the Igbo worldview. Through this method, it investigates the epistemological and ontological implications of sacrifice beyond its ritual dimensions. Hermeneutics is equally utilized as an interpretive model for understanding Igbo cultural symbols, myths, proverbs, rituals, and sacrificial practices within their existential and communal contexts. This interpretive approach enables a deeper understanding of the meanings embedded in traditional Igbo experiences and worldviews. In addition, existential phenomenology is adopted to explore how sacrifice contributes to inward transformation, moral consciousness, existential awakening, and authentic selfhood. The work relies primarily on textual analysis of relevant philosophical, religious, and literary materials relating to African philosophy, Igbo ontology, existentialism, and indigenous epistemology.

Sacrifice In Igbo Worldview

♦Ontological Structure of Igbo Reality

The Igbo worldview is fundamentally ontological in orientation because it conceives reality as an interconnected network of visible and invisible forces existing in dynamic relationship. Existence is not interpreted in purely material terms but as a unified interaction between spiritual, human, and cosmic realities. Within this ontological structure, *Chukwu* occupies the highest position as the Supreme Being and ultimate source of existence. Beneath *Chukwu* are divinities, ancestors, spirits, human beings, and natural

forces, all participating within a hierarchy of being that sustains cosmic balance and communal harmony (Mbaegbu, 2015).

This metaphysical understanding reflects the relational nature of Igbo ontology where existence is communal and complementary rather than isolated. Human beings exist within a network of obligations involving the community, ancestors, divinities, and one's personal *chi*. Stressing further on this, Ukwamedua and Edogiaweri (2017) explain that the Igbo universe is structured around reciprocal relationships that ensure harmony between spiritual and material realities. Consequently, every human action possesses ontological significance because it affects both the visible and invisible dimensions of existence.

Hence, sacrifice functions as an important mediatory activity through which ontological balance is maintained. Sacrificial acts seek to restore broken relationships, appease spiritual forces, maintain communal harmony, and preserve existential equilibrium. The individual therefore participates in the continuity of cosmic order through sacrificial engagement with spiritual and communal realities. Sacrifice is thus deeply rooted in the Igbo ontology.

♦ Forms of Sacrifice in Igbo Culture

Sacrifice in Igbo culture manifests in multiple forms that extend beyond ritual offerings to include moral, communal, and existential dimensions.

One major form is ritual sacrifice directed towards divinities, ancestors, or spiritual forces. Such sacrifices often involve offerings of animals, food items, kola nuts, drinks, or symbolic objects intended to secure blessings, protection, purification, reconciliation, or communal peace. Arinze (1970) notes that ritual sacrifice among the Igbo serves as a symbolic medium of communication between the human and spiritual worlds. Through sacrifice, individuals express gratitude, seek forgiveness, and restore harmony within the cosmic order.

Another important dimension of sacrifice is communal sacrifice. Igbo society emphasizes collective existence and mutual responsibility; hence, individuals are often expected to sacrifice personal interests for the welfare of the community. This sacrificial consciousness is reflected in communal labour, participation in family responsibilities, support for kinship obligations, and defense of communal values. Gyekye (1997) observes that African communalism generally places moral emphasis on solidarity, reciprocity, and shared existence. Within the Igbo context, communal sacrifice reinforces belongingness and social cohesion.

Again, sacrifice possesses moral and existential dimensions. Moral sacrifice involves self-restraint, discipline, endurance, and ethical responsibility. The individual sacrifices selfish desires in order to uphold moral principles and maintain social harmony. Such sacrifices often involve suffering, perseverance, and inward transformation. In this regard, sacrifice contributes to character formation and existential

maturity. This is embodied in the proverb '*a na-amu amu amu ka e ji ama dike'*(a hero is known through endurance) The concept of *agwa* (character) in Igbo thought reflects this moral dimension because character is regarded as the true identity of the individual.

Existential sacrifice equally appears in the individual's struggle towards the fulfillment of destiny. The realization of one's *chi* frequently demands perseverance, suffering, hard work, discipline, and existential commitment. Sacrifice therefore becomes a necessary aspect of self-discovery and existential becoming.

♦ Symbolic Meaning of Sacrifice

Sacrifice in Igbo thought possesses profound symbolic significance because it represents purification, reconciliation, mediation, and restoration of harmony. Ritual sacrifice often symbolizes the desire to repair broken relationships between human beings, ancestors, divinities, and spiritual forces. Metuh (1987) explains that sacrifice within African religious consciousness functions symbolically as an act of restoring life-force and existential balance.

The symbolism of sacrifice is also closely connected to purification and moral renewal. Through sacrifice, individuals seek liberation from guilt, misfortune, spiritual imbalance, and existential disorder. Sacrifice therefore symbolizes transformation and renewal within both personal and communal existence. This understanding reveals why sacrificial rituals are often

performed during crises, conflicts, illness, or periods of communal instability. The aim is not only religious appeasement but the restoration of existential harmony.
Furthermore, sacrifice symbolizes mediation between visible and invisible realities. The Igbo worldview recognizes the continuous interaction between human beings and spiritual forces; consequently, sacrifice functions as a bridge connecting these dimensions of existence. Through sacrificial acts, communication is established between humanity and the transcendent realm. Such mediation reinforces the relational ontology underlying Igbo cosmology.

Sacrifice equally symbolizes commitment and existential responsibility. The willingness to endure suffering, surrender selfish desires, and assume communal obligations reflects the individual's participation in moral and existential becoming. In this sense, sacrifice acquires epistemological significance because it contributes to self-discovery and moral consciousness. Through sacrifice, individuals encounter the realities of suffering, limitation, duty, and responsibility, thereby attaining deeper understanding of existence and selfhood.

♦ Sacrifice and Communal Existence

Communal existence occupies a central position in Igbo philosophy because the individual is understood primarily within the context of relationships and social belonging. The community serves as the foundation of identity, morality, and existential meaning. Mbiti (1969) famously observes that the African conception of

personhood is grounded in the principle that "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." This communal orientation is strongly reflected within Igbo thought where personhood is inseparable from communal participation and moral responsibility. this is embodied in the proverb "*Egbe bereugobere*" (let the kite perch and let the eagle perch)

Sacrifice therefore becomes essential to the sustenance of communal life. Individuals are expected to contribute to the welfare of the community through acts of service, responsibility, solidarity, and moral commitment. The willingness to sacrifice personal comfort for communal harmony reflects the ethical foundations of Igbo society. Okere (1983) argues that African communal existence requires a moral consciousness rooted in reciprocity and relationality. Consequently, sacrifice becomes a moral necessity for the preservation of social equilibrium.

The communal dimension of sacrifice is further evident in traditional ceremonies, festivals, rites of passage, and family obligations where individuals collectively participate in sacrificial activities for the benefit of society. Such practices reinforce social unity and shared identity. Through communal sacrifice, individuals internalize values of solidarity, empathy, discipline, and mutual responsibility.

Additionally, communal sacrifice contributes significantly to the formation of selfhood within Igbo epistemology. The self comes to understand its identity through participation in communal life and sacrificial

responsibility. The individual acquires moral consciousness and existential awareness through relationships with others. Sacrifice therefore, functions not only as a communal obligation but also as an existential process through which authentic selfhood is attained.

Sacrifice As A Pathway To Self-Knowledge In Igbo Epistemology

♦ Sacrifice and Existential Awakening

Within Igbo epistemology, sacrifice functions not merely as ritual performance but as a transformative existential process through which the individual attains deeper awareness of self and reality. Human existence is understood as a continuous process of becoming. Consequently, sacrificial experiences often serve as moments of existential awakening that compel individuals to confront the realities of existence and discover their authentic identities.

The existential significance of sacrifice is closely connected to the Igbo understanding of life as a moral and spiritual journey. Human beings encounter various existential conditions such as suffering, hardship, uncertainty, and limitation, all of which contribute to the formation of wisdom and self-understanding. Frankl (2006) argues that suffering possesses transformative potential because it enables individuals to discover meaning and existential purpose.

Similarly, Heidegger (1962) maintains that authentic existence emerges when individuals confront the realities

of being and assume responsibility for their existence. In Igbo thought, sacrificial engagement often produces such existential confrontation by exposing individuals to discipline, suffering, and inward reflection. Through these experiences, the individual develops deeper consciousness of moral responsibility, destiny, and communal identity. Sacrifice therefore becomes an existential medium through which self-awareness is attained.

The role of suffering within sacrificial consciousness is particularly important. In many traditional Igbo contexts, suffering is not always interpreted negatively but as an educative and transformative experience capable of producing wisdom and moral strength. Through sacrificial suffering, individuals acquire experiential knowledge that contributes to self-discovery and existential awakening.

Furthermore, sacrificial experiences often compel inward reflection and moral introspection. The individual begins to question the meaning of existence, personal responsibility, and existential purpose. Kierkegaard (1980) emphasizes inwardness as a necessary condition for authentic selfhood because the self must confront its own existential reality. This existential inwardness is reflected within Igbo sacrificial consciousness where discipline, endurance, and responsibility foster deeper awareness of self and destiny.

♦ Sacrifice and Discovery of *Chi* (Destiny)

The concept of '*chi'* occupies a central place in Igbo philosophy because it represents personal destiny and spiritual guidance. Every individual is believed to possess a unique *chi* that shapes personal existence and determines existential possibilities. However, the realization of one's *chi* is not automatic; it often requires struggle, discipline, sacrifice, and existential commitment. Consequently, sacrifice becomes an important pathway through which the individual aligns with destiny and attains self-knowledge.

Nwankwo (2021) explains that the realization of *chi* involves existential participation in one's life purpose through moral conduct, perseverance, and responsibility. Human beings come to understand themselves through engagement with the existential demands of destiny. In this regard, sacrifice represents the willingness to undergo suffering, discipline, and self-denial in pursuit of existential fulfillment. The individual therefore discovers authentic selfhood through alignment with *chi* and commitment to existential responsibility.

Achebe's literary works provide significant insight into this relationship between sacrifice and destiny within Igbo thought. In *Things Fall Apart*, the character of Okonkwo struggles intensely with personal ambition, fear, communal expectations, and destiny. His sacrifices, struggles, and existential anxieties reveal the tension between individual aspiration and the demands of communal and spiritual realities. Similarly, *Arrow of God* explores the existential burden associated with

spiritual responsibility and sacrificial leadership within traditional Igbo society. These literary narratives illustrate that sacrifice is deeply connected to existential becoming and the search for authentic identity.

Moreover, the communal dimension of *chi* further reinforces the relational nature of self-knowledge in Igbo epistemology. The fulfillment of destiny is not pursued in isolation but within the context of communal existence and moral responsibility. Authentic selfhood emerges when the individual harmonizes personal aspirations with communal values and spiritual obligations. Sacrifice therefore mediates between individuality and communal existence, enabling the individual to attain existential balance and self-realization.

♦ Sacrifice and Moral Consciousness

Moral consciousness occupies an essential position within Igbo epistemology because the worth of the individual is evaluated primarily through character and ethical conduct. The concept of *agwa*(character) reflects the belief that authentic personhood is inseparable from moral responsibility and disciplined living. Consequently, sacrifice becomes a necessary condition for moral formation because ethical existence often requires self-restraint, endurance, and the subordination of selfish desires.

Iroegbu (2005) argues that morality within African philosophy is deeply relational and communal in orientation. Moral values are not abstract principles

detached from life but practical expressions of communal harmony and human responsibility. Within the Igbo worldview, sacrifice contributes to moral consciousness by training individuals in discipline, responsibility, empathy, and communal solidarity. The individual learns to place communal welfare above personal interests, thereby developing ethical maturity and existential awareness.

Sacrificial responsibility also contributes to the cultivation of virtues such as patience, humility, courage, and perseverance. These virtues are regarded as essential aspects of authentic personhood within traditional Igbo society. Through sacrificial experiences, individuals encounter situations that demand moral decision-making and existential commitment. Such experiences deepen self-awareness and contribute to the formation of ethical identity.

The epistemological significance of moral sacrifice lies in its contribution to self-understanding. Through ethical struggle, discipline, and responsibility, individuals gain deeper awareness of their values, limitations, and existential identity. Self-knowledge therefore emerges through moral engagement with life.

♦ Sacrifice and Authentic Personhood

Authentic personhood within Igbo epistemology is attained through existential participation in communal, moral, and spiritual realities. The individual becomes fully human not merely through biological existence but through responsible engagement with the demands of

existence. Sacrifice therefore functions as a pathway to authentic selfhood because it compels individuals to transcend selfishness and participate meaningfully in communal and existential life.

Asouzu's (2007) complementary ontology provides important insight into this understanding of personhood. According to Asouzu, human existence is fundamentally relational because beings attain meaning through complementarity and mutual dependence. The individual cannot achieve fulfillment in isolation from others. This perspective aligns closely with the Igbo worldview where personhood is grounded in communal belonging and existential reciprocity. Sacrifice becomes an act of complementarity through which the individual contributes to the well-being of others while simultaneously attaining existential fulfillment.

Existential philosophers equally emphasize responsibility and authenticity as conditions for genuine selfhood. Sartre (2007) argues that human beings define themselves through choices and actions undertaken within concrete existential situations. Similarly, Heidegger (1962) maintains that authentic existence emerges when individuals assume responsibility for their being rather than conforming blindly to social expectations. These existential insights resonate with Igbo sacrificial consciousness where authentic selfhood is attained through responsible participation in communal and moral existence.

Furthermore, sacrificial existence enables the individual to transcend superficial identity and attain deeper existential awareness. Through suffering, discipline, and moral commitment, the individual develops inward maturity and existential wisdom. As Frankl (2006) argues, meaning is often discovered through responsible suffering and existential commitment. Within Igbo thought, sacrificial experiences similarly contribute to existential fulfillment because they reveal the interconnectedness between selfhood, morality, destiny, and communal existence.

Authentic personhood therefore emerges through sacrificial engagement with life. The individual attains self-knowledge not through isolated introspection but through participation in suffering, responsibility, communal obligation, and existential struggle. Sacrifice consequently becomes both an epistemic and existential process through which authentic selfhood is disclosed within Igbo epistemology.

Critical Evaluation and Contemporary Relevance

♦ Decline of Sacrificial Consciousness in Contemporary Society

Contemporary African/Igbo societies have experienced significant cultural, religious, and philosophical transformations resulting from globalization, modernization, colonial influence, technological advancement, and the rise of individualistic worldviews. These developments have profoundly affected traditional systems of thought, including indigenous conceptions of sacrifice, communal responsibility, and existential

selfhood. Within many modern contexts, sacrifice is increasingly interpreted in narrow ritualistic or material terms, while its deeper existential and epistemological significance receives limited attention.

One major consequence of modernization is the erosion of communal consciousness that traditionally shaped African moral and existential life. The rise of excessive individualism has shifted emphasis from communal responsibility to personal ambition, material success, and self-interest. Onyeibe (2017) observes that globalization and cultural transformation have altered traditional expressions of identity among the Igbo, particularly through changes in language, values, and communal practices. As communal structures weaken, sacrificial obligations that once sustained moral and existential balance also decline.

Similarly, modern materialism has contributed to the reduction of sacrifice to transactional religious practices aimed primarily at obtaining wealth, success, or protection. Such interpretations often obscure the existential dimensions of sacrifice involving discipline, suffering, moral responsibility, and self-transformation. In many contemporary religious contexts, sacrifice is frequently associated with material exchange rather than existential awakening and moral consciousness. This shift weakens the philosophical depth of sacrificial thought within African epistemological traditions.

The influence of Western rationalism has equally contributed to skepticism towards indigenous

metaphysical systems, symbols, myths, and spiritual practices. Colonialism and missionary activities often portrayed African sacrificial systems as primitive or irrational, thereby undermining their philosophical significance. Mbiti (1969) argues that African religious consciousness possesses coherent metaphysical and existential foundations that should not be dismissed through Eurocentric assumptions. Nevertheless, the continued dominance of Western epistemological paradigms has marginalized many indigenous systems of knowing and being.

Furthermore, contemporary existential crises such as moral decadence, social fragmentation, identity confusion, and spiritual disorientation reveal the consequences of abandoning sacrificial consciousness. The decline of values such as discipline, communal solidarity, responsibility, and moral restraint has contributed to increasing social instability within many African societies. In this regard, the weakening of sacrificial ethics reflects a broader crisis of meaning and existential identity.

♦ Philosophical Relevance of Igbo Sacrificial Thought

Despite these challenges, the Igbo conception of sacrifice remains philosophically relevant within contemporary discourse because it offers important insights into morality, identity, communal existence, and existential fulfillment. One major contribution of Igbo sacrificial thought lies in its critique of radical individualism. By emphasizing relationality, communal responsibility, and existential complementarity, the Igbo

worldview presents an alternative understanding of selfhood grounded in moral interdependence and communal solidarity.

The existential relevance of sacrifice is equally significant. Contemporary societies increasingly struggle with questions concerning meaning, suffering, identity, and purpose. Frankl (2006) maintains that modern existential crises often emerge from the inability to discover meaning within suffering and responsibility. The Igbo conception of sacrifice addresses this crisis by interpreting suffering and discipline as transformative experiences capable of producing wisdom, self-awareness, and existential maturity.

Additionally, Igbo sacrificial thought contributes meaningfully to contemporary African epistemology by challenging purely rationalistic conceptions of knowledge. The Igbo worldview demonstrates that knowledge is not limited to abstract cognition but includes experiential wisdom, moral consciousness, spiritual awareness, and communal participation. Through sacrifice, individuals acquire existential insight concerning suffering, morality, destiny, and communal responsibility.

The relevance of sacrifice is also evident within moral philosophy. The contemporary world increasingly faces ethical crises involving corruption, selfishness, violence, and social injustice. The Igbo sacrificial worldview emphasizes discipline, moral restraint, responsibility, and concern for communal welfare as essential

conditions for authentic personhood. Such values remain necessary for the restoration of ethical consciousness within modern societies.

Furthermore, the reinterpretation of sacrifice as a pathway to self-knowledge contributes to intercultural philosophical dialogue between African and Western existential traditions. The existential concerns addressed by philosophers such as Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Frankl find significant resonance within Igbo sacrificial consciousness. Both traditions emphasize suffering, responsibility, inward transformation, and existential becoming as conditions for authentic selfhood.

♦ Comparative Perspective between Western Existentialism and Igbo Thought

There are important philosophical similarities and differences between Western existentialism and Igbo existential consciousness, particularly in their understanding of selfhood, suffering, responsibility, and authentic existence. Existential philosophers such as Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Frankl emphasize the individual's confrontation with existence, anxiety, freedom, suffering, and the search for meaning. Heidegger (1962), for instance, argues that authentic existence emerges when the individual assumes responsibility for being, while Kierkegaard (1980) emphasizes inwardness and existential commitment as conditions for authentic selfhood. Sartre (2007) further maintains that human beings define themselves through free choices and actions, whereas Frankl (2006)

interprets suffering as a pathway to existential meaning and fulfillment.

Although these existential concerns resonate with Igbo sacrificial consciousness, significant differences remain. Western existentialism often emphasizes individuality, subjective freedom, and personal autonomy, whereas Igbo existential thought is fundamentally communal and relational. In Igbo epistemology, the self does not exist in isolation but within a network of relationships involving the community, ancestors, spiritual realities, and one's *chi*. Unlike Sartrean radical freedom, Igbo selfhood is realized through complementarity, communal obligation, moral responsibility, and alignment with destiny. Similarly, while Western existentialism frequently portrays suffering as an individual existential burden, Igbo thought interprets suffering and sacrifice within the broader context of communal harmony, spiritual balance, and existential becoming. Consequently, sacrifice in Igbo philosophy functions not merely as personal existential struggle but as a communal and ontological process through which authentic personhood and self-knowledge are attained.

♦ Critical Evaluation

Although the Igbo conception of sacrifice possesses profound philosophical and existential significance, certain tensions and limitations require critical examination within contemporary ethical and social discourse. Traditional Igbo society strongly emphasizes communal responsibility, kinship loyalty, and collective identity. While these values promote solidarity and

social cohesion, they may sometimes suppress individual autonomy and existential freedom. In many communities, individuals are expected to contribute financially to burial ceremonies, title-taking festivals, communal projects, and extended family obligations regardless of their economic condition. Failure to participate often attracts social criticism or exclusion. Such pressures may subordinate personal aspirations entirely to communal demands.

This tension is particularly evident in some traditional marriage and burial practices. Lavish funeral ceremonies, often interpreted as sacrificial obligations to ancestors and community, sometimes compel families to incur heavy debts merely to satisfy communal expectations. Similarly, age-grade obligations and title-taking ceremonies may place excessive financial and social burdens on individuals. Philosophically, this raises important questions concerning the balance between communal responsibility and personal freedom. While sacrifice remains essential for communal harmony, it becomes problematic when it undermines existential self-determination.

Another limitation concerns ritual practices that conflict with contemporary ethical standards and human rights principles. Historically, certain sacrificial practices within some African societies reflected ritual assumptions tied to spiritual purification and cosmic balance but are no longer morally acceptable. Examples include the killing of twins in some precolonial communities, discriminatory aspects of the *Osu* caste

system, and harsh widowhood cleansing practices. Such practices undermine human dignity, equality, and social justice, thereby requiring critical reinterpretation. The philosophical essence of sacrifice as moral responsibility, discipline, and communal solidarity should therefore be preserved, while practices incompatible with modern ethical consciousness should be rejected.

Contemporary realities such as migration, capitalism, social media culture, prosperity-centered religiosity, and political corruption further demonstrate the transformation of sacrificial consciousness in African societies. Economic migration and capitalist values have weakened communal bonds as individuals increasingly prioritize personal advancement over communal obligations. Social media culture has also encouraged excessive self-presentation and material competition, often undermining traditional values of humility, discipline, and solidarity. Similarly, prosperity-oriented religious movements frequently interpret sacrifice in transactional terms as a means of obtaining wealth or miracles rather than moral transformation and existential growth. Political corruption equally reflects the erosion of sacrificial ethics, where public office is pursued for personal enrichment instead of communal service.

Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the enduring philosophical relevance of sacrifice within Igbo epistemology. Sacrifice continues to reveal that self-knowledge is attained not merely through abstract rational reflection but through existential participation in

suffering, responsibility, discipline, and communal life. Through sacrificial engagement, individuals confront the deeper meanings of existence and attain authentic selfhood, moral consciousness, and existential awareness.

Conclusion

This work has examined sacrifice as an existential and epistemic pathway to self-knowledge within Igbo epistemology. Against interpretations that reduce sacrifice to mere ritual performance or religious appeasement, the study has demonstrated that sacrifice within the Igbo worldview possesses deeper ontological, moral, communal, and existential significance. Sacrifice functions not only as a medium of spiritual mediation but also as a transformative process through which the individual attains moral consciousness, existential awakening, and authentic personhood.

The study established that the Igbo understanding of reality is fundamentally relational and complementary. Human existence is interpreted within an interconnected network involving Chukwu, divinities, ancestors, spirits, the community, and one's *chi*. Within this ontological structure, sacrifice becomes essential for maintaining harmony between visible and invisible realities. Ritual sacrifice, communal responsibility, moral discipline, and existential endurance all contribute to the preservation of cosmic balance and communal equilibrium.

Furthermore, the work demonstrated that self-knowledge in Igbo epistemology is not merely introspective or

individualistic but experiential, communal, moral, and spiritual. The self (*onwe*) is realized through participation in communal existence, existential struggle, ethical responsibility, and alignment with one's destiny (*chi*). Through sacrificial engagement, individuals encounter suffering, discipline, limitation, and moral obligation, thereby attaining deeper awareness of selfhood and existential purpose. Sacrifice therefore emerges as a process of inward transformation and existential becoming.

The study also argued that the contemporary decline of sacrificial consciousness has contributed to moral fragmentation, excessive individualism, existential confusion, and the weakening of communal values within many modern African societies. Nevertheless, the Igbo conception of sacrifice remains philosophically relevant because it provides an alternative framework for understanding morality, identity, suffering, and existential fulfillment. Its emphasis on relational existence, communal responsibility, and experiential wisdom offers valuable insights for contemporary discussions in African philosophy, existentialism, and intercultural epistemology.

This work contributes to African philosophy by expanding the interpretation of sacrifice beyond ritualism into the sphere of existential selfhood, moral consciousness, and epistemological reflection. It also contributes to intercultural philosophical discourse by demonstrating important convergences between Igbo ontology and existential phenomenology. Ultimately,

sacrifice in Igbo epistemology reveals that authentic selfhood is attained not through isolated rational introspection alone but through existential participation in suffering, communal responsibility, moral discipline, and the continuous search for meaning within the human condition.

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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENT DEGRADATION ON QUALITY OF LIFE

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Abstract

The detrimental effects of environmental degradation on standards of living cannot be exaggerated. The connection between environmental decline, living standards and sustainability has emerged as a topical issue in international development debates especially in West Africa where ecological pressures and socio-economic weaknesses coincide. This paper fundamentally exploreshow environmental degradation affects quality of life and sustainability in West Africa emphasizing health, economic stability and ecological equilibrium. Human sustainability refers to the capacity to uphold or assist a process continuously and avert resource depletion. The trajectory of negative impact and adverse effects on quality of life have led to environmental degradation emerging as a vital global issue with extensive consequences for human welfare and sustainable growth. The research employed a descriptive design and heavily relied on secondary data sources to illustrate how elements like air pollution, deforestation, biodiversity decline, and water contamination diminish living standards and jeopardize

long-term sustainability. Findings indicated that environmental harm adversely impacts life satisfaction, heightens disease burden and hinders economic productivity especially among at risk groups. The research also shows that deforestation and pollution greatly lower quality of life whereas better environmental management boosts well-being and sustainability. The paper concluded that effective and sustainable environmental practices, robust governance and cohesive policy frameworks are crucial for enhancing quality of life and guaranteeing ecological sustainability. Recommendations with policy implications were made along with robust suggestions for direction of future research

Keywords; *Environmental degradation, quality of life, sustainability, wellbeing.*

Introduction

Environmental degradation in West Africa represents combination of damaged environment and socio-economic inequalities that impact quality of life in the region.The identified Westa African nations mostly affected include Coastal West Africa comprising Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Togo besides the mining belts of Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Guinea and the Sahel region of **Nigeria**, Niger, Burkina Faso and Niger. Depletion of natural resources that include deforestation, land degradation, and coastal erosiondriven by rapid urbanization, unsustainable agriculture, resource extraction and other human factors have contributed significantly to decline in quality of life and

environmental decline globally. Quality of life (QoL) is a multidimensional concept that includes physical health, psychological well-being, economic stability, and social relationships. Increasingly, scholars argue that environmental conditions are fundamental determinants of quality of life, as access to clean air, water, and natural resources directly affecting human well-being Sustainability.In essence, sustainability are about preserving to meet needs of tomorrow. Essentially, environmental sustainability is a core pillar of sustainable development and emphasizes the protection of ecosystems and efficient use of resources.The relationship between environmental degradation, quality of life and sustainability has become a central issue in global development discourse, particularly in developing regions where environmental stress and socio-economic vulnerabilities intersect and more research is needed not only to deepen understanding of the dynamics but to elevate the knowledge to in-depth levels.

Unarguably, environmental degradation, resource scarcity and pollution are major drivers of unprecedented level of insecurity, conflicts, violence, and multifaceted displacements particularly in developing countries all with implications on quality of life. When the natural environment no longer has the capacity to longer support livelihoods that include farming and fishing, the populations become vulnerable leading to increased crime, social tension, and the rise of violent groups. The International Institute of Sustainable Development have pointed out the link between poor Environment and Insecurity as well as resource scarcity and conflict. The depletion of natural resources, such as the shrinking of

Lake Chad, drives competition among communities for water, arable land, and fishing spots and the consequence is violent conflicts and clashes. An environmental; degradation such as oil spillage and pollution in the Niger Delta or desertification in the North Nigeria destroys traditional economic activities and force people, particularly youth into poverty, making them susceptible to criminality.On the other hand, ecological degradation, including floods and drought, causes mass displacement resulting in displaced populations (IDPs) often facing extreme poverty and lack of opportunities that exacerbate urban crime and violence. Pollution and environmental degradation, including urban waste and contamination, have been found to directly cause severe health issues and decrease quality of life through increasing frustration and violence.

Statement of the Problem

In recent decades, the relationship between quality of life and environmental degradation in the West African region has gained increasing prominence in academic and policy debates.Environmental degradation drastically lowers the quality of life in West Africa through severe public health crises, rampant food insecurity and massive economic losses. Air and water pollution cause millions of premature deaths, while land degradation and coastal erosion destroy livelihoods, displace communities, and stifle regional economic growth. It has become clear that human well-being cannot be adequately assessed using conventional economic indicators alone, such as gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Instead, it is essential to

incorporate substantive environmental dimensions—such as air quality, thermal regulation, biodiversity conservation, and secure access to water resourcesinto the analysis. This integrative approach acknowledges that healthy ecosystems directly influence both mental and physical health. Despite growing awareness of environmental issues, environmental degradation continues to worsen globally with severe consequences for human well-being. Many communities, particularly in low-income and vulnerable regions, are disproportionately affected by environmental decline.In Nigeria, issues such as deforestation, soil erosion, flooding, air and water pollution and desert encroachment have disrupted livelihoods and increased health risks. For instance, rural populations dependent on agriculture faces reduced productivity due to soil degradation, while urban residents suffer from poor air quality and inadequate waste disposal systems.Besides the growing literature, there remains a critical research gap on how environmental degradation affects quality of life across social and geographic contexts. There is a lack of integrative models that connect environmental conditions to both objective and subjective indicators of well-being,

The problem is further compounded by weak environmental policies, lack of enforcement, poverty, and limited public awareness. As a result, environmental degradation continues to undermine efforts to improve living standards and achieve sustainable development.There is therefore a critical need to examine the extent to which environmental degradation

affects quality of life and to identify strategies that can mitigate its negative impacts. Habitat degradation and fragmentation not only may decrease food availability and restrict the movement of humans and animals within the region. Thus, understanding this relationship is essential for policymakers, researchers, and development practitioners seeking to promote sustainable human development.

Despite global efforts to promote sustainable development, environmental degradation continues to intensify and elevate to astonishing levels posing serious threats to quality of life and long-term sustainability. Air pollution, deforestation, water scarcity, and climate change have significantly reduced access to essential resources required for healthy living.Empirical evidence shows that environmental degradation has a direct negative impact on life satisfaction and well-being, particularly in developing countries and marginalized communities In Africa, for example, environmental degradation has been linked to declining quality of life due to its effects on agriculture, health, and economic productivity

Furthermore, environmental degradation undermines sustainability by depleting natural resources and disrupting ecological systems necessary for future survival. Rapid urbanization and weak environmental governance exacerbate these challenges, leading to increased pollution, poor sanitation, and loss of biodiversity.Despite the growing body of research, there remains a gap in understanding the integrated relationship between environmental degradation, quality

of life, and sustainability. While attention is frequently given to the economic and social effects such as malnutrition and disease outbreaks, the impact on overall quality of life have not received adequate attention. Many policies address these issues separately rather than holistically, resulting in ineffective interventions. Thus, there is a critical need to examine how environmental degradation affects both present well-being and future sustainabilityand to develop integrated strategies that address these interconnected challenges bringing to the fore behavioral components of environmental degradation.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present study

1. To examine the causes of environmental degradation
2. To assess the impact of environmental degradation on quality of life.
3. To evaluate the implications of environmental degradation for sustainability.
4. To identify vulnerable populations affected by environmental degradation.
5. To propose strategies for promoting environmental sustainability and improving quality of life.
6. To contribute to body of knowledge and make recommendations that can shape the direction of future research

Significance of Study

The study is significant in various ways namely by deepening understanding and exposing the dynamics of environmental degradation and impact on quality of life and contributing to body of knowledge in environmental degradation and quality of life an area that has received little attention and by enhancing the understanding of environmental conditions that impact quality of life as well as providing theoretical and policy-relevant contributions to the emerging field of environmental justice and sustainable development. The paper, informs sustainable resource management policy and shapes climate justice initiatives andconstitute a strategic evidence-based tool in the hands of environmental and economic planners. with aim to protect the environmental ecosystems and promote quality of life and sustainability. The paper provides significant insight into the overall impact and dynamics of environmental degradation on human wellbeing and sustainable development by exposing behavioral contexts and gaps in knowledge and practice.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to understanding the effect of environmental degradation on quality of life and sustainabilityin West Africa region with focus on identifying types of environmental degradation and what constitutes quality of life and sustainability

Conceptual Framework

In order to understand the complex relationship between environmental degradation and quality of life, studies have postulated that it is necessary to draw upon interdisciplinary theoretical perspectives that transcend purely economic interpretations of well-being and quality of life which is extrapolated to analyzing environmental issues in quality of life. Typically, environmental degradation includes pollution, deforestation, desertification, biodiversity loss, and climate change. These processes disrupt ecosystems and reduce the availability of natural resources. A conceptual framework linking environmental degradation to quality of life (QoL) generally integrates ecosystem health with human well-being, exploring how pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change diminish physical, mental, and economic conditions. Common frameworks utilize the capabilities approach (impact on life choices) and human needs theory impact on subsistence/health to measure degradation's effect on human prosperity, as highlighted in studies on the following.Environmental degradation is thus not merely an ecological issuebut a multidimensional crisis that affects health, economic stability, and social justice.

Quality of Life

Quality of life encompasses physical health, mental well-being, income, housing, and social relationships. Environmental quality plays a significant role in determining these factors. It denotes the extent to which

an individual or community is satisfied with aspects of life.

Sustainability

Sustainability involves maintaining ecological balance while promoting economic development and social equity. Environmental sustainability is essential for long-term human survival.

The key components of the framework are summarized as follows

- The Degradation–Poverty linkage**:** This explains how environmental damage exacerbates poverty, which in turn leads to further exploitation of natural resources resource.
- Impact on Health and Well-being**:** Environmental degradation, particularly from pollution, directly decreases longevity and increases mortality.
- Ecological Impact: Using environmental impact assessments to link consumption directly to environmental degradation and QoL
- Integrated Assessment approach**:** Combining qualitative (perceived) and quantitative (measured) data on both environment and quality of life, as explored by the
- Policy Focused Models: Focus on "pay as you pollute" initiatives, environmental management, and sustainable development goals (SDGs) to reverse degradation.

- Human Factors: Conceptualizing the relationship as a bi-directional cycle, where human activity causes degradation, which in turn modifies human behavior and population structure

Review of Related Literature

Globally, Quality of life has constantly been threatened by environmental degradation. Numerous reports warn that environmental degradation has intensified its impact on human well-being. According to WHO,air pollution indoor and outdoor causes over seven million premature deaths annually, with particulate matterand nitrogen dioxide (NO2) remain amajor contributor to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Although Africa emits only 3% of global greenhouse gases, it faces disproportionate consequences such as extreme droughts, loss of arable land, and increasing food insecurity all leading to decreased quality of life. These inequalities are further exacerbated by geopolitical asymmetries and institutional weaknesses in the most vulnerable regions. Numerous studies have explored the link between environmental degradation, quality of life, and sustainability. A study of twenty-four countries found that deforestation and air pollution significantly reduce quality of life, while improved sanitation enhances well-being. MDPI Research in Africa shows that environmental degradation has severe negative effects on quality of life, particularly due to climate-related impacts on agriculture and livelihoods Studies on life satisfaction reveal a consistent negative relationship between environmental degradation and human well-being Urban research on its part highlights that water pollution and

environmental stress significantly reduce perceived quality of life in cities.Sustainability research indicates that improvements in environmental performance and ecological management contribute positively to quality-of-life outcomes These studies demonstrate that environmental degradation has both direct and indirect effects on human well-being and sustainability. Several studies have established a connection between climate change and mental health.According to the World Bank (1992), environmental degradation includes deforestation, air pollution, water pollution, soil degradation, and biodiversity loss. Environmental degradation is often caused by human activities such as industrialization, mining, urbanization, and unsustainable agricultural practices. The World Health Organization (2018) identified climate change as a major threat to mental well-being, linking it to stress, trauma, and depression.Berry et al. (2010) introduced the concept of "eco-anxiety," describing chronic fear of environmental doom.Clayton et al. (2017) emphasized that climate change affects mental health through acute eventse.g. Disasters and long-term environmental changes.Johnson et al. (1997) described environmental degradation as the reduction in the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives. Similarly, Mohammed et al. (2021) defined environmental degradation as the depreciation in the quantity and quality of environmental resources such as land, air, water, flora, and fauna. The intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2021) reported that climate-related risks include psychological distress and social conflict.Cunsolo & Ellis (2018) highlighted the

emotional impact of environmental loss, particularly among indigenous and rural populations.These studies demonstrate that climate change has both immediate and long-term psychological and quality of life consequences.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive in nature relying primarily secondary data sources. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journals, international organization reports and environmental studies. A qualitative analytical approach was used to examine relationships between environmental degradation, quality of life and sustainability. The study synthesizes findings from multiple contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Results and Findings

The study suggests that progress in quality of life is certainly accompanied by degree of environmental improvements an indication that the environment is equally a predictor of quality of life. The findings highlight the urgent need to incorporate sustainability criteria into well-being policies. Findings from reviewed literature revealed a direct health impact i.e.Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, grief, emotional stress and depression occurred following natural disasters and climate related uncertainty. The Indirect Mental Healthimpact includes mental stress, degree of anxiety and psychological distress which are consequences of food insecurity and economic hardship. There is abundance of research evidence that Air

pollution which is harmful to humans contributes to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and this has negative impact impact on quality of life.Evidence from reviewed literature indicate that access to sanitation services has a positive and highly significant effect on quality of life. Environmental stress increases health issues and reduced agricultural productivity due to soil degradation and Loss of livelihoods in farming and fishing communities also Increased health healthcare costs that eventually affects quality of life and sustainability. In terms of social impact on quality-of-life issues such as migration due to environmental stress and erosion leads to loss of livelihoods in farming and agricultural productivity all which have negative impact on quality of life and sustainability. The undeniable fact is that the sustainability impact arises from the depletion of natural resources, Loss of biodiversity and reduced capacity for future development disrupts ecological systems necessary for sustainable development, making it difficult to achieve long-term economic and social goals The findings further revealed that improving environmental quality is essential for enhancing human well-being improving quality of life and achieving sustainable development. In all, there is strong evidence that degraded environments and exploitation cause loss of biodiversity, contamination of water sources and poor living conditions in urban areas significantly reduce life satisfaction. These results align with proven theories which emphasize the critical role of preserved natural environments for maintaining public health and quality of life.

Discussion

The primary purpose of study is to examine the impact of environmental degradation quality of life and sustainability. Result has clearly established a clear relationship between key environmental variables and quality of life globally consistent with previous studies. Environmental degradation is significantly associated with a decline in well-being and quality of life which aligns with the findings of most studies Likewise, recent research indicates that the loss of vegetation cover affects biodiversity, microclimate, and equitable access to green spaces, especially in vulnerable regions. This effect is more severe in communities with a high dependence on ecosystem services, as observed in contexts of artisanal mining or accelerated deforestation. In contrast, access to sound environmental practices and basic sanitation services shows a strong positive relationship with quality of life. It has also been pointed out that effective environmental management, such as improved sanitation and reduced pollution are crucial for improving life expectancy and well-being, especially in developing nations. The present study seeks to analyze the relationship between environmental degradation and quality of life globally. The aim is to identify the mechanisms through which environmental factorsuch as biodiversity loss, air pollution, and water insecurity impact human well-being, particularly in contexts marked by structural vulnerability contribute to reduction in quality of life.

Conclusion

This study reveals the need for adopting a multidimensional and context-based approach when analyzing the relationship between environmental conditions and quality of life. The fact is Environmental degradation poses a serious threat to both quality of life and human sustainability. The impact of environmental degradation is widespread and extensive affecting health, economic stability, and social well-being. The findings from reviewed literature study emphasized that improving environmental quality is essential for enhancing human well-being and achieving sustainable development.Research concluded that science environmental degradation poses a serious threat to both quality of life and sustainability, an urgent action is necessary to haltcontinued degradation of the environment otherwise community, national and globalefforts towardsquality-of-life improvement will be undermined. It is important to reiterate that the impacts of degradation are widespread with adverse consequences on h health, economic activities and social well-being. The study concludes that improving environmental quality is essential for enhancing human well-being and achieving sustainable development. There is a clear understanding from findings that without urgent action, environmental degradation will continue to affect quality of life and undermine sustainability.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations

In view of the importance of life satisfaction and quality of life, there is need to promote community-based support systems and resilience programs to improve quality of life and sustainability. It is equally important to encourage and expand interdisciplinary research on quality of life. It is as well recommended that there is need for behavioral and attitudinal changes towards environment on the part of communities in the region. The study further recommended strengthening habitat planning, environmental policies and enforcementmechanisms, promoting sustainable agriculture and resource management, massive investments in renewable energy and clean technologies besides improving waste management and sanitation systems. The study also recommended increased public awareness integrating environmental sustainability into development planning and introducing environmental education as a compulsory discipline in schools and further highlighted the need to support environmental research and data collection efforts on environment impacts. In all,the study emphasized that improving environmental quality is essential to improving long-term life satisfaction and wellbeing of people.It is also recommended that all countries in the region comply with 2015 Paris agreement a legally binding successor to Kyoto protocol calling for reduction in emissions to improve quality of life and sustainability

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NZIPỤTA MMETỤTA ỌZỤZỤ NWA N'ỌGANIIHU AGỤMAKWỤKWỌ: NTỤLE *A TỤỌRỌ ỌMARA* NA *NWAANYỊ DỊ URU*

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Ụmiedemede

Nchọcha a nyochara nzipụta mmetụta ọzụzụ nwa n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ n'iduuazị Igbo ndị a họọrọ; A Tụọrọ Ọmara na Nwaanyị Dị Uru. Ebumnobi nchọcha a bụ ịchọpụta etu ndị odee si zi ọrụ ọzụzụ nwa na nduzi ezinaụlọ n'ịkwalite ma ọ bụ igbochi ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ ụmụaka. Ọ bụ ezie na e nweela ọtụtụ ọmụmụ gbasara ihe ndị na-emetụta ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ, ma, enwekabeghị nke lebara anya n'etu agụmagụ Igbo si anọchite anya isiokwu a. Nchọcha a jiri usoro nkọwa na nnyocha ọdịnaya (content analysis) nyochaa data sitere n'iduuazị ndị a họọrọ, ebe Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha (Social Learning Theory) nke Albert Bandura bụ ntọala nkọwa ya. Nchọpụta gosiri na ezi ọzụzụ nwa, nke gụnyere nduzi, ịdọ aka ná ntị, nkwado ezinaụlọ, ịkụnye ezi omume na ịgba ụmụaka ume, na-arụ ọrụ dị mkpa n'ịkwalite mmasị n'agụmakwụkwọ, ịdị uchu na mmezu agụmakwụkwọ. N'aka nke ọzọ, nleghara anya, nduzi na-adighị mma na echiche na-adighị akwado mmụta nwere ike ibute omume ọjọọ na igbochi ọganihu agụmakwụkwọ ụmụaka. A chọpụtara na ndị odee nke A Tụọrọ Ọmara na Nwaanyị Dị Uru ji

agwa na nzipụta agwa ha gosi na ọzụzụ nwa bụ ntọala dị mkpa n'idozi ọdịnihu agụmakwụkwọ na mmepe zuru oke nke nwata. N'ihi ya, a tụrụ aro ka ndị nne na nna, ndị nlekọta, ndị nkụzi na ndị na-eme iwu agụmakwụkwọ na-arụkọ ọrụ ọnụ n'ịkwalite ezi ọzụzụ nwa dịka ụzọ isi meziwanye ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ na mmepe ọha mmadụ.

Ọkpụrụokwu: Ọzụzụ nwa, agụmakwụkwọ, ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ, iduuazị Igbo, Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha.

Ndubanye

Agụmakwụkwọ bụ otu n'ime ngwáọrụ kachasị mkpa e ji azụlite mmadụ na ọha mmadụ n'oge a. Ọ na-enye mmadụ ohere ịzụlite ọgụgụ isi, nkà na àgwà ọma ndị ga-enyere ya aka ibi ndụ bara uru ma sonye n'iwulite obodo ya. Dịka Dewey (1916) siri kwuo, agụmakwụkwọ abụghị naanị nkwadebe maka ndụ kama ọ bụ akụkụ dị mkpa nke ndụ n'onwe ya, ebe mmadụ na-amụta site na nkuzi na mmekọrịta ya na gburugburu. Freire (1970) gbakwụnyere na agụmakwụkwọ kwesịrị ịbụ ụzọ e si enye mmadụ ikike ighọta ọnọdụ ya ma nwee ike inwe mgbanwe bara uru n'ime onwe ya na n'ọha. N'otu aka ahụ, UNESCO (2021) kwusiri ike na mmepe obodo na mmezu ebumnobi mmepe ga-adigide na-adabere nke ukwuu n'ogo na ezi agụmakwụkwọ ụmụaka na ndị ntorobịa na-enweta.

N'agbanyeghị mkpa agụmakwụkwọ, ihe ịga nke ọma ụmụaka n'ụlọakwụkwọ anaghị adabere naanị n'ụlọakwụkwọ ma ọ bụ n'ọrụ ndị nkụzi. Ọtụtụ ndị ọkà

mmụta egosila na ezinaụlọ na ụdị ọzụzụ nwa na-eketa òkè dị ukwuu n'ịhazi agwa, omume na mmasị nwata n'ịmụ ihe. Bronfenbrenner (1979) kọwara na mmepe nwata na-adabere n'ọtụtụ usoro mmekọrịta gbara ya gburugburu, ma ezinaụlọ bụ nke kacha pụta ihe ma bụrụkwa nke na-enwe mmetụta siri ike. N'otu aka ahụ, Baumrind (1967) chọpụtara na ụdị nduzi na njikwa ndị nne na nna na-enye ụmụ ha nwere ike ịkwalite ma ọ bụ gbochie uto ọgụgụ isi, njide onwe onye na ihe ịga nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ.

N'omenaala Igbo, ọzụzụ nwa bụ ọrụ dị nsọ nke ezinaụlọ na obodo. A na-ele nwata anya dịka onye ga-anọchi anya ezinaụlọ na ọgbọ n'ọdịnihu, ya mere, a na-atụ anya ka e jiri ezi nduzi, ịdọ aka na ntị na ezi omume zụlite ya. N'ihi ya, ọzụzụ nwa na-agafe naanị inye nri na uwe; ọ gụnyekwara ịkụnye ụkpụrụ ịrụsịọrụ ike, nsọpụrụ, ezi omume na ịhụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya.

Agụmagụ Igbo, dịka enyo ndụ eji ahụta ndụ, na-egosipụta n'ụzọ doro anya, mmekọrịta dị n'etiti ezinaụlọ, ọzụzụ nwa na mmepe agụmakwụkwọ. Ndị odee na-eji agwa na nzipụta agwa ha gosipụta etu nduzi ọma, nkwado nne na nna na ịkụziri ụmụaka ezi omume si enyere ha aka ime nke ọma, nakwa etu nleghara anya ma ọ bụ ọzụzụ na-adighị mma pụrụ isi duga ha n'ụzọ ga-emebi ọdịnihu ha. N'echiche a, agụmagụ anaghị arụ ọrụ ntụrụndụ naanị; ọ na-arụkwa ọrụ nkuzi na mgbasa ụkpụrụ bara uru n'ime ndị mmadụ, dịka Achebe (1975) siri kwuo na ọrụ onye odee Afrịka bụ ịkọwa ma kpalite mgbanwe n'ime obodo ya.

N'agbanyeghị na e nweela ọtụtụ nchọcha gbasara agụmakwụkwọ ụmụaka na ihe ndị na-emetụta ya, ọtụtụ n'ime ha lekwasịrị anya n'akụkụ mmekọrịta mmadụ, akụ na ụba ma ọ bụ sayensị omume. N'aka nke ọzọ, enwekabeghịnchọcha ndị lebara anya n'etu ndị odee Igbo si eji agụmagụ ha egosi na ọzụzụ nwa bụ isi ihe na-akwalite ma ọ bụ na-egbochi ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. Nke a na-egosi oghere dị mkpa nke chọrọ ka e nyochaa ya site n'echiche agụmagụ.

Ọ bụ n'ime oghere a ka nchọcha a dabere na ya. Ebumnobi ya bụ ịtụle nzipụta mmetụta ọzụzụ nwa n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ site n'ịtụcha iduuazị *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*. Nchọcha a na-achọ igosi etu ndị odee si eji agwa ha na nzipụta agwa dị n'akwụkwọ ha kwado echiche na-ekwu na ezi ọzụzụ nwa, nduzi kwesịrị ekwesị na nkwado ezinaụlọ bụ ihe ndị nwere ike iwulite ọdịnihu agụmakwụkwọ nwata, ebe nleghara anya na ọzụzụ na-adighị mma nwere ike ibute ọdịda ma ọ bụ gbochie mmezu ikike ya. N'ụzọ dị otu a, nchọcha a na-atụ anya itinye aka n'ịgbasa ọmụmụ gbasara agụmagụ Igbo ma gosipụta uru ọ bara n'ịkwalite echiche na omume ndị ga-ewulite ọgbọ nwere mmụta na ezi agwa.

Ntụleharị Agụmagụ

- **Ọzụzụ Nwa**

Ọzụzụ nwa bụ usoro a na-esi eduzi omume, echiche na agwa nwata site n'aka nne na nna, ndị nlekọta na ọha mmadụ ka o wee too bụrụ onye bara uru n'ezinaụlọ na obodo. Echiche a anaghị akwụsị naanị n'inye nwata nri, uwe na ebe obibi, kama, ọ gụnyere ịkụziri ya ezi omume, ịrụsịọrụ ike, nsọpụrụ, ịdabere n'eziokwu na mkpa

agụmakwụkwọ. Dịka Bornstein (2022) siri kwuo, ọzụzụ nwa bụ usoro mmekọrịta na-aga n'ihu nke na-emetụta mmepe ọgụgụ isi, mmepe omume na mmepe mmekọrịta mmadụ n'ogeọ bụ nwata na n'oge o toro.

Baumrind (1967) kewara ụdị ọzụzụ nwa n'ụzọ dị iche iche nke gụnyere ọzụzụnke na-ejikọta ịhụnanya na ịdọ aka ná ntị (*authoritative parenting*), nke siri ike ma na-adighị enye ohere mkparịta ụka (*authoritarian parenting*), nke na-ahapụ nwata ka o mee ihe ọ chọrọ (*permissive parenting*), na nke nleghara anya (*neglectful parenting*). N'ime ha, ụdị nke jikọtara ịhụnanya na nduzi doro anya ka ọtụtụ nchọpụta gosiri na ọ na-akwalite ntụkwasị obi, ịrụsi ọrụ ike na mmezu agụmakwụkwọ.

Darling na Steinberg (1993) na-arụ ụka na ihe na-eme ka ọzụzụ nwa nwee mmetụta abụghị naanị iwu ndị nne na nna na-etin, kama, ọ bụkwa ọnọdụ mmekọrịta na nkwado mmetụta uche ha na-enye. N'otu aka ahụ, Smetana (2017) kwusiri ike na ezi ọzụzụ nwa na-enyere nwata aka ịzụlite njide onwe ya, ikike ime mkpebi ziri ezi na mmụọ ịrụsi ọrụ ike.

N'omenaala Igbo, ọzụzụ nwa bụ ọrụ ezinaụlọ dum na obodo. A na-atụ anya ka nwata mụta nkwanye ugwu, ịrụsịọrụ ike na omume ọma site n'aka ndị okenye. Nke a na-egosi na echiche ndị Igbo banyere ọzụzụ nwa na-agafe naanị nlekọta anụ ahụ ma gbasaa ruo n'ịkụnye ụkpụrụ ga-enyere nwata aka ịga nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ na ndụ.

- **Agụmakwụkwọ**

Agụmakwụkwọ bụ usoro a na-esi ahafe nghọta, nkà, ụkpụrụ na ikike site n'otu ọgbọ gaa n'ọzọ site n'usoro mmụta a haziri ahazi ma ọ bụ nke na-eme n'ime ndụ kwa ụbọchị. Dewey (1916) kọwara agụmakwụkwọ dịka usoro mmepe mmadụ na-aga n'ihu nke na-eme ka onye ahụ nwee ike idozi nsogbu na isonye n'ọrụ obodo ya. Freire (1970) gbakwụnyere na ezigbo agụmakwụkwọ kwesịrị ime ka mmadụ nwee mmụọ nyocha na ikike ịgbanwe ọnọdụ ya karịa naanị ịnakọta ozi.

UNESCO (2021) na-ele agụmakwụkwọ anya dịka isi ntọala mmepe dịọkpụ, ịdị n'otu ọha na eze na mmezu ikike mmadụ. N'otu aka ahụ, OECD (2023) kwusiri ike na agụmakwụkwọ nke oge a kwesịrị ịzụlite ikike iche echiche miri emi, mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya na idozi nsogbu n'ụwa nke a na-agbanwe ngwa ngwa.

N'echiche nchọcha a, agụmakwụkwọ abụghị naanị ịga ụlọakwụkwọ ma ọ bụ inweta asambodo, kama, ọ bụ usoro zuru oke nke na-enyere nwata aka ịzụlite ikike uche, omume na mmekọrịta mmadụ nke ga-eme ka ọ bụrụ onye bara uru n'ọha obodo.

- **Ọganiihu Agụmakwụkwọ**

Ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ na-arụtụ aka n'ogo nwata ma ọ bụ onye mmụta ruru n'inweta ihe ọmụma, nkà na mmezu ebumnobi agụmakwụkwọ ya. A naghị amata ya naanị site n'akara ule ma ọ bụ asambodo, kama ọ gụnyekwara ikike iche echiche nke ọma, ịnagide nsogbu, ịnọgidesi ike n'ọrụ na mmepe omume ọma.

York et al. (2015) kwuru na ihe ịga nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ bụ echiche buru ibu nke na-agụnye mmezu agụmakwụkwọ, nnọgidesi ike n'ụlọakwụkwọ, mmepe onwe onye na njikere maka ọrụ na ndụ obodo. Richardson, Abraham na Bond (2012) chọpụtara na ihe ndị Dịka mkpali ime nke ọma, nkwado ezinaụlọ na njide onwe onye na-enwe mmetụta dị ukwuu n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ karịa naanị ọgụgụ isi.

N'otu aka ahụ, Credé, Kuncel na Harms (2008) gosiri na àgwà dịka ịdị uchuna ịrụsi ọrụ ike na-enyere ụmụ akwụkwọ aka ịgbaru ọsọ ha n'isi. Nke a na-egosi na ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ bụ njikọta ikike onwe onye na nkwado sitere n'ezinaụlọ na gburugburu ebe nwata bi.

Mmekọrịta Dị n'etiti Ọzụzụ Nwa na Ọganiihu Agụmakwụkwọ

Ọtụtụ nchọpụta egosila na ụdị ọzụzụ nwata na-enweta n'ezinaụlọ na-enwe mmetụta kpọm kwem n'àgwà ya n'ụlọakwụkwọ na ihe ọ na-emezu n'agụmakwụkwọ. Bronfenbrenner (1979) n'Atụtụ *Ecological Systems* kọwara na ezinaụlọ bụ ebe mbụ nwata na-amụta ụkpụrụ na omume ndị ga-emetụta mmepe ya n'ọdịnihu. Mgbe e nwere nkwado, nduzi na mmekọrịta dị mma n'etiti nne na nna na ụmụ ha, nwata na-enwekarị mmasị n'ịmụ ihe ma na-egosipụtakwa njide onwe onye.

Fan na Chen (2001), site n'ịtụle ọtụtụ nchọpụta, chọpụtara na enyemaka ndị nne na nna n'ihe gbasara agụmakwụkwọ ụmụ ha na-enwe njikọ dị mma na arụmọrụ ụlọakwụkwọ. Jeynes (2007) gbakwụnyere na ọ bụladị mgbe ndị nne na nna enweghị nnukwu ego ma ọ

bụ agụmakwụkwọ dị elu, nkwado mmetụta uche ha na atụmanya ọma ha nwere n'ebe ụmụ ha nọ ka nwere ike ime ka ụmụ ahụ mee nke ọma.

Wilder (2014) kwadoro na mmekọrịta ezinaụlọ na ụlọ akwụkwọ na nkwado nne na nna na-akwalite mkpali ime nke ọma, ịga ụlọ akwụkwọ mgbe niile na mmezu agụmakwụkwọ. Bornstein (2022) kwusiri ike na ụkpụrụ, omume na nkà nwata na-amụta n'ụlọ na-emetụta etú ọ ga-esi ewere agụmakwụkwọ na ihe mgbaru ọsọ ndụ ya.
N'omenaala Igbo, ebe a na-ele ezinaụlọ anya dịka ebe mbụ a na-akụziri nwata omume na ezi ọrụ, mmekọrịta a ka na-apụta ìhè. Nne na nna na ndị okenye na-arụ ọrụ dị mkpa n'ịkụnye mmụọ ịrụsiọrụ ike, nsọpụrụ na ịhụ mmụta n'anya. Ya mere, mgbe e nwere ezi ọzụzụ nwa, ọ na-abụkarị ntọala siri ike nke ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ; ma mgbe ọzụzụ ahụ adighị mma ma ọ bụ e nwere nleghara anya, ọ nwere ike ibute omume ọjọọ, enweghị mkpali n'ịmụ ihe na ọdịda agụmakwụkwọ.

N'ịdabere n'echiche ndị ọkà mmụta ndị a, nchọcha a na-ewere ọzụzụ nwa dịka otu n'ime ihe ndị kacha emetụta mmepe agụmakwụkwọ nwata. Nke a bụkwa isi echiche a ga-eji nyochaa etu ndị odee si zipụta mmetụta ezi ọzụzụ na ọzụzụ na-adighị mma n'akwụkwọ *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*.

Ntụle Atụtụ

Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha (Social Learning Theory)

Nchọcha a dabere n'Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha (*Social Learning Theory*), nke Albert Bandura wepụtara

ma kwalite n'afọ 1977. Atụtụ a na-ekwu na mmadụ, ọkachasị nwata, anaghị amụta ihe naanị site n'ihe a na-akụziri ya ozugbo, kama ọ na-amụtakwa ihe site n'ịhụ omume ndị ọzọ, ịnomi ha na inweta nkwado ma ọ bụ ntaramahụhụ dabeere n'omume ya. Bandura (1977) kwusiri ike na ezinaụlọ bụ ebe mbụ nwata na-enweta ụdị mmụta a, n'ihi na nne na nna na ndị okenye na-abụkarị ihe nlereanya ọ na-ele anya ma na-eso.

Dịka Bandura (1986) siri kọwaa n'ọrụ ya gbasara *Social Cognitive Theory*, mmụta mmadụ na-esite n'mmekọrịta ihe atọ: àgwà onye ahụ, omume ya na gburugburu ebe ọ bi. Nke a pụtara na ọzụzụ nwa na ụdị omume ndị nne na nna na-egosipụta n'ụlọ nwere ike ịhazi echiche nwata banyere agụmakwụkwọ, ịrụsịọrụ ike, ịdọ aka ná ntị na mmezu ebumnobi. Mgbe nwata na-ahụ nne na nna ma ọ bụ ndị nlekọta ya ka ha na-akwado mmụta, na-asọpụrụ ezi omume ma na-enye nduzi kwesịrị ekwesị, o yikarịrị ka ọ ga-anabata ma megharịa àgwà ndị ahụ.

Ọtụtụ ndị ọkà mmụta kwadoro echiche a. Schunk (2020) na-ekwu na mmụta site n'ịhụ ihe na imegharị ya (*observational learning*) bụ otu n'ime ụzọ kachasị mkpa ụmụaka si enweta nkà na ụkpụrụ omume. N'otu aka ahụ, Bussey na Bandura (1999) gosiri na omume na ụkpụrụ nwata na-amụta site n'ezinaụlọ na-enwe mmetụta ogologo oge n'ụzọ o si eme mkpebi na etú o si arụ ọrụ n'ụlọakwụkwọ na n'ọha mmadụ.

Mkpa Atụtụ a na Nchọcha a

Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha dabara adaba nke ukwuu n'isiokwu nchọcha a n'ihi na ọ na-akọwa etu ọzụzụ nwa

si emetụta ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. N'echiche a, nne na nna na ndị nlekọta abụghị naanị ndị na-enye nwata nri na ebe obibi; ha bụkwa ndị na-akụziri ya ụkpụrụ ndụ site n'omume ha, ndụmọdụ ha na mkpebi ha na-eme kwa ụbọchị. N'ihi ya, ezi ọzụzụ nwa nwere ike ịkwalite mmasị n'ịmụ ihe, ịrụsi ọrụ ike, ịchịkwa onwe onye na ịrụ ọrụ n'usoro, ebe nleghara anya ma ọ bụ nduzi na-adighị mma nwere ike ibute omume ọjọọ, enweghị ntụkwasị obi na ọdịda agụmakwụkwọ.

N'ihe gbasara agụmagụ, atụtụ a na-enyere onye nchọcha aka ịkọwa etu ndị odee si eji agwa na mmekọrịta ezinaụlọ wulite ozi ha. N'akwụkwọ *A Tụọrọ Ọmara*, mgbanwe a hụrụ n'àgwà Azụbụike na-egosi na nduzi, ịdọ aka ná ntị na mmezi sitere n'ezinaụlọ nwere ike ime ka nwata gbanwee ụzọ ma lekwasị anya n'agụmakwụkwọ. N'otu aka ahụ, *Nwaanyị Dị Uru* na-egosi na nkwado na atụmanya ọma sitere n'aka nne na nna nwere ike ịkwalite ọchịchọ ụmụaka iga ụlọakwụkwọ na ime nke ọma, ebe echiche ma ọ bụ omume na-adighị akwado agụmakwụkwọ nwere ike bụrụ ihe mgbochi nye mmepe ha.

Ọzọ kwa, atụtụ a na-enye ohere ịkọwa na ụmụaka abụghị naanị ndị na-anabata nduzi n'efu; ha na-ahọrọ, na-enyocha ma na-emeghari omume ha site n'ihe ha hụrụ na ihe ha mụtara. Nke a dabara n'echiche Bandura (1986) banyere *reciprocal determinism*, nke na-egosi na mmadụ na gburugburu ya na-emetụta ibe ha n'usoro na-aga n'ihu. Ya mere, mgbe agwa dị n'iduuazi ndị a na-anabata ezi nduzi ma na-eji ya emeziwanye ndụ ha, ọ na-

egosi etu ọzụzụ nwa si bụrụ isi ihe na-akwalite ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ.

NtụlegharịEderede Nchọpụtaga

N'ime afọ ndị gara aga, ọtụtụ ndị ọkà mmụta emeela nchọcha gbasara mmekọrịta dị n'etiti ọzụzụ nwa, itinye aka ezinaụlọ na ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. Ọtụtụ n'ime nchọpụta ndị a sitere n'akụkụ sayensị agụmakwụkwọ, akparamàgwà mmadụ na mmekọrịta ọha mmadụ, ebe ole na ole nyochara isiokwu a site n'echiche agụmagụ Igbo. Nke a na-eme ka o doo anya na e nwere mkpa ịgbasa ọmụmụ n'ụzọ ga-ejikọta agụmagụ na mmepe agụmakwụkwọ.

Jeynes (2022), site na nchịkọta ọmụmụ (*meta-analysis*) gbasara atụmanya ndị nne na nna n'ebe ụmụ ha nọ, chọpụtara na atụmanya dị elu na nkwado ezinaụlọ nwere njikọ siri ike na mmezu agụmakwụkwọ ụmụ akwụkwọ. Ọ rụrụ ụka na ọ bụladị mgbe ezinaụlọ enweghị nnukwu akụ na ụba, nkwenye ha n'ikike nwa na nkwado ha na-enye nwere ike ịkwalite arụmọrụ ụlọakwụkwọ. N'agbanyeghị uru nchọpụta a, ọ dabere n'ihe gbasara agụmakwụkwọ n'ozuzu ma ọ naghị eleba anya n'etú echiche ndị a si apụta n'agụmagụ ma ọ bụ n'ọrụ ndị odee Igbo.

Tan, Cheung na Lee (2025) nyochara ọtụtụ *meta-analysis* gbasara ụdị ọzụzụ nwa na ụtụ nne na nna n'agụmakwụkwọ. Ha chọpụtara na ụdị ọzụzụ na-ejikọta ịhụnanya, nduzi na njikwa ziri ezi (*authoritative parenting*) na-enwekarị mmekọrịta dị mma n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ, ebe ọzụzụnleghara anya ma ọ bụ njikwa siri ike na-enweghị nkwado mmetụta uche na-enwe

mmetụta na-adịghị mma. N'agbanyeghị, nchọpụta ha gbadoro ụkwụ n'ihe atụ sitere n'ụlọ akwụkwọ na nyocha mmekọrịta mmadụ, ọ bụghị na nzipụta edemede ma ọ bụ agụmagụ ọdịnaala.

N'aka nke ọzọ, Pinọuart (2016) chọpụtara na ụdị ọzụzụ nwa nke na-enye ịhụnanya, nkwado na mnwere onwe nwere njikọ dị mma na arụmọrụ agụmakwụkwọ, ebe ụdị ọzụzụ dabeere n'ike, nleghara anya ma ọ bụ njikwa uche nwere njikọ na-adịghị mma. Ihe nchọpụta a na-akwalite bụ na ọzụzụ nwa kwesịrị ịbụ ngwakọta nke nduzi, nkwado na ịkụziri nwata ezi ọrụ, kama ịbụ naanị ntaramahụhụ ma ọ bụ ihapụ ya kpamkpam.

N'agbanyeghị uru nchọpụta ndị a niile, e nwere oghere ọmụmụ pụtara ihe. Ha na-elekwasị anya n'ihe gbasara omume mmadụ, agụmakwụkwọ na mmekọrịta ezinaụlọ site n'ụzọ sayensị, ma ha anaghị atụle etu ndị odee si eji agwa, esemokwu na usoro akụkọ zipụta mmetụta ọzụzụ nwa n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ.

Ya mere, nchọcha a na-emeju oghere ahụ site n'ịtụle nzipụta mmetụta ọzụzụ nwa n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ n'iduuazị *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*. Kama ilekwasị anya n'ihe atụ sitere na nyocha ụlọ akwụkwọ ma ọ bụ data sayensị mmekọrịta mmadụ naanị, nchọcha a na-enyocha etu ndị odee Igbo si eji agwa na nzipụta agwa ha gosipụta na ezi ọzụzụ nwa nwere ike ịbụ ntọala nke mmepe agụmakwụkwọ, ebe nleghara anya ma ọ bụ nduzi na-adịghị mma nwere ike ibute ọdịda na ndụ nwata.

Ntụcha Nchọpụta

Nzipụta Mmetụta Ọzụzụ Nwa n'Ọganiihu Agụmakwụkwọ n'*A Tụọrọ Ọmara*

Otu n'ime ozi dị mkpa e zipụtara n'iduuazị *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* bụ na ọzụzụ nwa na nduzi sitere n'ezinaụlọ nwere ike ịgbanwe ụzọ ndụ nwata ma duzie ya n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. Onye odee jiri agwa Azụbụike na Chuka gosipụta ndịiche dị n'etiti nwata nwetara nduzi kwesịrị ekwesị na nke dara n'ọnọdụ ọzụzụ na-adighị mma. N'ụzọ a, akwụkwọ a na-egosi na ihe ịga nke ọma ma ọ bụ ọdịda nwata n'agụmakwụkwọ na-adabere nke ukwuu n'ụkpụrụ na omume e tinyere n'ime ya site n'oge ọ bụ nwata.

Na mmalite akụkọ ahụ, Azụbụike na-esonye n'otu ndị enyi a kpọrọ ndị*akpụobi* ma bụrụ ndị na-akwalite omume na-adighị mma nke nwere ike imebi ọdịnihu ya. Otu ọ dị, nna ya chọpụtara mgbanwe ahụ ma jiri amamihe, ịdọ aka ná ntị na nduzi dozie ọnọdụ ahụ. Kama ileghara ya anya, ezinaụlọ ya tinyere aka n'ịkụziri ya mkpa agụmakwụkwọ, ịrụsi ọrụ ike na ịhọrọ ezigbo ndị enyi. Mgbe mgbanwe a gasịrị, Azụbụike malitere ilekwasị anya n'ịmụ akwụkwọ ma gosipụta mmụọ ọhụrụ nke ịdị uchu na ịchịkwa onwe ya. Onye odee ji akparamagwa a kwado echiche na ezi ọzụzụ nwa nwere ike iweghachi nwata n'ụzọ ziri ezi ọ bụladị mgbe ọ malitere ịkpafuụzọ.

N'aka nke ọzọ, agwa Chuka na-arụ ọrụ dịka ihe atụ nke ihe nwere ike ime mgbe ọzụzụ nwa adighị ike ma ọ bụ mgbe e nweghị nduzi kwesịrị ekwesị. Omume ya na

mkpebi ndị ọ na-eme na-egosi na enweghị nlekọta na ntụziaka nwere ike iduga nwata n'omume ga-egbochi mmepe ya. Site n'itinye Azụbụike na Chuka n'otu akụkọ, onye odee na-emepụta ntụnyere doro anya nke na-eme ka onye na-agụ ya ghọta na ọ bụghị naanị ọgụgụ isi na-ekpebi ọdịnihu agụmakwụkwọ, kama ọ bụkwa ụdị ọzụzụ nwata natara.

Ihe ọzọ pụtara ìhè n'akwụkwọ a bụ na ọzụzụ nwa anaghị adabere naanị na ntaramahụhụ. Onye odee na-egosi na nkwurịta okwu, ndụmọdụ, nlekọta na igosi nwata ụzọ ziri ezi bụ akụkụ dị mkpa nke ezi ọzụzụ. Azụbụike agbanweghị n'ihi ụjọ naanị, kama ọ gbanwere n'ihi na ndị mụrụ ya na ndị okenye gbara ya gburugburu nyere ya nduzi ga-eme ka ọ ghọta uru agụmakwụkwọ na ihe ize ndụ dị n'ịgbaso omume ọjọọ.

Ntụle a kwekọrọ na Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha nke Bandura, nke na-ekwu na ụmụaka na-amụta site n'ịhụ ihe nlereanya na mmekọrịta ha na ndị gbara ha gburugburu. Azụbụike, mgbe ọ nwetara ezi nduzi na ezigbo ihe nlereanya n'ezinaụlọ, gbanwere echiche ya ma mezie omume ya. Nke a na-egosi na ezinaụlọ nwere ike ịbụ ebe a na-akụzi ụkpụrụ ga-eduga nwata n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ.

Ọzọ kwa, *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na-egosipụta echiche ọdịnaala Igbo na-ekwu na "a na-azụ nwa maka echi." N'echiche a, ọzụzụ nwa bụ itinye ego n'ọdịnihu ya. Ndị nne na nna na-arụsi ọrụ ike n'ịkụnye ezi agwa, ịdọ aka ná ntị na ịhụ mmụta n'anya na-ewulite ntọala siri ike nke ga-eme ka nwata nwee ike ime nke ọma n'ụlọ akwụkwọ na n'ọrụ

ndụ ndị ọzọ. N'aka nke ọzọ, nleghara anya ma ọ bụ ịhapụ nwata ka ọ too n'enweghị nduzi nwere ike ibute nsogbu ga-esiri ya ike idozi n'ọdịnihu.

Ya mere, site n'agwa Azụbụike na Chuka, onye odee na-eme ka o doo anya na ọzụzụ nwa bụ otu n'ime ihe ndị kacha emetụta mmepe agụmakwụkwọ. Ozi dị n'akwụkwọ a na-akwalite echiche na ndị nne na nna, ndị nlekọta na ọha mmadụ kwesịrị ịrụkọ ọrụ ọnụ n'ịzụlite ụmụaka n'ụzọ ga-eme ka ha bụrụ ndị nwere ezi omume, mmụọ ịrụsi ọrụ ike na ọchịchọ ime nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ.

Nzipụta Mmetụta Ọzụzụ Nwa n'Ọganiihu Agụmakwụkwọ na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*

N'iduuazị *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*, onye odee na-eji mmekọrịta dị n'etiti ndị nne na nna na ụmụ ha gosipụta na ọzụzụ nwa na nkwado ezinaụlọ bụ isi ihe na-akwalite ma ọ bụ na-egbochi ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. N'adighị ka *A Tụọrọ Ọmara*, nke lekwasịrị anya n'ịdọ aka ná ntị na ime ezi omume nwata, *Nwaanyị Dị Uru* na-enye nnukwu ohere ịtụle ọrụ nne na nna n'ikụnye ihụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya n'ime ụmụ ha na n'ịkwalite ọchịchọ ha ime nke ọma n'agbanyeghị ihe isi ike.

Otu n'ime ihe pụtara ìhè n'iduazị a bụ àgwà Ụlọma, onye gosipụtara onwe ya dịka nne ghọtara na agụmakwụkwọ bụ ihe ga-emepe ụzọ ndụ ụmụ ya. N'agbanyeghị ihe ịma aka ezinaụlọ na ọnọdụ siri ike ha na-eche ihu, ọ naghị akwụsị ịgba ụmụ ya ume ka ha gụọ akwụkwọ ma jiri ezi omume na ndidi chụsoo ọdịnihu ha. Onye odee ji agwa a gosipụta na ezi ọzụzụ nwa na-

amalite site n'ịkụnye nwatakịrị echiche ziri ezi banyere uru mmụta na mkpa ọ dị ịrụsi ọrụ ike iji nweta ya.

N'otu aka ahụ, agwa Nwadịụtọ na ụmụnne ya na-egosi mmetụta dị mma nke nduzi na nlekọta nne. Ha na-eto n'ụlọ ebe a na-akwalite ịdị uchu, nkwanye ugwu na ịdabere n'ezi ọrụ. N'ihi nke a, ha na-egosipụta mmụọ ịrụsi ọrụ ike n'agụmakwụkwọ ma na-enwekwa ike ịnagide nsogbu na-ahapụghị ebumnobi ha. Onye odee na-eme ka o doo anya na mkpali na nkwado sitere n'ezinaụlọ nwere ike ime ka nwata nwee ntụkwasị obi n'onwe ya ma nwee obi ike iga n'ihu n'agbanyeghị ihe mgbochi.

N'aka nke ọzọ, iduazị a na-egosikwa na echiche ndị nne na nna banyere agụmakwụkwọ nwere ike ịbụ ihe mgbochi nye mmepe ụmụaka. Omume Odogwu n'ihe gbasara agụmakwụkwọ ụmụ ya, karịsịa n'ebe o metụtara ụmụ nwaanyị, na-egosi etu nkwenye ọdịnaala ma ọ bụ mkpebi nne na nna nwere ike isi belata ohere ụmụaka nwere ịzụlite ikike ha. Site n'itinye echiche Odogwu n'ihu nkwado na ọgụ Ụlọma na-alụ maka ọdịnihu ụmụ ya, odee na-ezipụta esemokwu na-apụta mgbe ezinaụlọ enweghị otu echiche gbasara mkpa agụmakwụkwọ, ọ nwere ike ịkpata ihe isi ike n'ụzọ mmepe nwata.

Ihe ọzọ dị mkpa n'iduazị a bụ na ọzụzụ nwa apụtaghị naanị ịnye iwu ma ọ bụ ntaramahụhụ. Odee na-egosi na ịhụnanya, mkparịta ụka, nlekọta na ime ka ụmụaka nwee olileanya bụkwa akụkụ dị mkpa nke ezi ọzụzụ. Ụlọma na-agba ụmụ ya ume site n'okwu na omume ya, na-eme ka ha mata na mmụta bụ ụzọ isi meziwanye ndụ ha na

nke obodo ha. Nke a na-egosi na echiche na nkwado sitere n'aka nne na nna nwere ike ịpụta n'ọdịnihu agụmakwụkwọ nwata karịa ịkatọ ya mgbe niile.

Ntụcha a kwenyere n'Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha, nke na-ekwu na ụmụaka na-amụta ụkpụrụ, ọchịchọ na omume site n'ihe nlereanya nke ezinaụlọ ha. N'ime *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*, Ụlọma na-arụ ọrụ dịka ezigbo ihe nlereanya nke na-akwalite ịrụsi ọrụ ike, ndidi na ịhụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya. N'ihi ya, ụmụ ya na-amụta ịtụkwasị obi na mgbalị onwe ha ma na-ewere agụmakwụkwọ dịka ụzọ isi nweta mmepe onwe onye na nke ọha.

Ọzọ kwa, odee na-ejikwa akụkọ a kpalie mkparịta ụka gbasara mkpa ọ dị inye ụmụ nwoke na ụmụ nwanyị ohere nhatanha n'agụmakwụkwọ. Site n'ịgosipụta uru nkwado Ụlọma nyere ụmụ ya na ihe ịga nke ọma ha mechara nweta, akwụkwọ a na-ajụ echiche na agụmakwụkwọ bụ naanị ihe ga-abara ụmụnwoke uru. Kama, ọ na-egosi na mgbe a zụlitere ụmụaka n'ụzọ kwesịrị ekwesị ma nye ha ohere ịmụ ihe, ha nwere ike ighọ ndị ga-ewetara ezinaụlọ na obodo ha nnukwu uru.

N'ụzọ zuru ezu, *Nwaanyị Dị Uru* na-egosi na ọzụzụ nwa na-agụnye ịhụnanya, nduzi, nkwado na ịkụnye ụkpụrụ ọma nke na-eme ka nwata nwee mmasị n'agụmakwụkwọ ma nwee ike ime nke ọma. Ozi onye odee na-ezipụta bụ na ọdịnihu agụmakwụkwọ nwata na-amalitekarị n'ụlọ, ebe nne na nna na ndị nlekọta na-arụ ọrụ dị mkpa n'ịkpụzi echiche na omume ga-akwalite ma ọ bụ gbochie mmepe ya.

Mkparịta Ụka: Ntụnyere Nzipụta Mmetụta Ọzụzụ Nwa n'Ọganiihu Agụmakwụkwọ n'*A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*

Ntụcha e mere n'iduuazị *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru* na-egosi n'ụzọ doro anya na ndị odee abụọ ahụ na-ewere ọzụzụ nwa dịka otu n'ime ihe ndị kacha emetụta ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. Ọ bụ ezie na usoro ha si ewulite akụkọ na agwa dị iche, ha abụọ nwere otu echiche nke bụ: na ezi nduzi, nlekọta na nkwado sitere n'ezinaụlọ nwere ike ịkpụzi ọdịnihu nwata, ebe nleghara anya ma ọ bụ echiche na-adịghị akwado mmepe nwere ike imebi ikike nwata nwere.

N'*A Tụọrọ Ọmara*, onye odee na-elekwasị anya n'ọrụ ịdọ aka ná ntị, ime ezi omume na ịchịkwa mmekọrịta nwata na ndị enyi ya. Azụbụike na-egosi na mgbe nne na nna ma ọ bụ ndị nlekọta chọpụtara mmejọ nwata ma were amamihe duzie ya, enwere ike ịgbanwe ụzọ ndụ ya ma mee ka ọ laghachi n'ụzọ ga-eduga n'ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ. N'aka nke ọzọ, agwa Chuka na-egosinduịla n'iyi nke na-esite n'ịhapụ nwata n'enweghị nduzi na nlekọta kwesịrị ekwesị. Onye odee si n'ụzọ a kwuo na ọrụ ezinaụlọ abụghị naanị ịmụ nwa, kama ọ bụ ịzụlite ya ka ọ bụrụ onye nwere ezi agwa na ebumnobi doro anya.

N'*Nwaanyị Dị Uru*, isi ihe onye odee na-akwalite bụ nkwado ezinaụlọ, karịsịa ọrụ nne n'ịkụnye ịhụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya n'ime ụmụ ya. Ụlọma na-arụsi ọrụ ike n'igba ụmụ ya ume, n'ịkụziri ha uru mmụta na n'ịkwado ha n'agbanyeghị ihe isi ike ezinaụlọ. N'ihi nke a, ụmụ ya na-etolite n'echiche na agụmakwụkwọ bụ ụzọ

isi meziwanye ndụ ha. N'otu oge ahụ, esemokwu dị n'etiti echiche Ụlọma na nke Odogwu na-egosi na mgbe ndị nne na nna enweghị otu echiche banyere mkpa agụmakwụkwọ dị, ọ nwere ike ibute ihe mgbochi n'ụzọ mmepe ụmụaka.

Ihe jikọtara akwụkwọ abụọ a ọnụ bụ na ha abụọ na-egosi na ọzụzụ nwa na-amalite site n'ezinaụlọ ma na-aga n'ihu n'ịkpụzi omume nwata n'ụlọ akwụkwọ na n'ọha obodo. Ndị odee anaghị egosi agụmakwụkwọ dịka ihe ụlọ akwụkwọ naanị na-ahụ maka ya; kama ha na-egosi na ụlọ bụ ebe mbụ a na-akụnye mmasị n'ịmụ ihe, ịrụsi ọrụ ike, nsọpụrụ na ezi ọrụ. N'echiche a, ezinaụlọ na ụlọ akwụkwọ na-arụkọ ọrụ ọnụ n'ịmepụta nwata ga-enwe ike irite elele mgbaru ọsọ ya n'isi.

Ntụnyere a na-egosikwa na ezi ọzụzụ nwa nwere akụkụ abụọ dị mkpa. Nke mbụ bụ ịdọ aka ná ntị na imezi omume mgbe nwata kpafuru ụzọ, dịka a hụrụ n'*A Tụọrọ Ọmara*. Nke abụọ bụ nkwado mmetụta uche, agbamume na ịkụnye olileanya, dịka e gosiri n'*Nwaanyị Dị Uru*. Mgbe akụkụ abụọ a jikọtara ọnụ, nwata na-enweta ntọala siri ike nke na-enyere ya aka ịzụlite njide onwe ya, ịdị uchu na mmụọ ịga nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ.

Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha nke Bandura na-enye nkọwa bara uru banyere nzipụta ndị a. Dịka atụtụ ahụ siri kwuo, ụmụaka na-amụta site n'ilekọta ma na-eso ihe nlereanya ndị nọ ha nso. Ya mere, mgbe nne na nna ma ọ bụ ndị nlekọta na-egosipụta ịhụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya, ịrụsịọrụ ike na ezi omume, ụmụaka na-enwekarị mmasị ịnomi àgwà ndị ahụ. N'aka nke ọzọ, mgbe e nwere

nleghara anya, enweghị nduzi ma ọ bụ nkwado, ohere nwata nwere ịzụlite àgwà ga-akwado mmepe agụmakwụkwọ ya na-ebelata.

Ihe ọzọ pụtara ìhè bụ na ndị odee abụọ ahụ na-ezipụta ọzụzụ nwa dịka usoro na-aga n'ihu, ọ bụghị ihe na-eme otu ugboro. Ọ bụ usoro na-achọ oge, ndidi, mkparịta ụka, nlekọta na ime ihe nlereanya ọma. Site n'echiche a, ha na-akpọku ndị nne na nna, ndị nlekọta na ọha mmadụ ka ha ghọta na ọdịnihu agụmakwụkwọ ụmụaka na-adabere nke ukwuu n'ihe a na-eme n'ụlọ tupu nwata eruo ụlọakwụkwọ na n'oge ọ na-aga n'ihu na mmụta ya. N'ikpeazụ, nchọpụta sitere n'akwụkwọ abụọ a na-egosi na ọzụzụ nwa bụ ihe na-ekpebi ma nwata a ga-ahụ agụmakwụkwọ dịka ụzọ mmepe ma ọ bụ hapụ ohere ndị dị n'ihu ya. Site n'iji Azụbụike, Chuka, Ụlọma na ụmụ ya wulite akụkọ ha, ndị odee na-egosi na ezinaụlọ nwere ikike ịmepụta ma ọ bụ igbochi ọnọdụ ga-eme ka nwata gaa nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ. N'ụzọ dị otu a, agụmagụ Igbo na-arụ ọrụ dị mkpa n'ịkwalite echiche na ụkpụrụ ga-enyere aka iwulite ọgbọ nwere ezi agwa, mmụọ ịmụ ihe na ọchịchọ ime nke ọma.

Mmechi

Nchọcha a lebara anya n'isiokwu bụ **"Nzipụta Mmetụta Ọzụzụ Nwa n'Ọganiihu Agụmakwụkwọ n'Iduuazị Igbo Ndị A Họọrọ"** site n'ịtụle *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru*. Site na nyocha e mere, o doro anya na ndị odee abụọ ahụ na-ewere ọzụzụ nwa dịka otu n'ime ntọala kachasị mkpa nke na-ekpebi ihe ịga nke ọma ma ọ bụ ọdịda nwata n'agụmakwụkwọ. Ha gosipụtara na ezi ọzụzụ, nke gụnyere nduzi, ịdọ aka ná ntị, nkwado

mmetụta uche, ịkụnye ezi omume na ịgba ụmụaka ume, na-enyere nwata aka ịzụlite mmụọ ịrụsi ọrụ ike, njide onwe ya na ịhụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya.

N'aka nke ọzọ, nchọcha ahụ gosikwara na nleghara anya, nduzi na-adịghị mma ma ọ bụ echiche na-adịghị akwado agụmakwụkwọ nwere ike ibute omume ọjọọ, enweghị mkpali n'ịmụ ihe na ọdịda n'ime mmepe agụmakwụkwọ nwata. Site n'agwa Azụbụike na Chuka n'*A Tụọrọ Ọmara*, ya na Ụlọma, Odogwu na ụmụ ha n'*Nwaanyị Dị Uru*, ndị odee gosipụtara na ezinaụlọ bụ ebe mbụ a na-akpụzi echiche na agwa ga-emetụta ndụ agụmakwụkwọ nwata n'ọdịnihu.

Ọzọ kwa, nchọpụta a kwadoro na Atụtụ Mmụta Mmekọrịta Ọha (Social Learning Theory) dabara nke ọma n'ịkọwa etu ụmụaka si amụta ihe site n'ihe nlereanya na nduzi sitere n'aka ndị nne na nna na ndị gbara ha gburugburu. Nke a na-egosi na ọzụzụ nwa abụghị naanị ọrụ ezinaụlọ kama ọ bụkwa usoro na-ewulite mmadụ nke na-emetụta ọganihu obodo n'ozuzuoke ya.

N'ikpeazụ, nchọcha a na-egosi na agụmagụ Igbo anaghị arụ ọrụ ntụrụndụ naanị, kama ọ bụkwa ụzọ ndị odee si akuziri ọha mmadụ uru ezi ọzụzụ nwa na mkpa agụmakwụkwọ dị. Site n'izipụta agwa na omume na-akpali mmụọ, ha na-akpọku ndị nne na nna, ndị nlekọta na obodo dum ka ha tinye aka n'ịzụlite ụmụaka n'ụzọ ga-eme ka ha bụrụ ndị bara uru nyere onwe ha na ọha mmadụ.

Aro

N'idabere na nchọpụta e mere, a na-atụ aro ihe ndị a:

1. Ndị nne na nna na ndị nlekọta kwesịrị ighọta na ọrụ ha anaghị akwụsị n'inye ụmụaka nri na uwe, kama ha kwesịrị ịkụnye n'ime ha ezi omume, ịhụ agụmakwụkwọ n'anya na mmụọ ịrụsi ọrụ ike site n'omume na nduzi ha.
2. Ezinaụlọ kwesịrị ịmepụta gburugburu ebe a na-akwado mmụta, mkpariịta ụka na nkwado mmetụta uche ka ụmụaka nwee obi siri ike ịga n'ihu n'agụmakwụkwọ ha ma merie ihe isi ike ha na-ezute.
3. Ndị nkụzi na ụlọ akwụkwọ kwesịrị ịrụkọ ọrụ ọnụ na ndị nne na nna iji nyochaa ma kwalite mmepe agụmakwụkwọ na omume ụmụ akwụkwọ, ebe mmekọrịta dị mma n'etiti ụlọ na ụlọakwụkwọ na-enyere aka iwulite ụmụaka nke ọma.
4. Ndị odee na ndị na-eme nchọcha n'agụmagụ Igbo kwesịrị ịga n'ihu ide na ịmụ ọrụ ndị na-egosipụta nsogbu metụtara ọzụzụ nwa, n'ihi na agụmagụ nwere ike ịbụ ụzọ dị irè isi kpalite mgbanwe n'omume ọha mmadụ.
5. Gọọmenti na ndị na-ahụ maka iwu agụmakwụkwọ kwesịrị ịkwado mmemme na-amụba ọgụgụ isi ndị nne na nna gbasara ezi ọzụzụ nwa, ikike ụmụaka na uru agụmakwụkwọ, ka e wee belata omume na-egbochi mmepe ụmụaka.
6. Ndị nchọpụta n'ọdịnihu nwere ike ịgbasa ọmụmụ a site n'ịtụnyere iduuazị Igbo na ụdị agụmagụ ndị ọzọ, dịka ejije, uri na ihe nkiri Igbo, iji chọpụta etu echiche banyere ọzụzụ nwa na ọganiihu agụmakwụkwọ si apụta n'ụdị edemede dị iche iche.

N'nchịkọta, nchọpụta a na-egosi na ezi ọzụzụ nwa bụ otu n'ime ihe ndị kacha enye aka n'ịzụpụta ụmụaka ga-eme

nke ọma n'agụmakwụkwọ na ndụ, ma, *A Tụọrọ Ọmara* na *Nwaanyị Dị Uru* na-egosi nke a n'ụzọ doro anya site n'agwa na akparamagwa ndị e jiri wulite akụkọ ha.

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COPING STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract
Nigeria today confronts a state of emergency in mental health. Despite there being policies aimed at addressing mental issues in Nigeria, there is still significant disparity between the demand and supply of mental health services, and at the same time, in-depth information on mental health services is non-existent. Therefore, this study explored coping strategies and support systems in the treatment of mental health problems in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State. Social learning theory by Albert Bandura served as the theoretical framework. It also employed a cross-sectional survey design and multi-

stage sampling technique where a total of 400 respondents who are residents of Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra were randomly sampled using a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Data collected were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency distribution tables. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed with the use of the thematic method of data analysis. The study hypotheses were tested using the chi-square (x^2) test of statistics. The study findings revealed that mental health problems are highly prevalent in Awka South Local Government Area, with most respondents affirming their visibility and public concern. It showed that youth are the most affected demographic, likely due to socio-economic pressures such as unemployment and drug abuse. It was recommended that, amongst other things, the Anambra State Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, should implement community-based awareness programs to educate residents of Awka South Local Government Area on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of mental health problems.

Key Words: Coping Strategies, Mental Health Problems, Treatment, Support Systems

Introduction

Mental health is an integral part of health and well-being, and yet it's been neglected in this part of the world (Wada et al. 2021). Across the globe, 450 million people have mental disorders, and 25% of the population

will suffer from mental health problems at some time in their lives (WHO, 2021). In the view of Rehm and Shield (2019), mental health problems contribute to approximately 7% of the global health burden, impacting disabilities. According to the World Health Organisation (2021), mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities. It is an important and essential component of health. Going by this statement, mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to his or her community (WHO, 2021).

In Africa, with Nigeria not an exception, mental health problems appear to be increasing in importance (Sankoh and Sevalie, 2018). To Sankoh and Sevalie (2018), between 2000 and 2015, the continent's population grew by 49%, yet the number of years lost to mental health problems increased by 52%. In Nigeria, the subject of mental health is often culturally evaded, as many people are not usually inclined to discuss it openly (Bakare, 2013; Onyewunmi et al., 2015). The reality, however, is that mental health statistics in Nigeria are alarming. Nigeria is a country with a population of more than 200 million people, with about 60 million people going through mental health issues (The Borgen Project, 2023). According to Fadele et al. (2024), Nigeria today confronts a state of emergency in mental health.
This is because Nigerians with mental health problems are often rendered to their household members since the available mental health workforce is apparently out of

proportion, the majority of whom are centralised in urban areas, compounded by the lack of knowledge and capacity to cater to mental health problems at the primary healthcare level (Ugochukwu, 2020). Statistics indicate that about 80% of people in Nigeria with severe mental health problems are unable to obtain care, which is primarily attributable to the country's stigma and negative social attitudes toward mental health issues as well as lack of facilities, resources, and mental health professionals (Fadele et al. 2024). Also, according to Ikwuka (2016), there is a widespread belief in Nigeria that mental health problems originated from supernatural causes, such as being possessed by evil spirits. Hence, it is common for individuals with mental health problems to be left in the hands of the "gods" or traditional healers for help (Ikwuka, 2016).

Moving forward, Nigeria's federal government has continuously earmarked less than 15% of the benchmark of the health sector budget allocation agreed upon in April 2001 by leaders of the African Union. According to Wada et al. (2021), in 2012, Nigeria earmarked 5.95%, 4.4% in 2014, 5.5% in 2015, 4.23% in 2016, 4.16% in 2017, 3.9% in 2018, and less than 5% in 2020. Presently, despite the low budget allocation for health care in Nigeria, mental health care does not have a clearly defined allocation from the total health care budget allocation (Fadela et al. 2024). These shortcomings have stalled mental health practitioners from carrying out adequate research and engaging in other activities that will positively enhance the treatment of persons with mental health problems.

Statistically, the WHO estimates that a whopping 20% of Nigerians, or around 40 million people, are affected by mental health problems (Coker, 2018). According to Coker (2018), some of Nigeria's most prevalent mental health problems include depression and anxiety disorder. In 2017, about 7 million Nigerians (3.9% of the population) had depressive disorders, and 4.9 million Nigerians (2.7%) had anxiety disorders. On top of this, substance abuse disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and personality disorders are common in Nigeria.

Therefore, following the above-stated problems, it is established that treatment of mental health problems in Nigeria desperately needs improvement, and thus, it is imperative to have an empirical study on the subject of discussion, as it will help to unearth ideas, opinions, and various viewpoints that will aid in developing a feasible framework and coping strategies that would spur the treatment of mental health problems in Nigeria. It is therefore against this backdrop that this study is aimed at exploring coping strategies and support systems in the treatment of mental health problems in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Mental Health Problem

'Mental health problem' refers to a health condition involving changes in emotion, thinking and behaviour (or a combination of these). Mental health problems can be associated with distress and/or problem functioning in social, work or family activities (Chesla, 2020).

Awadalla et al. (2020) defined it as all diagnosable mental disorders. Mental health problems are common among youths in Nigeria. It is treatable, and a vast majority of individuals with mental health problems continue to function in their daily lives. Mental health illness results in significant changes in thinking, emotion and behaviour. The opposite of it, which is mental health, involves effective functioning in daily activities resulting in productive ventures, healthy relationships, the ability to adapt to change and coping with adversity (Awadalla et al., 2020).

Mental health is the foundation for emotions, thinking, communication, learning, resilience, hope and self-esteem (Ikejiuba, 2020). Mental health is also key to relationships and personal and emotional well-being and contributes to community development. This makes it a component of overall well-being. It can influence and be influenced by physical health. Many people who have mental health problems do not want to talk about it (Ikejiuba, 2020). But a mental health problem or illness, according to Field (2020), is nothing to be ashamed of. It is a medical condition, just like heart disease or diabetes, and can be treated. Research is continually expanding our understanding of how the human brain works, and treatments are available to help people successfully manage mental health problems.

Speaking further, Castro and Rice (2021) posited that mental illness does not discriminate; it can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, geography, income, social status, race, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, sexual

orientation, background or other aspects of cultural identity. Crocker (2022) agreed that while mental illness can occur at any age, three-fourths of all mental illness begins by age 24. Mental illness takes many forms. Some are mild and only interfere in limited ways with daily life, such as phobias (abnormal fear). Other mental health illnesses are so severe that a person may need care in a hospital. Similar to other medical illnesses, the optimal way to provide care depends on the illness and the severity of its impact (Castro & Rice, 2021; Crocker, 2022).

Ahmed et al. (2021) stressed that mental health conditions are treatable, and improvement is possible. Many people with mental health conditions return to full functioning after treatment. It is not always clear when a problem with mood or thinking has become serious enough to be a mental health concern. Sometimes, for example, a low or depressed mood is normal, such as when a person experiences the loss of a loved one, but if that depressed mood continues to cause distress or gets in the way of normal functioning, the person may benefit from professional care. People of diverse cultures and backgrounds may view mental health conditions differently. However, stigma around mental illness and treatment prevents many people from seeking needed treatment in Nigeria (Ahmed et al., 2021).

Prevalence of Mental Health Problems in Nigeria

Mental health remains a critical yet often overlooked public health issue in Nigeria, a country grappling with a complex interplay of socio-economic, cultural, and

systemic challenges. With a population exceeding 200 million, Nigeria faces a significant burden of mental health problems, affecting individuals across all demographics (Wenger & Mittleman, 2020). The prevalence of mental health problems in Nigeria is alarmingly high, driven by factors such as poverty, conflict, stigma, and limited access to mental health services. Understanding the scope of this issue is essential for developing effective interventions and fostering a society that prioritizes psychological well-being (United Nations, 2019).

Estimates suggest that approximately 20–30% of Nigerians experience some form of mental health problems at any given time, with conditions such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) being among the most common (Abubakar, 2021). According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), Nigeria has one of the highest rates of depression in Africa, with over 7 million Nigerians affected. Suicide rates, often linked to untreated mental health conditions, are also a growing concern, with Nigeria recording an estimated 12.1 suicides per 100,000 people. These figures likely underestimate the true prevalence, as underreporting and misdiagnosis are rampant due to cultural stigma and inadequate diagnostic resources (WHO, 2021; Akinrinde et al., 2024).

Several factors contribute to the high prevalence of mental health problems in Nigeria. Poverty, affecting over 40% of the population, creates chronic stress and

exacerbates conditions like depression and anxiety (Ameh, 2019). The ongoing insurgency in the Northeast, coupled with communal violence and kidnapping across the country, has led to widespread trauma, particularly among women and children. For instance, survivors of Boko Haram attacks often exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), yet access to psychological support remains scarce. Additionally, rapid urbanization and unemployment especially, among youth, fuel feelings of hopelessness, thereby contributing to substance abuse and other maladaptive coping mechanisms (Ameh, 2019; Abubakar et al., 2025).

According to Nolan et al. (2020), depression is one of the common mental health problems. Hopelessness and helplessness are its main causes. Depression is a prevalent problem among young people across Nigeria. For students, it affects learning abilities and the ability to perform their daily and routine activities efficiently. Depression is marked by sad feelings among undergraduates, and it is now known as a common mental illness.

Perceptions of Mental Health Problems among People

Mental health issues among young Nigerians are increasingly recognised as a critical public health concern, yet perceptions of these problems are shaped by a complex interplay of cultural, social, religious and modern influences (Novotney, 2021). Nigeria, with its youthful population of over 60 per cent citizens under 25, faces unique challenges in addressing mental health.

Young Nigerians navigate a society where traditional beliefs, stigma, economic pressures and globalised perspectives collide, resulting in diverse and often conflicting views and perceptions of mental health problems (Novotney, 2021). The perceptions of Nigerians about mental health problems among young people have been examined by different researchers (Novotney, 2021; Nwakoby, 2021; Olowu, 2022; Ogbonna et al., 2024). Their viewpoints and perceptions have been discussed as follows:

Cultural and Traditional Perspectives

In many Nigerian communities, mental health problems are often misunderstood through a cultural lens that attributes them to supernatural causes. Among young Nigerians, particularly those in rural areas or with strong ties to traditional practices, mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety or schizophrenia may be perceived as spiritual afflictions.

Religious Influences

Religion plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of mental health in Nigeria. Many young Nigerians view mental health problems through a religious framework, often interpreting them as tests of faith, demonic possession or consequences of sin (Ogbonna et al., 2024). In charismatic Christian churches and some Islamic sects, mental health struggles may be addressed through deliverance sessions, fasting or exorcisms rather than therapy or medication. For example, a young Nigerian experiencing anxiety might be encouraged to pray fervently or undergo spiritual cleansing rather than

seek psychiatric care. While these practices offer community support, they can reinforce stigma by framing mental health issues as moral or spiritual failings.

Economic and Structural Factors

Economic hardship and inadequate healthcare infrastructure shape how young Nigerians perceive and address mental health problems (Ozota et al., 2024). With over 50 per cent of Nigerian youths unemployed or underemployed, according to a recent survey by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023), financial stress exacerbates conditions like anxiety and depression. Many young people view mental health struggles as secondary to survival needs, dismissing them as “luxury problems” that only the privileged can afford to address. The scarcity of mental health services in Nigeria reinforces the perception that professional help is inaccessible.

Social Stigma and Peer Influence

Social stigma remains a formidable barrier to addressing mental health problems among young Nigerians. Mental health illness is often equated with "madness", a term that evokes images of severe, visible disorders rather than common issues like depression or anxiety. Young people fear being labelled as weak or unstable, which can lead to social exclusion or discrimination in academic and professional settings (Owens et al., 2021).

Challenges Affecting the Treatment of Mental Health Problems

Mental health problems are caused by complex interactions between social, psychological, and biological factors. Life events such as childhood adversity and loss of one's parents, siblings, or loved ones contribute to the intensity of mental strain among the youths (Owens et al., 2021). According to Umejesie (2023), when young people get worried about their poor family backgrounds, past and present ugly experiences, their journey in life, academic performances, amongst others, so much so that they begin to feel like they have achieved nothing, such youths are likely to feel and experience mental health problems. Looking at causes of mental health illness among youths, Ameh (2019) stated that an individual's beliefs regarding life, the world, and the future can affect mental health. That is why people who blame themselves for their financial misfortunes often experience mental health problems. This section explores the challenges affecting the treatment of mental health problems in Nigeria (Uchegbu, 2021; Umejesie, 2023). They are discussed as follows:

Inadequate Mental Health Infrastructure

One of the most significant barriers to treating mental health problems in Nigeria is the lack of adequate mental health infrastructure. The country has fewer than 10 psychiatric hospitals to serve its large population, with most facilities concentrated in urban areas, leaving rural communities underserved (Adewuya, 2021; Ogbonna et al., 2024). For instance, facilities like the Federal

Neuropsychiatric Hospitals in Yaba, Lagos, and Aro Neuropsychiatric Hospital in Abeokuta are overburdened and often lack modern equipment or sufficient bed space. Community-based mental health services, which are essential for early intervention and ongoing care, are virtually non-existent in most regions.

Stigma and Cultural Beliefs

Stigma surrounding mental health is a pervasive challenge in Nigeria, deeply rooted in cultural and religious beliefs. Mental illness is often misunderstood and attributed to supernatural causes such as witchcraft, demonic possession, and ancestral causes. These misconceptions discourage individuals from seeking professional help, as families may prefer traditional healers or religious leaders over medical practitioners (United Nations, 2019;Stanley & Chinwe, 2022). For example, in many Nigerian communities, a person exhibiting symptoms of schizophrenia might be taken to a spiritual healer for rituals rather than a psychiatrist for mental evaluation.

Limited Human Resources

The shortage of mental health professionals in Nigeria is a critical barrier to effective treatment. The country has fewer than 300 psychiatrists for its population, translating to a ratio of approximately one psychiatrist per 10,000 people (Adewuya, 2021; Breslau et al., 2023). Additionally, there is a scarcity of clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses, and social workers trained in mental health care.

Policy and Funding Gaps

Nigeria's mental health policy framework is outdated and poorly implemented. The country's mental health legislation, primarily based on the Lunacy Act of 1946, is archaic and does not reflect modern understandings of mental health or human rights (Awoke, 2021; Aydogan&Buyukyilmaz, 2021). Although efforts have been made to update the mental health bill, it has not been passed into law, leaving a regulatory vacuum.

Theoretical Framework

Social learning theory by Albert Bandura 1961 has been selected to serve as the theoretical framework for this study because it holds that people learn new behaviors through imitation, and some of these new behaviors, like drug use, could lead to mental health illnesses such as depression, delusion, hallucination, phobias, anxiety, mood swings, insomnia, psychosis, and schizophrenia. It is instructive to note that usually, youths see bad behaviors as fun and a good way to explore life until mental illness sets in. This perhaps is one of the reasons why criminologists stress the need to have a good neighborhood and learning environment for youths so that they will not be exposed to the negative peer and social media influences in society. This position and logical argument by social learning theory has earned it a spot in this study as the most suitable theory to provide good understanding of the treatment of mental health problems and convey existing misconceptions and perceptions, challenges, and treatments of mental health

problems among residents of Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A mixed-methods research design was adopted for this study. The area of the study was Awka South Local Government Area, located in Anambra State, with its headquarters in Awka. Awka South has a land area of 10.95 square meters and experiences two distinct geographical seasons (the rainy and dry seasons), with an estimated total amount of precipitation of 2950 mm. Nine towns make up the Awka South Local Government Area: Awka, Nibo, Nise, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Okpuno, Ezinato, Umuawulu, and Amawbia. The indigenous people of Awka South are primarily of the Igbo ethnic group. They have a rich culture and customs, strengthened by a hierarchal demarcation of responsibilities within the traditional administrative cadres aimed at maintaining law and order in society. According to the 2025 National Population Commission (NPC), using the estimated 3% annual population growth rate, Awka South LGA has a total population of 303,447 persons. The population is made up of 160,723 males and 142,724 females. Additionally, the study sample included 400 persons aged 18 years and above who are residents of Awka South Local Government Area. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) statistical method. The study used both nonprobability and probability sampling techniques. To maximize the study's results, the researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methods. Structured questionnaires and the In-Depth Interview (IDI) were tools utilized to gather

quantitative and qualitative data for this study. The Test-Retest Reliability Technique was used in the investigation. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was employed to manage and analyze the data collected for this study. Descriptive statistics, encompassing fundamental percentages, charts, and frequency distributions, were employed to organize, display, analyze, and interpret the data.

Results

Table 1: Respondents' views on when last they saw an individual suffering from a mental health problem in Awka South Local Government Area

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than two days ago	128	34.6
Less than a week	108	29.2
A month ago	84	22.7
Two months and above	50	13.5
Total	**370**	**100.0**

Field Survey, 2026

Table 1 presents respondents' views on when last they saw an individual suffering from a mental health

problem in Awka South LGA. The data reveals that the majority, 128 respondents (34.6%), reported seeing someone with a mental health problem less than two days ago, followed by 54 respondents (29.2%) within a week. This suggests that mental health issues are frequently observed in the community. A smaller proportion, 84 respondents (22.7%), reported seeing such cases a month ago, and 50 respondents (6.2%) reported two months or more. This indicates a high visibility of mental health problems in Awka South LGA.

Table 2: Respondents' views on the assessment of the prevalence of mental health problems in Awka South Local Government Area

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	146	39.5
High	108	29.2
Low	66	17.8
Very Low	50	13.5
Total	**370**	**100.0**

Field Survey, 2026

Table 2indicates respondents' views on the assessment of the prevalence of mental health problems in Awka South LGA. The data reveals that 146 respondents

(39.5%) rated the prevalence as very high, and 108 respondents (29.2%) rated it as high, indicating a strong perception of widespread mental health issues. A smaller proportion, 66 respondents (17.8%), rated it as low, and 50 respondents (13.5%) rated it as very low. This suggests that most respondents perceive mental health problems as highly prevalent in the area.

Table 3: Respondents' views on the notable challenges affecting the treatment of mental health problems in Awka South LGA

Responses	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Stigmatisation and cultural beliefs	150	40.5
Inadequate mental health infrastructure	86	23.2
Shortage of mental health professionals	74	20
High cost of treatment	44	11.9
Lack of health insurance	16	4.3
Total	**370**	**100.0**

Field Survey, 2026

Table 3notes respondents' views on the notable challenges affecting the treatment of mental health problems in Awka South LGA. The data reveals that 150

respondents (40.5%) identified stigmatisation and cultural beliefs as the primary challenge, followed by 86 respondents (23.2%) citing inadequate mental health infrastructure, 74 respondents (20%) pointing to a shortage of mental health professionals, 44 respondents (11.9%) mentioning high cost of treatment, and 16respondents (4.3%) indicating lack of health insurance. This suggests that cultural and systemic barriers are significant impediments to mental health care in Awka South LGA.

This data is corroborated by the interviews conducted. Findings from the interviewees are reproduced below.

An interviewee stated:

Drug abuse is a big problem causing mental illness, and many people end up on the streets because there's no proper care. Stigma and lack of hospitals are huge challenges (Male, 45, married, health care provider, Awka South indigene).

Another interviewee stated:

People with mental problems are often taken to prayer houses or left to roam. The biggest issues are stigma and no mental health facilities. Treatment is too expensive for most (Female, 35, married, trader, Awka South).

Another interviewee also stated:

There are many challenges, like no professionals or clinics. Cultural beliefs make people think it's spiritual, so they don't seek proper treatment. Drug abuse is also a cause (Male, 50, married, civil servant, Awka South).

Table 4: Respondents' views on strategies to improve the treatment of mental health problems and enhance support systems in Awka South Local Government Area

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public enlightenment on mental health problems	170	45.9
Increase in the number of mental health professionals	108	29.3
Provision of adequate mental health infrastructure	92	24.8
Total	**370**	**100.0**

Field Survey, 2026

Table 4 shows respondents' views on strategies to improve the treatment of mental health problems and enhance support systems in Awka South LGA. The data reveals that 170 respondents (45.9%) identified public enlightenment as the most effective strategy, followed by 108 respondents (29.3%) citing an increase in the number of mental health professionals, and 92 respondents (24.8%) mentioning provision of adequate mental health infrastructure. This suggests that respondents believe awareness and systemic improvements are key to enhancing mental health care in the area.

This data is corroborated by the interviews conducted. Findings from the interviewees are reproduced below.

An interviewee stated:

Public enlightenment is crucial to reduce stigma. We need more mental health professionals and proper clinics. The government should fund these efforts to help people (Female, 42, married, teacher, Awka South indigene).

Another interviewee stated:

We need campaigns to educate people about mental health. More trained professionals and facilities would make a big difference. Policy support is essential (Male, 48, married, health care provider, Awka South).

Another interviewee also stated:

Educating the public and building mental health centers are important. Training more professionals will help treat people properly and reduce roaming cases (Female, 32, single, student, Awka South).

Discussion of Findings

The study explored coping strategies and support systems in the treatment of mental health problems in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State. From the findings, it was observed that mental health problems are highly prevalent in Awka South Local Government Area, with most respondents affirming their visibility and public concern. These findings corroborate the findings of a similar study conducted by the World Health Organization (2021), which noted that Nigeria has one of the highest rates of depression in Africa, with

over 7 million affected. From the findings, it is instructive to assert that mental health problems are a significant public health issue in Awka South Local Government Area.

On the issue of perceptions of mental health problems among people in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, the data that were analyzed showed that youth are the most affected demographic, likely due to socio-economic pressures such as unemployment and drug abuse. This finding aligns with Crocker (2022), who noted that three-fourths of mental illness begins by age 24. The high prevalence and public concern underscore the need for urgent interventions. The study also found that supernatural beliefs, such as demonic possession, dominate perceptions of mental health problems, corroborating Ahmed et al. (2021), who highlighted that stigma and cultural beliefs prevent many from seeking treatment in Nigeria. From the findings, it then implies that cultural norms significantly shape health-seeking behavior.

Moving on, an issue of the challenges affecting the treatment of mental health problems in the Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, the study identified drug abuse, stress, trauma, and poverty as major causes of mental health problems, supporting Abubakar (2021), who linked socio-economic factors like poverty to mental health issues in Nigeria. The prevalence of stigma and discrimination, as noted by 60.2% of respondents, further complicates treatment, aligning with the findings of Awadalla et al. (2020) on the impact of stigma. The study also revealed significant

challenges, including stigmatization, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of professionals, corroborating Ameh (2019), who emphasized systemic barriers in Nigeria's mental health care system.

Amidst these challenges on the issue of measures that can be employed to improve the treatment of mental health problems and enhance adequate support systems in the Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State; the benefits of addressing mental health problems were indirectly highlighted through the need for improved treatment pathways, as many individuals are currently left to roam the streets or rely on prayer houses and traditional healers. Equally, the study identified public enlightenment, increased professionals, and infrastructure development as key strategies, supported by the WHO (2021), which advocates for awareness and systemic improvements to enhance mental health care.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is concluded that mental health problems are a significant public health issue in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, with high prevalence and public concern, particularly among youth. The dominance of supernatural beliefs, such as demonic possession, shapes negative perceptions and contributes to widespread stigmatization, which hinders treatment. Socio-economic factors, especially poverty and drug abuse, are major drivers of mental health issues, exacerbating the challenges faced by the community. The lack of mental health infrastructure and professionals, coupled with cultural barriers, results in

inadequate treatment, with many affected individuals left without proper care. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach, including public education, increased professional capacity, and improved infrastructure. Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Anambra State Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, should implement community-based awareness programs to educate residents of Awka South LGA on the causes, symptoms, and treatment of mental health problems. These campaigns should aim to dispel myths about demonic possession and promote understanding of mental health as a medical condition.

2. The government should invest in training and recruiting more mental health professionals, including psychiatrists, psychologists, and counselors, to address the shortage in Awka South LGA. Scholarships and incentives could encourage professionals to serve in rural areas.

3. The state government should establish well-equipped mental health facilities and psychiatric units in existing hospitals within Awka South LGA to provide accessible and affordable treatment options for residents.

4. Community leaders and health authorities should develop policies that promote social inclusion and reduce stigmatization of individuals with mental health problems. This could include

integrating mental health education into school curricula and community programs.

5. The government should implement poverty alleviation programs and youth employment initiatives to reduce the socio-economic pressures contributing to mental health problems, such as unemployment and drug abuse.

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FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SYSTEMATIC INEQUALITY ACROSS AFRICAN CULTURES

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Abstract

Discriminations against women have been a major global concern and the 21st century has witnessed unprecedented rise in systematic discriminations against women especially in Africa where women are historically unfairly treated. The concept of inequality is a complex and multifaceted one that has over the years proved difficult to resolve due to cultural barriers. Gender parity though, a societal goal has remained an unrealizable global dream despite universal efforts. Women historically have been discriminated against in various contexts in African cultures including pay and employment. The World bank estimates thatglobally about 2.4 billion women of working age do notget equal economic opportunities compared to men.The entire world is struggling to tackle the challenges of gender inequalitywhich remains one of the most persistent social issues across cultures and societies and continues to undermine sustainable development of societies. Themain premise of this descriptive research is to examine the factors responsible for gender inequality across cultures in Africa and explore how cultural,

economic, political, and social institutions contribute to its persistence. The study utilizes data collected from scholarly articles, books and international reports.Consistent with expectations, findings indicate historical cultural systems and beliefs, gender roles, economic dependency, limited educational opportunities, and discriminatory legal structuresand traditional gender norms significantly influence gender inequality across different cultural contexts in Africa. These factors interact with social institutions such as family, religion, education, and political systems to aggravate and reinforce unequal gender relations. The study concludes that gender inequality is a deep-rootedsocial problemaggravated by historical, cultural, and structural forces that requires urgent integrated social, economic and policy interventionsto address.

Keywords: Gender inequality, factors, women, Africa, across cultures,

Introduction

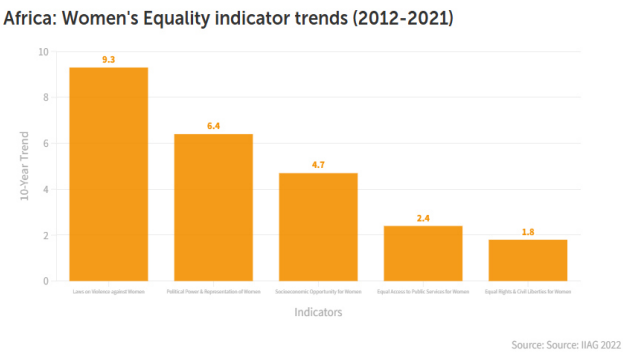
Historically, women have been discriminated against and in extreme cases results in sexual abuses which are often neglected and unreported. With passage of time, African societies have been reconstructed to be male dominated and this paradigm has not shifted in social and societal contexts. The implication is that gender inequality will continue to thrive regardless of what policy makers think and what international instruments say and this forms the background of this research. The fact remains

genderequality and inclusivity in Africa are two major conversationsconsidered pertinent to human sustainability and peaceful coexistence and these is need to move these conversations to realizable levels for the broader good of the society especially when exclusion breeds resentment, divisions and hostility while inclusion fosters belonging. When citizens both sexes feel valued, they become stakeholders in national peace and progress rather than spectators of governance Genderinequality in effect refers to the unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their gender. In this context, women have always been targeted and subjected to performing domestic responsivities and deprived opportunities to contest these assigned roles.Gender inequality as a concept manifest in various aspects of life including access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare, political participation, and decision-making power. Thefindings of the Africa Gender Index 2023 Analytical Report indicated that **women** in Africa score just 50.3% in equality across economic, social, and public spheres. Women's Equality has experienced a substantial improvement on average across the continent between 2012 and 2022. The 2026 UN reports on gender equality, released as part of celebration of International Women's Day (March 8), highlight that no country has achieved full legal equality, with projections suggesting it could take 286 years to close the global rights gap. The major findings indicate that women have only 64% of the legal rights of men and legal systems are failing to protect women from violence with 54% of countries lacking consent-based rape laws and 44% failing to guarantee equal

pay. Moreover, there is failure of the legal and justice systems with the UN Women report revealing that laws in many nations are failing to protect women, with 3 in 4countries still allowing child marriage.In global political representation, women remain underrepresented, with only 28 countries led by a woman head of state. Womenequally hold 27.5% of parliamentary seats and only 22.4% of cabinet positions, which is a decline from 2024, showing a reversal in progress.Thus, there is a disturbing trend on contentious attitudes towards gender equality. Gender inequality or discrimination against women is not uniform across societies; rather, it varies depending on cultural traditions, social structures, and institutional arrangements.Research shows that gender inequality is maintained through complex interactions between social structures, cultural beliefs, and institutional practices.

These structures influence how societies define gender roles and distribute resources and power between men and women. Traditionally, womenoften face barriers that limit their participation in economic and political activities. These barriers are frequently justified through traditions and cultural norms that prioritize male authority and leadership. Understanding the factors responsible for gender inequality is essential for developing effective strategies to promote gender equity worldwide. Gender inequality has today been recognized as the most important factor that inhibit collective creativity and innovation in society. Gender inequality is always views as psychologically sand coitally constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a

particular society considered appropriate for men and women. This and the related power relations are a social construct – they vary across cultures and through time, and thus are amenable to change. The particular economic, social roles and responsibilities considered appropriate for women and men exist in many societies' illiterate and non-educated. These do not exist in isolation, but are defined in relation to one another and through the relationship between women and men. The cultural and historical manifestations of gender discrimination and weaponization of deeply entrenched systems and practices against women is visible in African societies regardless of modernism and sophistication. Against this background African societies must leverage modernized local tools, international instruments and universal obligations to advance the cause of women and work towards long term gender equality and parity for achievement of human sustainability goals where everyone regardless of gender has an equal opportunity to participate in national development and human capital development ambitions. In all these, societies must tackle historical and cultural obstacles that hinder gender equality in order to achieve the goal of gender parity.



Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to exposing gaps in theory and practice in gender inequality and contribution to better understanding of the cultural and structural causes of gender inequality across African societies. The study explores gender discrimination in depth and encourages the development of culturally sensitive strategies for promoting gender equity. It increases awareness of the importance of equal opportunities for both men and women and contributed to enhanced appreciation of gender norms and beliefs. The studyalso identifies the shortcomings in addressing issues of gender inequality and discrimination especially in policy making and highlights the fact that greater efforts have not been put on exploring the root causes of gender inequality across Africa societies and has made recommendations on how to amplify efforts to achieve common humanity and equality. The research highlights how deep-rooted traditions and social institutions shape gender relations and opportunitiescrucial for identifying and dismantling systemic barriers that hinder human rights, economic growth, and sustainable development. Thestudy made recommendationsfor direction of future research and will significantly contribute to the body of knowledgeand policy.

This study is relevantbecause for the following reasons; It provides insight into the cultural and social mechanisms that sustain gender inequality. It contributes to academic discussions on gender studies and cross-cultural sociology.It assists policymakers and social organizations in identifying key factors that hinder

gender equality. It explores gender discrimination in depth and encourages the development of culturally sensitive strategies for promoting gender equity.It increases awareness of the importance of equal opportunities for both men and women.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this research are namely; to identify the major barriers to gender inequality across cultures, to analyze discrimination on the basis of gender, to examine how cultural traditions influence gender roles in different societies,to analyzethe role of social institutions in sustaining gender inequality,to evaluate the impact of economic and educational disparities on gender inequality and to provide recommendations for reducing gender inequality across cultures.

Review of literature

Gender inequality considered a euphemism for sexual discrimination has been widely studied in sociology, anthropology, and gender studies. People consider systemic gender inequality as a scare on human conscience especially when human area created equally. Scholars have identified multiple factors responsible for gender disparities and inequalities across societies in career advancement, in access to health, in entrepreneurship and education. Researchers and educational actors have suggested substantive measures to combat these general trends in view of the persisting bottlenecks and further observed that it is essential to

improve the status of women and their rights within the family and society at large.Reviewed literature highlights its persistence and deeply entrenched cultural norms, unequal power structures, and economic factors that are structured against women both at home and in workplace and even in political representation and education. Gender issues in Africa are characterized by significant, deeply rooted inequalities, including high rates of gender-based violence, limited economic participation, and restricted access to education for girls, exacerbated by harmful traditional practices like child marriage.

Despite progress in political representation, the barriers still remain. Improvements in gender equality in Africa, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Maputo Protocol, have been achieved through legal and institutional reforms aimed at promoting equal participation and access to opportunities.

However, as former Liberian President H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf pointed out in the 2022 IIAG report, in addition to clear laws, there must be ‘‘the political will to ensure [their] implementation’’.These barriers are more visible in development nations than in advanced countries One major factor is patriarchy, a social system where men hold dominant power and authority in political, economic, and family institutions. In Switzerland, in 1996, a paper advocating teacher training in equality was published on the initiative of the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Public Instruction.

Egalité des chances à l'école ("Equality of opportunity at school") (CDIP, 1996) starts from the premise that the education system reflects existing social relations and thus restricts opportunities for development and training available to girls. Vigneron, 2004, and Lentillon, Trottin in Education et francophonie, 2005 observed that there were prejudices about the weakness of girls and encouraged boys and girls to make choices in keeping with their gender characteristics, Anne Guison, 2004 in his dissertation observed that in Bukina Faso, a ten-year plan for the development of basic education has been put into effect and while education is seen as a means of improving the occupational integration of girls, poverty reduction measures are also regarded as a tool for improving their educational prospects. Patriarchal norms often restrict women's access to resources and opportunities, reinforcing unequal gender relations. Cultural traditions and beliefs also play a crucial role in shaping gender inequality. In many societies, traditional gender role attitudes influence employment opportunities and income levels. Studies have shown that such attitudes contribute significantly to wage disparities between men and women. Marinova, 2003 observed that society places more value on boys than girls at work place and in public life Regrettably, this has led society to place greater emphasis and value on the role of men and boys in public life even in unpaid community work. Another factor is the role of social institutions. Educational systems, legal frameworks, and family structures often reinforce gender divisions. For example, women are frequently excluded from political decision-making positions due to institutional barriers and societal

expectations. Historical factors also contribute to gender inequality. In Africa, colonial policies disrupted traditional social systems and introduced patriarchal norms that placed men in dominant roles within economic and political structures. Psychological and cultural theories also highlight the role of sexism in sustaining gender inequality. The theory of ambivalent sexism explains how both hostile and seemingly positive attitudes toward women can reinforce gender stereotypes and limit women's social roles. Furthermore, gender inequality is reflected in areas such as health, nutrition, and survival rates. In some regions, preference for male children leads to unequal access to healthcare and resources for girls, contributing to demographic imbalances.These studies collectively demonstrate that gender inequality is not caused by a single factor but rather by an interaction of cultural, economic, and institutional forces.

Methodology

This research adopts a descriptive research design to examine the factors responsible for gender inequality across cultures.The study uses a descriptive approach to analyze existing information and identify patterns of gender inequality in different cultural contexts.Data SourcesThe data for this study were collected through secondary sources, includingBooksResearch articles and Reports from international organizations,onlinescholarly databases. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods. Key themes and patterns related to gender inequality were identified and

categorized into cultural, economic, social and political factors.

Results

The analysis of existing literature revealed several major factors responsible for gender inequality across cultures and are in conformity with the understanding that gender inequality is deeply entrenched and hinders women participation in governance. The findings revealed 6 major factors that entrenched gender inequality including traditional practices, gender socialization, poverty and discrimination in access to land, The prominent factors are as follows

1. Cultural and Traditional NormsTraditional beliefs about gender roles often define men as breadwinners and women as caregivers. These norms limit women's participation in public lifeand professional careers.

2. Patriarchal Social StructuresMany societies operate under patriarchal systems where men control political, economic, and family decisions. This structure reduces women's access to power and leadership roles.

3. Educational InequalityIn several cultures, girls have less access to education compared to boys. This limits their employment opportunities and economic independence.

4. Economic DependenceWomen often face wage gaps, limited employment opportunities, and occupational segregation, making them economically dependent on men.

5. Legal and Institutional BarriersIn some countries, laws and policies restrict women's rights related to inheritance, property ownership, and political participation.

6. Discrimination Attitudes against women is widespread across cultures.

Discussion

The findings suggest that gender inequality is deeply rooted in cultural beliefs and social institutions. The biggest challenge of nation states is how to ensure gender equality at home at work, in school and the work place.Results also revealed that social structures constitute an obvious part of the systemic discrimination against women. Patriarchal traditions often assign specific roles to men and women, reinforcing unequal power relations.Economic factors also play a significant role as women are historically paid less compared to men in the work place. Women's limited access to education and employment reduces their economic independence and decision-making power. Additionally, institutional barriers within political and legal systems prevent women from achieving equal representation and influence.Cultural practices such as son preference, gender stereotypes, and traditional family structures further reinforce inequality across generations. Addressing these issues requires not only policy reforms but also changes in cultural attitudes and social norms.

Conclusion

Gender inequality continues to be a threat to societal cohesion and the practice has not brought dividends to facets of society. The present study is an attempt to deepen understanding and expose the challenges associated with discrimination against women. Findings reveal that women continue to be discriminated against due to deep rooted cultural biases and norms consistent with continued discrimination against women at work, home, and politics and in promotions and appointment. As the practice continues in various forms in African societies, the danger of developing an unequal and unjust society becomes real. Findings from this study reveal that genders inequalities exist in many countriesand are witnessed in Advanced and developing countries. Gender inequality remains a global challenge and rights issue influenced by cultural traditions, economic conditions, and institutional structures increases with each passing day. The study reveals that patriarchal systems, educational disparities, economic dependency, and discriminatory policies are major factors responsible for gender inequality across cultures.To reduce gender inequality, governments and international organizations must implement policies that promote equal access to education, employment, and political participation. Cultural awareness and social reforms are also necessary to challenge traditional stereotypes and empower women worldwide.Ultimately, achieving gender equality requires collaborative efforts from governments, communities, and individuals to create inclusive and equitable societies.Achieving gender parity is urgent and

should resonate with leaders and everyone who seek a sustainable world Gender inequality. These barriers are deep-seated and systemic aggaravated by patriarchy, stereotypes, and discriminatory structures that inhibit socioeconomic development and human rights of women. Achieving equality requires urgent, mandatory policy interventions, such as enforcing legislation, anti-discrimination laws and equal pay, rather than voluntary measures.

Limitations of study

The present study is descriptive in nature and do not have rigorous empirical data.

The study is unable to establish firmly cause- effect relationship

The scope of study is African region and may not have convened experiences in all societies.

Recommendations

The following key recommendations are presented to promote gender equality

1. To holistically address discrimination and economic subjugation of women
2. To outlaw all forms of discrimination against women using appropriate instruments international and loca.l
3. To ensure equal pay for both males and females and mainstream gender equality in offices

4. To formulate policies at international, national and regional levels to close gender gap.
5. To ensure affirmative action and quota for women in governance and entrepreneurship
6. To allow women equal access to science education, entrepreneurship and economic opportunities.
7. To allow equal participation and representation of women in politics and governance.
8. To implement women friendly policies and allow participation of women in decision making
9. To criminalize violence and sexual abuse against women.

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IWU NA AHA MMADỤ N'IGBO

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Ụmịedemede

Ndị Igbo bụ otu n'ime agbụrụ dị n'ụwa a ndị e jighi ihe banyere nkwenye ha egwu egwu. N'ihi nke a ha na-egosipụta nkwenye ha n'ihe ọ bụla ha na-eme. Nkwenye ndị Igbo na-emetụta ekpemekpe, alụmalụ nakwa usoro obibi ndụ ha dị iche iche nke jikọro ọnụ bụrụ omenaala ha. Ọ bụ nke a mere ha ji esite n'ụdị aha ha na-aza egosipụta nkwenye ha nwere n'ihe dị iche iche. Nchọcha a chọrọ inyocha ma chọpụta aha dị iche iche ndị Igbo na-aza nke na-egosi nkwenye ha n'iwu ọdịnaala ha. Nchọcha a bụ nchọcha enweọgụ nke e ji

igba ajụjụ ọnụ nweta njiatule e ji mee ya. Mbunuche nchọcha a bụ ịchọpụta ma nye obere nkọwa banyere aha dị iche iche ndị Igbo na-aza ndị gosipụtara nkwenye ha n'ebe iwu ọdịnaala nọ. Iwu bụ ụkpụrụ doro anya a tụpụtara e ji achịkwa omume ndị mmadụ iji hụ na e nwere udo na ezi mmekọrịta n'obodo. Iwu ọdịnaala Igbo na-emetụta ọnọdụ dị iche iche nakwa ihe dị iche iche ha kwenyere na ya. Nchọpụta nchọcha a gosiri na e nwere ọtụtụ aha ndị Igbo na-aza iji gosi nkwenye ha nwere ebe iwu ọdịnaala ha dị. Ọchọcha a tụrụ aro ka ndị nchọcha ndị ọzọ mekwuo nchọcha banyere aha ndị Igbo na ekpemekpe ha.

Ọkpụrụkpụ Okwu: Nkwenye , Ekpemekpe, Omenaala, Aha na Iwu.

Mkpọlite

Ndị Igbo bụ otu n'ime agbụrụ e nwere n'ala Naijiria ndị bi n'ọwụwa anyanwụ . Asụsụ e ji mara ndị Igbo bụ asụsụ Igbo. Ndị Igbo Dịka agbụrụ pụrụ iche nwere iwu dị iche iche na-achịkwa usoro obib ndụ ha. Iwu bụ usoro e si agbazi omume mmadụ. Okodo (2009) kwuru na iwu bụ omenala Igbo n'ihi na ọ bụ usoro nsieme ndi Igbo (Ndi Igbo bụ ndị kwenyere n'egbe bere, ugo bere n'ihi na ha ejighị mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya egwuri egwu (Ọnwụbiko, 1988). Ha ji ịkwanyere okenye ugwu, ileta ọbịa, inyere mmadụ aka na mmekọrịta nwanne na nwanne kpọrọ ihe tupu ọbịbịa ndị ọcha n'ala Igbo. Mgbe mmadụ mere ihe ọbụla adabaghị na nkwenye ọhaneze, a na-asị na onye dị etu ahụ adaala iwu (Amadị, 2005).

Umeọgụ (2012) kwuru na tupu a kpọọ ihe ọbụla iwu na ọ ga-enweịrị mbunuche ọ na-emejupụtara ọhanaeze. N'uche Okafor na Onebunne (2019) iwu kwesịrị ịbụ maka ọdịmma ọhaneze. Ndị Igbo anaghị eme iwu ọbụla iji megide onye ọbụla. Iji kwado nke a, Asonye Obi kwuru a na-emebe iwu mgbe e nwere onye e ji n'aka ya bụ mgbe e nwere onye darala iwu ahụ. Ọ bụ nke a mere ndị Igbo ji ekwu okwu na-asị 'a naghị eji mmadụ n'aka ama iwu'. E nwere iwu metụtara ihe dị iche iche n'omenala Igbo. Obodo (2005 p.85) kọwara iwu dịka "atụmatụ dị iche iche e wekọtara ọnụ ndị e dere ede na ndị e deghị ede e ji eme ka udo dị n'obodo". N'ịkwado nke a, Obiwulu (2007) gara n'ihu kwuo na ihe a kpọrọ iwu ga-akwadoịrị ihe ọma ma katọọ ihe ọjọọ. Ọ sịrị na iwu na-anabata ihe kwesiri ekwesi ma gbarụọ ihu n'ebe ihe ekwesighi ekwesi dị. Mgbe ọchọcha na Ọka iwu Okoli na-akparịta ụka banyere ihe bụ iwu ka ọka iwu a kọwara iwu dịka "ụkpụrụ na atụmatụ dị iche iche nke na-ekpebi etu mmadụ si akpa agwa n'ihe gbasara ala, ezinaụlọ na mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya". Site na nkọwa a, anyị chọpụtara na ihe na-eme ka okwu bụrụ iwu bụ ka e si asọpụrụ ya n'obodo na ka o si achịkwa omume ndị mmadụ n'obodo. Ihe nke a gosiri bụ na ma e dere iwu ede ma e deghi ya ede, ma ọ bụ nke sitere na mmepe anya ma ọ bụghị, iwu bụ iwu ma ọ bụrụ na ọ na-enwetazu ihe ndị e ji maka ha tinye ya.

Obodo (2005) kwenyere na iwu bụ ụzọ e si eduzi obibi ndụ mmadụ. Ihe na-achị obodo ọ bụla bụ ụzọ ha si hazie nduzi nke obibi ndụ ndị mmadụ. Ụzọ ndị a na-egosipụta ma na-atụpụta ụkpụrụ e si emegasị ihe dị iche iche n'obodo ahụ. Mgbe ọ bụla iwu na-akwado ihe ziri ezi

ma na-emegide ajọọ ihe, a na-asị iwu ahụ dabara adaba. Iwu bụ ezigbo iwu ga-emetụtarịrị ihe ndị mmadụ kwadoro ma ọ bụ nabata. Ọ bụrụ na e nweghi iwu a gaghị enwe ikpe nkwụ mọtọ (Oraegbunam,2010). E kwesịghị ime iwu maka ihe nrita nke onwe ma ọ bụ iji megide onye ọ bụla.

Mbunuche Nchọcha

Nchọcha a bu n'uche :

7. Ịkọwa ihe aha bụ
- Ịchọpụta uru aha bara na ndụ mmadụ
- Ịchọpụta aha dị iche iche ndị Igbo na-aza nke gosiri nkwenye ha n'iwu omenala Igbo.

Usoro Nchọcha

E ji usoro nchọcha nkọwa dee nchọcha a. Usoro nchọcha a nyere ohere ịkọwapụta ihe niile banyere aha na iwu omenala Igbo. Usoro nchọcha nkọwa bụ usoro kwesiri iji mee nchọcha n'isi okwu ọ bụla metụtara omenala n'ihi na usoro a na-akọwa omenala Dịka e si eme ya ma mee ka ezi okwu pụta ihe n'ihe a na-ede maka ya.

Ntụleharị Agụmagụ

E nwela ọtụtụ nchọcha ndị e merela banyere aha. Anyị ga-akọwapụta ụfọdụ n'ime ha ebe a.

Arinze(2001 P.23) kwuru na aha abụghị ihe a na-eleghara anya n'ihi ọ Dịka nwaanyị dị ime nke nwere ịmụpụta mpụtara dị omimi. Ndị Igbo na-eji aha ezi ozi, adọ aka na ntị ma ọ bụkwanụ egosi nnabata. N'inyekwu

nkọwa n'ihe banyere aha Onah na Gudaku (2023) kọwara na ọ bụ naanị mmadụ nwere onyinye nakwa ọnatarachi nke inye ihe aha. Ịgụ aha metụtakarịrị mmadụ. Olatunji na Abdul-Rasheed(2015) kwuru na n'ala Afrịka, aha nwere ike gosipụta abụmọke, agbụrụ, ọnọdụ nakwa ọkwa mmadụ nọ n'obodo. Mgbe ụfọdụ o nwekwara ike gosi akparamagwa na usoro nkwenye mmadụ. N'ala Igbo aha e nyere nwata na-egosi ụbọchị ahịa a mụrụ ya.

Geertz (2006) kwuru na aha na-egosi onwe ma ọ bụ onye ma ọ bụ ihe mmadụ bụ Dịka o simetụta ndị nwe onye ahụ, ọkachasị ezinaụlọ nne na nna onye ahụ n'ihi na a na-ewe aha ahụ Dịka nkwanye ugwu n'ebe onye wetara aha nọ. Dịka Simon na Schueter (1975) siri kwuo, aha pụtaramkpụrụokwu maọ

bụ okwu ole na ole e ji mara mmadụ, ebe, ihe, ọkwa ma ọ bụ onye ọbụla dị kanjirimara ya. Nke a gosịrị na ọ bụ site n'aha ka e ji amata ihe dị iche iche Chineke kere nakwaọnọdụ, ogogo na ọkwa ha nọgasị na ya. William (2005) hụrụ aha Dịka okwu ma ọ bụ mkpokọtaokwu dị iche iche e ji amata mmadụ. Aha ahụ na-egosipụta njirimara onye ahụ a na-ekwu makaya kpọmkwem. Ọzọ, aha abụghị naanị ndịiche mmadụ nwere n'ebe ndị ọzọ nọ ka ọ na-egosikama na ọ na-akọwapụta ụdịdị onye na-aza aha ahụ.

Ọzọ, Ọbaji (1982) kwuru na aha nwere ihe ọ na-egosi, a bịazie n'ebe ndị Igbo nọ, na ọna-egosi ihe ahụ ndị mmadụ na-aghọta mgbe onye na-aza aha ahụ kpọrọ ya ma ọ bụ mgbe ndị ọzọkpọrọ ya aha ahụ. Aha na-enye akụkọ ntọala ndụ onye na-aza ya. McGraw (1993) nyere

nkọwanke ya na aha bụ otu mkpụrụokwu ma ọ bụ mkpụrụokwu dị iche iche na-akọwa maka mmadụ,anụmanụ, ebe, ihe ma ọ bụ ogogo ihe dị iche iche.

N'ịga n'ihu, Nwigwe (2001) mere nyochara ma nyochapụta etu ndị Igbo si enweta aha hana-aza n'ebe o metụtara ahịa anọ ndị Igbo nwere ma na-azụ bụ (Eke, Orie, Afọ, Nkwọ). Nanchọcha Nwigwe mere, ọ chọpụtara na ndị Igbo na-agụ ndị aha ahịa anọ ndị Igbo iji hụba ụbọchịa mụrụ ndị ahụ ama. N'okwu ya, aha ahịa anọ ndị Igbo nwere mmụọ nwe nke ọbụla n'ime ha.Mmụọ ndị ahụ na-ejere ụbọchị ahịa anọ ndị a ozi nke a na-ewere gụọ ndị nta a mụrụ ọhụrụ ka ọbụrụ aha e jiri mara ha. Aha ndị ọzọ a gụrụ mmadụ nwere ọnọdụ na mpụtara ọ na-ezipụtan'ezinaụlọ ya nakwa n'ebe ndị ikwu na ibe ya nọ. A na-akpacha anya ahọrọ aha ndị ahụ ka ewere ya na-echeta ihe mere mgbe a mụrụ onye ahụ, ebe aha ahịa a ga-enye ya bụ iji cheta ụbọchịa mụrụ ya

Site na nchọcha Sutherland (1991) mere, ọ kọwara na ndị Gana na-agụ aha site n'ụbọchịdị n'izuụka a mụrụ onye ahụ. Onye a mụrụ ụbọchị mbụ n'izuụka bụ ụbọchị ụka, a na-agụ ya

'Kwesis' ma ọ bụrụ ndị nwoke ebe ndị ndịanyị a mụrụ n'ụbọchị ụka na-aza 'Esis'. Onye a mụrụn'ụbọchị anọ n'ime izuụka Dịka ndị nwoke na-azakwa 'Kwekus' ebe ndị ndịanyị a mụrụn'ụbọchị anọ na-aza 'Ekuwas'. Ọ bụ etu a ka ọ dị n'ime ụbọchị ndị ọzọ dịgasị n'izuụka dị iche

Atụtụ Njiri mee Nchọcha

E nwere ọtụtụ atụtụ ndị dabara adaba maka nchọcha nchọcha mana ndị nchọcha gbadoro ụkwụ n'atụtụ abụọ wee chịkọta njatule nchọcha a. Atụtụ abụọ ndị a bụ : atụtụ ekerechi na atụtụ ndaba na nsieme ọhaneze. Ihe mere ndị nchọcha ji họrọ atụtụ abụọ ndị a bụ maka na ha kachasị daba n'isi okwu nchọcha a ma nyekwa aka n'ịkọwasị ihe a chọpụtagasịrị nke ọma.

Atụtụ Ekerechi

Iwu ekerechi bụ usoro nkwenye bụ ebumpụta ụwa nke e nwere ike ịchọpụta site n'ichemi echiche ime. Ọ bụ ụdị iwu nke e kwenyere na o si n'aka Eke kere ụwa rute mmadụ aka. Dịka mmadụ bụ anụ nwere echiche nke o ji achọpụta ihe dị iche iche. Ha na-eji akọnuche ha achọpụta iwu ndị a ma mee omume dabara na ha. Mmadụ site n'okike ụwa na-enwekarị agụ nke mmụba, nriju afọ, ezumike, ịchọ ezi nchekwaba nakwa ihe ndị ọzọ dị mma. Ihe ndị a dabachara n'iwu ekerechi iji hụ na mmadụ dịgidere ma mụbakwaa. N'ihi nke a, omume ọ bụla mmadụ mere nke dabara n'ihe ndị a ka a na ka ezi omume ebe a na-ahụta omume ndị na-adabaghị na ha ka mmebi iwu ma ọ bụ ajọ omume.. Iwu ekerechi na-enye aka iduzi akparamagwa n'ụzọ dị iche iche nke gụnyere usoro nnọchi ọkwa na mmụba akụnaụba. Dịka Houghton (2011) siri kọwaa , iwu ekerechi bụ usoro ndị ahụ nke e kenyere mmadụ n'ime nke na-enye aka ikpebi ma omume mmadụ o ziri ezi ka ọ bụ na o zighi ezi.

Onye bụ isi a hụrụ kwaba okpu n'atụtụ a bụ Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274) kwuru na ihe ọma dị mma ka a na-

eme ma kwesikwa ka onye ọ bụla gbaso ya ebe onye ọ bụla kwesiri ịgbara ihe ọjọọ ọsọ. Ọ gakwara n'ihu kwuo na iwu ekerechi na-emetụta mba ụwa niile. Ọ bụ n'iwu ekerechi ka mba dị iche iche si enweta iwu na-achịkwa omume ndị mmadụ n'obodo ha. Ebe ọ bụ na iwu ekerechi sitere n'aka Eke kere ụwa bịa, ọ na-emetụta mmadụ niile. Ebumnuche atụtụ iwu ekerechi bụ ka mmadụ niile nye aka n'inweta ọdịmma ọhaneze n'ihi na omume ọ bụla nke na-adabaghị n'iwu ekerechi bụ ajọ omume.

Atụtụ iwu ekerechi bụ ozuru mba ọnụ n'ụdị na a na-esite na ya enweta iwu ndị ọzọ n'ihi na ọ na-agbakwasị ụkwụ n'ugwu ruru mmadụ. Atụtụ iwu a ejighi ndụ mmadụ egwuri egwu. Ọ na-elekwasịkarị anya n'ikpe ziri ezi, nkwanye ugwu na imeru ihe n'oke.

N'aka nke ọzọ, atụtụ iwu ekerechi aanaghị adabacha oge ụfọdụ n'ihi na ọ na-achọkarị inwe nkwenye n'ebe Eke (Chukwu) kacha ihe niile nọ ma na-ewepụtakwa iwu ndị dị nnukwu mkpa nke adabereghi n'echiche na amamihe nke mmadụ. Ndị mmadụ kwesiri iji akọnuche ha mata eziokwu ndị a ma mee ihe ndị dabara adaba na ya. Adịmiche n'akọnuche mmadụ ekwesighi ịbụ ihe a ga-agbakwasị ụkwụ. N'ihi nke a iwu ọbụla nke anaghị echekwa ndụ mmadụ abụghị ezigbo iwu. E kwesikwaghị irubere ya isi.

Atụtụ Ndaba N'usoro Nsieme Ọhaneze

Atụtụ a sitere n'echiche Emile Durkheim (1897) n'akwụkwọ ya ọ kpọrọ "Suicide" wee gbasaa site n'aka Robert K. Merton n'afọ 1938. Atụtụ a na-ekwu maka

ọnọdụ ebe ụkpụrụ na iwu obodo dabara adaba nakwa ebe ọ dabaghị nke nwere ike kpalite mmụọ mmebi iwu site n'agbasoghi ntụziaka dabara n'omume ọma. Durkheim kwenyesiri ike na mgbe usoro mmekọrịta mmadụ dara, mmadụ na-enwe mmetụta nke nwere ike ime ka o bido mewe ihe n'usoro adabaghị n'echiche na nkwenye ọhaneze. N'ihe banyere omenala Igbo, atụtụ a bara uru iji kọwaa ọnọdụ ebe omenala dara n'ala ma rie mperi nke mere na o nwetaghị nkwado na ntụkwasị obi n'aka ndị ntorobịa n"ihi mmetụta agụmaakwụkwọ, mmepe anya na nka na ụzụ. Mgbe ndị mmadụ ahụtaghịzị uru iwu nke omenala bara n'ime ndụ ha, ọ ga-eduba ha n'imebi omenala site n'ịkpa agwa ọjọọ dị iche iche ndị gụnyere ịgha ụgha, izu ohi na ime ihe ndị ọzọ na-adịghị mma. Ọnọdụ dị etu a na-ebute mgbanwe na ntụgharị nke omume ọhaneze.

Atụtụ a dabara adaba maka nchọcha a n'ihi na ọ ga-enyere ọchọcha aka ịghọta na mmebi iwu n'oge a abụghị nsogbu metụtara naanị akparamagwa ma ọ bụ omume ndị mmadụ kama ọ na-esite na mmebi ma ọ bụ nghasa nke usoro nhazi ọhaneze na ọdịbendị Igbo. Atụtụ a na-akpọ oku ka eweghachịte ntụkwasị obi e nwere n'ebe iwu omenala dị site n'ịgbaso nkwenye na omenala ndị dabara na mgbanwe nke oge. N'ihi na Crossman (2018) kwuru na ihe na-ebute emeghi ihe Dịka o siri daba n'usoro iwu bụ e meghi ka ụmụaka mata mmbamuru n'usoro ndebeiwu nke obodo. O kwuru na ọnọdụ mgbe a hapụrụ ịgbaso usoro iwu omenala n'ime ihe ụfọdụ n'ewepụtaghị nke ọhụrụ e nwere ike iji dochie ya ka ahụ na-enweghi oghere ma ọ bụ ohere ọ bụla mmadụ ga-eji sị na ya amaghị. Nke a na-emetụta uto akụnaụba,

ndọrọndọrọ ọchịchị, mmekọrịta ọhaneze na ngalaba ndị ọzọ dị mkpa maka agamnihu nke obodo. Atụtụ a na-enyere ndị mmadụ nọ n'ogo dị iche iche aka isonye nke ọma n'usoro nsieme nke obodo. Ọ na-enyekwa aka ime ka mmadụ nweta ma nabata ọzụzụ nke ga-enyere ya aka ibi ezi ndụ. Mana, n'aka nke ọzọ, ọtụtụ na-elekwasị anya naanị n'ebe otu onye nọ ma kọwaa ihe kpatara o ji eme ihe ọ bụla ọ na-eme. Ọ naghị eleba anya n'omume ọjọọ nke ọtụtụ mmadụ n'obodo.

Nchịkọta Ntụlegharị Agụmagụ

Ọ bụ ezi okwu na e nweela ọtụtụ nchọcha ndị e mere banyere aha mana e nwebeghi nchọcha ọ bụla e merela banyere iwu na aha mmadụ n'omenala Igbo. Nke a oghere nchọcha a chọrọ imechi. Nchọcha a ga-enye aka mee ka ndị mmadụ mara ihe jikọtara iwi na omenala Igbo.

Ntụcha Aha Ndị Igbo Na-aza Gosiri Nkwenye Ha N'iwu Omenala

Ndị Igbo Dịka agbụrụ ndị ọzọ dị n'ụwa nwere etu ha si hụ ụwa. Nke a metụtara nkwenye ha na usoro ha ebi ndụ. Chi ndị Igbo adighị ka Chi ndị otu ụka kraịst nke nwere mmụọ ozi dị iche iche na-agara ya ozi. N'ịkwado nke a , Onukawa (2016) kwuru na echiche na Chi ndị Igbo dabere na nkwenye na nsirihụụwa ha. N'ihi nke a , ihe niile banyere ndị Igbo hiwere isi na nkwenye ha. Ọ bụ nke a mere ha ji kwenye n'iwu omenala Igbo ma jiri ya na-ahazi usoro obibi ndụ ha. Ha na-esite n'aha ha na-aza egosi nkwenye ha n'iwu omenala Igbo. Ka anyị tụlee aha

dị iche iche ndị Igbo na-aza nke gosiri nkwenye ha n'iwu omenala Igbo.

Iwuji

Ji bụ mkpụrụ akụkụ kachasị pụta ihe n'ime mkpụrụ akụkụ niile ndị Igbo na-akọ. Ji bụ ihe na-egosi ndụ ,akụnaụba na ihe nrụpụta nke ala . Ọ bụ nke a mere e ji nwee iwu dị iche iche metụtara ji iji chekwaa ugwu dịrị ya. Ndị Igbo na-agụ ma na-aza Iwuji n'ihi ji bụ nri kachasị ibe ya n'omenala Igbo.

Iwuọha

N'usoro ọchịchị ndị Igbo, e nwere ọha nke ihe mejupụtara ya bụ ụmụnna dị iche iche. Ọ bụ eziokwu na ndị Igbo enweghi usoro ọchịchị dịkọtara ọnụ Dịka nke dị Awụsa, Fụlanị na Yoruba mana ha nwere usoro pụrụ iche ha si achịkwa onwe ha(Mbachụ, 1994). Ndị Igbo kwenyere na ikike ọchịchị dị ọha n'aka ma site n'aka ọha agafe otu onye n'aka, onye na-ejidere ọha ikike ọchịchị a (Ọnụkawa, 2016). Ọ bụ nke a mere ndị Ọha ji bụrụ ekwucha ọgwụ n'usoro ọchịchị omenala Igbo. Ihe ọ bụla ha kpebiri banyere okwu ọ bụla a naghị agbagha ya agbagha. N'ihi ụdị nkwenye na usoro ọchịchị a , Ọkaa Mọnde Ọnụkawa mere ka anyị mata na iwu ọ bụla ndị ọha tinyere anaghị enwe mmegharị. A na-atakwa onye ọ bụla mebiri ya nnukwu ahụhụ. Iwu dị otu a jịkọta ma na-achịkwa usoro obibi ndụ ndị ọha. Nke a mere e ji akpọ ya iwu ọha.

Iwuchukwu

Ndị Igbo kwenyere na e nwere Chi nke kacha chi ndị ọzọ niile ma bụrụkwa onye Agbara ndị ọzọ na-agara ozi. Ha kwenyere na o nweghi onye nwere ike iruli ya nso. Ọ bụ nke a mere ha esi n'aka obere chi ndị ọzọ ezi Chukwu ahụ ozi. Obere chi ndị ọzọ a ndị Igbo si n'aka aha agakwuru Chukwu gụnyere Ibini Ụkpabi, Amadịọha , Igwekaala nakwa ndị ọzọ. Maazị Ume Mba mere ka anyị mata na Chukwu nwere iwu dị iche iche nke a na-edobe iji kwanyere ya ugwu. Ọ bụ nke a mere e ji nwee Iwuchukwu maka iwu ya adịghị mgbagha. Ndị Igbo na-aza ya n'aha iji gosi nkwenye ha n'iwu omenala Igbo.

Iwuanyanwụ

Anyanwụ bụ otu n'ime ihe okike kacha mkpa na ndụ na omenala ndị Igbo. Ndị Igbo na-ahụta anyanwụ Dịka isi iyi nke ndụ,ihe oge nakwa ike Chineke nyere mmadụ. N'ịkwad nke a , odoziakụ Enebe mere ka anyị mata na ọ bụ anyanwụ na-enye mmadụ ihe , mee ka ọ mara oge maka ime ihe dị iche iche. Nke a mere anyanwụ ji nwe nnukwu ọnọdụ na ndụ nakwa nkwenye ndị Igbo.

A gaghị akọwa akụkọ banyere ndụ ndị Igbo hapụ ịkpọtụ anyanwụ aha. Ndị Igbo bi n'ọwụwa anyanwụ ala Naịjirịa. A kọwakwa akụkọ etu ha siri malite ndụ ha a ga-akpọkwa anyanwụ aha. Ọ bụ n'ihi nnukwu mkpa anyanwụ dị na ndụ ndị Igbo kpatara e ji iwu ndị metụtara anyanwụ . Ndị Igbo na-azakwa Iwuanyanwụ iji gosi nkwenye ha n'ebe anyanwụ dị.

Iwundụ

Aha “Iwundụ” bụ aha ọdịnala nke sitere n’okwu abụọ bụ “iwu” na “ndụ.” N’ụzọ dị mfe, aha a pụtara na iwu bụ isi ndụ mmadụ na obodo. Aha a na-egosi na ndị Igbo na-ahụ iwu omenala dịka ihe na-echekwa ndụ, udo, ezi mmekọrịta na ịdị n’otu n’obodo. Ọ bụkwa ụzọ e si akụziri ụmụaka na ndụ enweghị isi ma ọ bụrụ na mmadụ anaghị eso iwu na omenala obodo ya.

Iwundụ na-egosi na ndụ obodo dabere n’iwu. Ndị Igbo kweere na obodo enweghị ike ịdị n’udo ma ọ bụrụ na iwu adighị. Ọ bụ iwu na-achịkwa omume mmadụ ma na-eme ka mmadụ mara ihe kwesịrị ekwesị na ihe ekwesịghị ekwesị.

Achebe (1958) kwuru na ndụ ọdịnala ndị Igbo dabere nke ukwuu n’usoro omenala na nkwanye ùgwù nye iwu obodo. Nke a pụtara na iwu bụ ihe na-eme ka obodo ghara ịdaba n’ọgbaaghara.

Ndị Igbo kweere na iwu sitere n’aka chi na nna nna. Onye mebiri iwu nwere ike ịnata ntaramahụhụ sitere n’aka ala ma ọ bụ mmụọ. N’ihi nke a, ndị mmadụ na-atụ egwu ime mmehie n’ihi na ha kweere na chi na-ahụ ihe niile mmadụ na-eme (Mbiti, 1969).

Iwunze

N'ala Igbo, ndị nze so n'otu n'ime ndị dị nnukwu mkpa n'usoro ọchịchị . Ha bụ ndị e ji ikpe ziri ezi na ikwụwa aka ọtọ mara. Maazị Elọm Uche mere ka anyị mata na ndị nze so na ndị na-ahụ na ọ dighị onye ọ bụla mebiri iwu omenala . Onye ọ bụla nupuru isi mebie ya na-anata

ntaramahụhụ . Ntaramahụhụ a na-enye onye dị etu a na-adabere n'ụdị iwu o mebiri. Nihi nkwenye ndị Igbo n'ọrụ ndị nze na-arụ na nchekwa iwu omenala ka ji aza Iwunze.

Nwaiwu

N'omenala Igbo, iwu abụghị naanị ihe a na-ede ede dịka e si ahụ ya n'usoro ọchịchị oge a. Kama nke ahụ, iwu bụ ụkpụrụ obodo nke sitere n'aka ndị nna ochie ma bụrụ ihe na-achị omume mmadụ n'obodo (Ọraegbunam, 2010). Ndị Igbo kwenyere na iwu bụ ihe na-echekwa ịdị n'otu na ịdị n'udo n'etiti ndị mmadụ. N'ihi ya, aha dịka "Nwaiwu" na-apụta dịka ụzọ e si akụziri nwa ọhụrụ mkpa nrubeisi na ezi omume.

Mgbe ụfọdụ, ezinụlọ na-enye nwa aha a mgbe ha chọrọ igosi na ezinụlọ ahụ bụ ndị na-asọpụrụ omenala ma ọ bụ mgbe ha chọrọ ka nwa ahụ too bụrụ onye ga-echekwa ezi omume na iwu obodo. Ọ nwekwara ike ịbụ aha e nyere nwa a mụrụ mgbe esemokwu ma ọ bụ ikpe kwụsịrị n'ezinụlọ, dịka ihe ncheta na udo na-adị mgbe iwu na-achị (Umeogu, 2012).

Ndị Igbo na-ele iwu anya dịka ihe nsọ nke jikọtara mmadụ na obodo ya. Iwu omenala na-achịkwa omume mmadụ n'ụlọ, n'ahịa, n'alụmdi na nwunye na n'ọrụ mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya (Obodo, 2005). Nke a na-egosi na aha "Nwaiwu" bụ aha nwere ebumnuche mmụta na nduzi.

N'echiche ndị Igbo, aha nwere ike ịkpụzi agwa mmadụ. Nke a mere ka ọtụtụ ndị nne na nna jiri aha na-echetara ụmụ ha ụzọ kwesịrị ekwesị ha ga-esi bie ndụ. Aha

"Nwaiwu" na-akpọku onye nwe ya ka ọ bụrụ onye na-anọ n'ụzọ ziri ezi ma ghara ime ihe ga-weta ihere n'ezinụlọ na obodo.

Ọnọniwu

Aha "Ọnọniwu" bụ otu n'ime aha ndị Igbo na-egosi mmekọrịta dị n'etiti mmadụ, iwu omenala, na nkwenye ọdịnala ndị Igbo. Aha a sitere n'okwu abụọ bụ "ọnọ" na "iwu." "Ọnọ" nwere ike ịpụta ịnọgide, ịdịgide, ma ọ bụ ịdị n'ọnọdụ siri ike, ebe "iwu" pụtara usoro nduzi, omenala, ma ọ bụ ụkpụrụ e ji achị obodo na ezinụlọ. N'ihi ya, "Ọnọniwu" nwere ike ịpụta "onye na-adịgide n'iwu," "onye nọ n'akụkụ iwu," ma ọ bụ "ịdịgide n'omume ziri ezi" (Umeogu, 2012).

Iwu omenala Igbo, abụghị naanị ihe gbasara ikpe n'ụlọikpe; kama ọ bụ usoro ndụ na-achị omume mmadụ, mmekọrịta mmadụ na ibe ya, na ịdị n'udo n'obodo. Ndị Igbo kweere na onye na-edebe iwu omenala na-enweta nsọpụrụ, nchekwa, na ịdị mma n'ụlọ na n'obodo. N'ihi nke a, aha dịka "Ọnọniwu" na-egosi na ezinụlọ nyere nwa ahụ aha ahụ chọrọ ka ọ bụrụ onye na-akwanyere omenala na iwu ugwu (Ọraegbunam, 2010).

Maazị Ume Mba anyị gbara ajụjụ ọnụ banyere aha a mere ka anyị mata na ihe na-akpalite mmụọ ezinaụlọ inye nwa ha ụdị aha bụ nkwenye siri ike ha nwere n' iwu omenala Igbo.

Nwaọnọniwu

Ọtụtụ mgbe na ndụ ndị Igbo ihe megasịrị ha na-akpalite mmụọ ha ịgụ na ịza aha iji gosi ka o si dịrị ha. Ọ bụrụ na

ịmụta nwa siere mmadụ ike nke ukwuu, o mechaa mụta nwa, o nwere ike gụọ ya Nwaọnọniwu. Nke a bụ ịjụ ndị mmụọ ajụjụ ma ịmụta nwa o megidere iwu omenala mere na ya amtụtabeghi nwa ruo n'oge ahụ. Ihe mere e ji ajụjụ dị etu a bụ makana ndị Igbo kwenyere na iwu omenala Igbo abụghị ihe a emebi ghara inweta ntaramahụhụ so ya. Maazị Okorie Asịegbu anyị gbara ajụjụ ọnụ gwara anyị na nwa bụ onyinye si n'aka Chukwu okike abịara mmadụ; onye na-amụtaghị nwa mgbe o lere anya ya nwere ike jụwa ma nwa ọ nọ n'iwu mere o jighi nwee nwa. Aha dị etu a na-egosi nkwenye ndị Igbo nwere ebe iwu omenala dị.

Nchịkọta na Mmechi

Iwu bụ usoro a haziri e si achịkwaakparamagwa ndị mmadụ . E wepụ iwu ezi mmekọrịta na ibi n'otu agaghị adị mfe. Iwu anyị lebara anya ebe a abụghị iwu bekee nke mmadụ na-emebe kama ọ bụ iwu omenala Igbo nke ndị Igbo kwenyere na ọ bụ Ala mebere ha. N'ihi nkwenye dị etu a ndị na-ahụta onye ọ bụla na-emebi iwu ka onye arụrụ ala. Nke a pụtara onye na-emerụ ala. Mgbe e mụrụrụ ala , a na-akwa ala mana ọ bụrụ n'ọnọdụ jọkasịrị ibe ya na njọ , a kpụọ arụ. Ihe ndị a niile bụ iji mee ka a gbara ajọ omume na mmebi iwu ọsọ.

N'ihi nkwenye siri ike ndị Igbo nwere n'ebe iwu omenala nọ, ha na-agụ ma na-azakwa aha dị iche iche iji na-echetara onwe ha mkpa iwu omenala dị n'usoro obibi ndụ ha. Aha bụ njirimara mmadụ . Ọ bụ n'ihi mkpa aha dị na ndụ mmadụ mere ndị Igbo ji eme mmemme ịgụ aha oge a mụ nwa ọhụrụ. Nke a bụ iji nye nwa ahụ njirimara. Ụfọdụ na-agụ nwa aha n'izu abụọ ebe ndị ọzọ

na-agụ n'izu nke bụ otu ọnwa. Oge e ji gụọ nwa aha abụchaghị ihe dị mkpa kama aha a gụrụ nwa ka a na-elegara anya. Aha a gụrụ mmadụ na-emetụta akara aka na omume ya. Ọ bụ nke a mere ndị Igbo ji akpachapụ anya mgbe ha na-agụ aha iji gbanahụ ọdachị aha adịghị mma nwere ike ibutere ha.

Nchọcha a nke jiri ịgba ajụjụ ọnụ na ihe ndị a gụtara n'akwụkwọ tụchara aha dị iche iche ndị Igbo na-aza iji gosi nkwenye ha n'iwu omenala Igbo. Aha ndị a tụchara gụnyere Iwuji, Iwuọha, Nwaiwu, Iwunze, Nwaọnọniwu , Ọnọniwu, Iwundụ na Iwuchukwu. Aha ndị a niile gbakwasịrị ụkwụ n'iwu omenala Igbo na-enyere ndị Igbo aka n'ịhazi usoro obibi ndụ ha site n'izere omume megidere iwu omenala Igbo.

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Ndị Agbara Ajụjụ Ọnụ

Aha	Mgbamafọ	Obodo	Aka ọrụ	Ụbọchị
Elọm Uche	Iri ise na Ise	Ikwo	Nkụzi	20/2/24
Irogewe Chinedum	Iri isii	Ụmụnneochi	Ọrụ ugbo	23/4/24
Ọsọndụ Clement	Iri isii na atọ	Enugwu	Ịzụ ahịa	30/5/25
Enebe Chibụzọ	Iri isi na ise	Udi	Nkụzi	6/7/25
Izunna Ikedịchi	Iri isi na atọ	Mbanọ	Ọrụ ugbo	10/8/25
Ogbonna Patrick	Iri ise na asatọ	Ezzamgbo	Ịzụ ahịa	13/9/25
Ọnụkawa	Iri isii na	Ụmụahịa	Nkụzi	16/11/25

Monday C.	abụọ			
Okorie Ashiegbu	Iri isii na anọ	Owere	Ọrụ Ugbo	18/11/25
Ụka Ejikeme	Iri isii na asatọ	Ụmụnze	Ịzụ ahịa	22/11/25
Mba Ume	Iri isii	Ezinifite	Nkụzi	10/12/25

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ETHNIC SOCIALIZATION AND ETHNIC AWARENESS IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE.

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Abstract

Nigeria by its composition is undoubtedly a nation comprising of multi-ethnic groups and, therefore in the face of competition for scarce resource, ethnicity obviously is going to be encountered. Ethnicity in Nigeria is rooted in the fact that Nigerians have since the amalgamation in 1914 been forced out of their familiar linguistic, social, political, and cultural units, and brought face to face, with others whose ways of life appear to constitute mutual threat. The root of ethnicity is fear, that is fear of the unknown; fear of losing the predictability of one's way of behaving which one's already acquired attitudes and values have guaranteed; fear of having one's established and cherished values changed or destroyed; fear of competition for scarce resources; fear of domination by privileged groups/minorities; fear of loss of control, etc. these fears keep social and psychological distances wide, too wide for a feeling of Nigerianness to be easily created. Nevertheless, Nigerians can derive formidable social,

political, economic and psychological strength from this collection of ethnic groups if their perceptions are not dominated by prejudice. One group that can have a significant role in this is social workers. Social work is described as the profession that helps society work better for people and helps them function better within society. This paper argues that treating citizens unequally on the basis of ethnicity is anti-developmental and a major problem in Nigeria. It has caused resentment among marginalized ethnic groups, fuelled conflicts and sometimes wars, and discouraged investments, retarding growth and development prospects.

Key words: ethnicity, Ethnic group, Socialization, Ethnic Awareness.

Introduction

Ethnic socialization involves the ways in which group membership affects development and the development processes by which we acquire the behaviors, perceptions, values, and attitudes of an ethnic group to come to see ourselves and others as members of such groups. The developmental processes shape our self-concept and play a role in shaping our self-esteem, our attitudes and behavior toward our own and other groups, as well as the way we are evaluated by others. Understanding of such processes will help the social workers facilitate the personal development and cross-ethnic interactions of those they work with.

Most definitions of ethnic groups focus on a number of themes, including a common religion, culture, physical

appearance or some combination of these. Gordon (1988) defines an ethnic group as

a population entity which considers itself to have a common historical ancestry and identity- a sense of people hood, of constituting a "people"- and is so regarded by others. It may be co-extensive with a particular nation, or it may be based on a common religion, a common racial ancestry or frequency, or some combination of several of these factors.

Ethnicity and ethnic group membership/ socialization are among major concerns to society and to the social work profession. The roots of social work in United States are closely tied to meeting the needs of diverse groups (Cox & Ephross, 2018). Ethnicity is a complex term that involves objective and subjective attributes and both social and psychological identity. Ethnicity is not a constant; its saliency alters with the life course. It is not the same as race although the terms are frequently interchanged; a plethora of ethnic groups can be subsumed within one racial group. The person-in-environment framework may not be fundamental object of interaction, and thus social Workers must be knowledgeable about the group's emphasis on individuals, family, or past generations. Cox and Ephross (2018) therefore said that ethnic identity provides lenses through which persons perceive, attributes meaning to experiences, and decide actions. The Social worker's lens must be free of distortion if interactions with ethnic groups are to be effective.

The Concept of Ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity is associated with culture and is often used interchangeably with culture as well as race, or nationality. Usually, ethnicity is used in reference to groups that are characterized in terms of common nationality, culture, or language(Fenton,2010). Members of ethnic groups may see themselves as culturally distinct from other groups, but the most usual are language, history or ancestry (real or imagined), religion, and styles of dress or adornment (Giddens & Sutton, 2013). The concept of ethnicity is related to the Greek concept of *ethnos,*which refers to the people of a nation or tribe, and ethnikos, which stands for national. Hence, ethnicity refers to the ethnic quality or affiliation of a group, which is normally characterized in terms of culture (Bentacourt & Lopez, 1993). Although cultural background can be a determinant of ethnic identity or affiliation, being part of an ethnic group can also determine culture. As members of an ethnic group interact with each other, ethnicity becomes a means by which culture is transmitted. According to Berry (1985), because an ethnic group is likely to interact with other ethnic groups, such interactions should not be ignored as possible sources of cultural influences.

When individual or group behaviours are perceived as manifesting elements of distinctiveness, separateness, and exclusivity (Desmet, Ortuno=Ortin, & Wacziarg, 2015), the adjective “ethnic” tends to be used to describe such perceived manifestations. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is a noun which Hoffneyer-zlotnik and Warner (2010) defines as discriminations and strife based on

differences in inter-ethnic symbols. Ethnocentrism (i.e group/race centeredness) is defined as the exaggerated tendency to think that the characteristics of one's own group or race are superior to those of other groups or races. Ethnocentrism (Njoroge & Kirori, 2014) is a tendency to view one's own group as the centre of everything and to rate all other people with reference to it. Adetiba, and Rahim (2012) defined ethnicity in a more expanded way by regarding it as an attitude and/or ideology concerning the relationship between an individual's own group and other groups, whereby positive characteristics of the individual's own group are strongly emphasized while features and members of other group are denigrated. Thus, easy rejection of unfamiliar things is characteristics of ethnocentrism which therefore becomes a component of general prejudice. Hence, both concepts of ethnicity and ethnocentrism convey notions of negative inter group perceptions and relationships. It has been observed that ethnicity has always been important to people because it not only locates them in group, but also helps them to answer the question, "who am I ?" (Gordon, 1988). The nature of an ethnic group's relationship with the society as a whole and with other groups in it constitutes one of the main problems in describing and analyzing such societies. In contemporary Nigerian society, people has been expected to subordinate their particular ethnic identity to national identity (e.g Ogoni), and in the process experience problems in assimilation, in asserting their unique ethnic identity and tradition. Such problems are compounded by the past historical neglect of these groups as recognized contributing members of Nigerian

society which in turn, lead to social, psychological, economic, and recently political problems of disadvantaged Nigerian minorities.

The Concept of Socialization and Ethnic Socialization

Every society has its own codes and conducts, rules and regulations, and norms and values. Infect, human beings as cultural animals have to figure out ways to adapts to their world and pass those ways to their children (Owoeye, 2012). Every human groups passes to their children what they believe would enable them adapt to their world. Therefore, Osuji (2005 in Owoeye,2012) stated that all human beings intervene to help their children learn appropriate behaviors, ignoring the adults because they are more amenable. However, socialization occurs throughout an individual life which means that socialization is a means of passing culture from one generation to another.

During socialization, humans learn the language of the culture they are born into as well as the roles to be played in life, on addition, they learn about the occupational roles that their society has in stock for them. This process of socialization is not limited to languages only but also the learning and adoption of cultural norms which are conceptions of appropriate and expected behavior that are held by mist member of the society. Socialization is a learning process that begins shortly after birth, and each society has its own socialization culture and process. This is mostly referred to as the rite of passage. Socialization processes are therefore shown in the three major ethnic groups in

Nigeria. According to Owoeye (2012), socialization process in Hausa land usually begins about a week after a child is born, when the child is given a name, during an Islamic naming ceremony. In their mid- to- late-teens, young men and women may become engaged. The marriage ceremony may take as long as several days. Music and art are important in their everyday life. From a young age, Hausa children participate in dancing, which are held in meeting placed such as the market. Again, Hausa society has a strong division of labor according to age and sex. The main activity in towns is thread while in rural areas, it is agriculture. The Yoruba's are not left out. The family is the most sacred as significant institution to the Yoruba, who are child centered, rule by the elderly, and controlled by adults. Yoruba culture places extremely high valued on children, it is safe to say that children are the highest good of the Yoruba. Therefore the value of children seems to show nature of immorality of the soul which flows which flows cyclically in the lineage through the birth of children. Among the Igbo, an Igbo offspring is a product of his father's lineage. The Igbo culture perceives socialization primarily as rite of passage. One of the highest occasions in the life of Igbo girls and boys is the initiation into adulthood through the rite of passage. Also, it is essential to point out that when one attains the age of puberty in most Igbo society, one is introduced to both the mother's mother's lineage and the father's father's lineage.

Ethnic socialization is the ways in which group membership affect development and development and

development processes by which we acquire the behaviours, perceptions, values and attitudes of an ethnic group to come to see ourselves and others as members of such group. These developmental processes shape our self-concepts and play a role in shaping our self-esteem, our attitudes, and behaviours towards our own and other groups as well as the way we are evaluated by others. Understanding of such processes will help us facilitate the personal development and cross-ethnic interactions of those we work with. Ethnic socialization is widely practiced in Nigeria. It has been identified as one of the critical task of Nigerian people particularly the social workers. Family ethnic socialization refers to parents' and other family members' efforts to expose young ones (youths) to the values and behaviors of their ethnic culture (umana-Taylor et al. 2009). Also Umana Taylor and Guimond, (2010) supports the notion that family ethnic socialization is positively associated with youths' ethnic identity exploration (i.e the degree to which youth have explored their ethnicity) and ethnic identity resolution (i.e the degree to which they are clear about the meaning that their ethnic group membership has in their lives).

The Growth of Ethnic Awareness

One of the major personal and social needs of a young child is to able to acquire an identity. He needs to be able to answer the question "who am I". he cannot answer that question until his society has answered the question "who he is ." the attitudes, values and behavior of his society towards him will act as a mirror for him to identify himself and distinguish it from other selves

around him. This consequently led Coolley (1902) to conceptualize what he called "looking glass self". Man's dependent nature makes the existence of human societies necessary as sources of his learning and survival. This implies that the existence of ethnic groups is crucial since such group enable the young child to acquire both personal and social identity. This means that the young child needs, not only to identify and distinguish himself from other individual in his ethnic group but also to identify and distinguish his ethnic groupfrom other ethnic or social groups. The question then is, how does the young child development ethnic awareness/identity? Part of the answer is that in the course of his socialization, the agents of socialization reinforce in him the need to belong and adhere to the worldviews of a specific and identifiable, linguistic and cultural goal in terms of which his personal identity can emerge. That group obviously has to be his ethnic group.

Socialization and Growth of Ethnic Awareness

Socialization is the root of all forms of social behavior whether adaptive or maladaptive. Socialization is a complex process. It involves being "led" by more able people into the ways of a society. Therefore socialization maybe defined as the process of learning to think and to act like other members of one's society. According to Thompson (1975), socialization refers to the organized social learning experiences through which the individual comes to acquire the conceptual and behavioral standard characteristic of the human aggregate in which he or she grows to adulthood. Unlike the instinctual emergence of behaviors in subhuman animals, socialization in human

involves the development of thought and evaluative or judgmental processes. It covers a wind range of society, through the acquisition of language, gestures, symbols and communication media, to learning the traditions and accepting the attitudes and values of one's own culture. Moreover, socialization spans the entire life span of every individual in the course of which the individual observes, learns, adopts and adapts the behaviours relevant or pertinent to every stage of his development.

Human beings even when tender in age, have very strong observation powers. The people from whom they learn by observation are called models. A model for example, a mother, father, teacher, or any significant other in the community, may have the objective of transmitting to the learner or young person, certain predetermined bits of knowledge, information, skill, habit, value, attitude, etc. but in doing so, he or she often exhibits styles, mannerisms, uses of words, slangs or gesture which he or she may not be conscious of or consider important, but which the learner observed keenly and in many instances, practices and effectively and/or efficient acquires.

Implication of Social Work practice in Nigeria

As a profession, social work's principal mission is to intervene and change human and social phenomena rather the solely to describe or explain them. Social workers must develop sensitivity towards ethnic populations. Sensitivity will ensure that assumption regarding the needs of the population are not entwined with those of majority population will be better equipped

for clinical practice. There is a need for clinical practice to consider the impact of racial discrimination and racial identity development (zayas, 2001). Perhaps the most effective method of developing sensitivity is to become aware of the historical, cultural, societal, and familial differences that impact the group's social functioning and mental health. This strategy will be increasingly important as social workers encounter greater numbers of immigrant children who have relocated with their families to urban areas for employment opportunities. Once social workers have an understanding of the differences in socialization experiences, their practice with groups can be sensitive to the hardships that these groups face in everyday life based on historical events. It is imperative for the social worker to understand the client's culture and perspectives on critical issues. In essence, the social worker is to have some adequate knowledge about clients' cultural background and world view in other to know how to approach issues presented by the client. Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures. Since Nigeria is a multicultural society, the promotion of cultural diversity should be the ethos of Nigerian social workers. It behooves social workers to equip themselves with the right knowledge so that they can reconcile the different objectives of their service provision to different groups. In other words they need to have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of service that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

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NARRATIVITY AS STRATEGY FOR THEMATIC MANAGEMENT IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S PURPLE HIBISCUS AND HALF OF A YELLOW SUN

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Abstract

This paper interrogates and evaluates the salient and inherent narrative techniques employed by Chaimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her first two novels. The study is predicated upon the concept of realism; with realism of technique being our major thrust. The paper contends that style and technique have been efficiently used by Adichie as pivotal tools for thematic management in her debut and second novels which

announced her literary ingenuity to the world. More importantly, it stimulates the need to look at writing in terms of manner and matter rather than relegating manner to the backwaters. This paper posits that style and techniques are as germane to the success of any literary work as much as themes are. This paper concludes that Adichie's eclectic and vibrant narrative techniques have stood her out and submitting that beyond her dexterity in story telling which cannot be over emphasized, the literary techniques deployment of are a hallmark of her literary craftsmanship. technique

Introduction

Thematic concerns are very important variables in all forms of literature as it is the fulcrum of creative literature. However, there is no denying the fact that thematic validity can be achieved with our efficient employment of narrative technique which this discourse has taken the liberty to refer to as Thus style and techniques are central and fundamental as well as pivotal in enhancing narrativity in literature. Suffice it to state here that narrativity on its own is the most potent ingredient in thematic realization and management.

Literature in this age and time has gone beyond thematic concerns alone. The manner (Style and techniques) have also taken centre stage in literary praxis and discourse. This treatise does not in any way negate, undermine or down play thematic concerns in literature rather it is an attempt to show that the matter of any literary genre is as important as the manner.

The burden of this work therefore is to critically evaluate how style and techniques have been effectively utilized by Adichie in her two ground breaking novels: Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun.

It is imperative at this point to state that the work of several authors may share similarities in terms of subject matter or theme but style and techniques constitute a fundamental variable and difference which brings out the peculiarity and distinctiveness employed by any writer.

This study is relevant owing to the fact that too much emphasis has been placed on the,matter of Adichie's novels relegating the manner to the background.

Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun are both important novels that launched Adichie's writing career. Her debut won her numerous accolades, awards, rave reviews and was nominated for the 2026 Man Booker Prize for literature, while the latter won her the prestigious Orange Broad Prize in literature 2008. This points to the fact that the manner and matter were judiciously deployed to realize these novels.

Conceptual Definitions

1. Narrativity- refers to the manner, act an/ or process brought to bear in rendering a story particularly in a novel. It is the approach employed in realizing a story which encapsulates the style and techniques. It is in this context that the word is used here.

2. Thematic Management- refers to the efficient deployment of narrative techniques towards effective

presentation of the underlining central messages in a story.

This work is approached using the concept of realism as our scaffold. We have chosen to premise this study on realism because Adichie's writings are a reflection of social reality. Realism in literature is the depiction of issues as they occur in everyday life without embellishment. This approach deals with the tendencies of art to mirror or get close to reality. It is an attempt to define life without idealization or romantic subjectivity.

Style and Technique in Purple Hibiscus

Chimamanda Adichie's debut Purple Hisbiscus struck the literary world like a thunder bolt; moving Jeane Marie Dauray to observe thus: "This book is a wonderfully crafted piece of fiction that pulls in the reader immediately…" Similarly Akachi Ezeigbo Adimora observes that "… this is a book you must return to again and again, reading it draws you deeper into the vast treasures of Purple Hibiscus." (The Blurb) The novel is very compelling and captivating such that a reader's attention is immediately caught and sustained.

The descriptive depth and detailed story telling ability employed by Adichie is one of her strengths. It is to say the least awesome and breathtaking.

She is vivid and graphic with detail and description that a reader cannot help but feel involved in her story. We capture in our minds eye all the scenes and issues Adichie raises. This is because vivid description is in itself an element and feature of realism which she

successfully puts to optimal use. She creates a world so detailed, evocative, emotionally true and graphic.

The story is set in a dysfunctional family in an equally dysfunctional Nigerian society; she describes so clearly the socio-political setting of Nigeria and her climate. One practically tastes the dust of the village roads on ones' tongue and smell the cashew trees after a heavy rain. Social customs, taboos and importantly too, the staple, snacks and food of her people. We are also presented the picture of domestic violence, pulling the reader into the complex political and religious struggles occurring in Nigeria at the time.

One of the very crucial and dominant issues presented in the novel is religious fanaticism and intolerance. From the very first page, one knows that religion will hang like a miasma over the novel.

We come face to face with grim reality that Papa is a religious zealot who can go any length all in the name of religion and serving God no matter how for reaching and despicable.

Papa craves attention from the clergy and he gets it. Fr Benedict believes so much in him and sees him as a model parishioner using him as a positive example for others to emulate.

Adichie describes the Mmuo Masqurade festival with so much colour, candour, virgor and enthusiasm that readers can picture it in their minds eye as though they were present in the rich cultural festival. The quaint description is like a vibrant painting that has come alive.

The elaborate portrayal of this highly cultural and folkloric festival is breathtaking (85-7).

All through the novel, a reader cannot help but marvel and agree totally that she is a skillful writer armed with uncommon descriptive acumen. Her graphic descriptive ability is in tandem with Ferdinand Asoo's proposition that "…realism of portrayal on detailed descriptive scenes and situations are further accomplished contrasting delineations." (56)

Point of View

One of the most effective narrative strategies employed in Purple Hibiscus is Adichie's use of the first-person point of view through Kambili Achike, the protagonist and central consciousness of the novel. The entire narrative unfolds through Kambili's perception, making the story psychologically intimate and emotionally layered. Through this narrative perspective, readers experience both the external realities of political instability and the internal tensions of fear, silence, trauma, and emotional awakening.

The first-person narration is particularly significant because it mirrors Kambili's psychological condition. Her voice is restrained, hesitant, and fragmented at the beginning of the novel, reflecting the oppressive atmosphere created by Eugene's authoritarian control. As the narrative progresses and Kambili encounters alternative spaces of freedom—especially in Nsukka—her narrative voice gradually becomes more confident and expressive. Thus, the development of narrative voice

parallels the protagonist's emotional and psychological growth.

Adichie's use of focalization also enhances thematic depth. By filtering events through Kambili's consciousness, the narrative foregrounds the subjective experience of domestic violence, religious extremism, and adolescence. Readers are not merely informed about oppression; they experience its emotional consequences through Kambili's silence, fear, and gradual self-discovery.

This narrative strategy aligns with contemporary trauma studies, which emphasize fragmented narration and silence as important modes of representing psychological repression. Kambili's limited narration therefore becomes both a stylistic and ideological tool for articulating trauma within the domestic and postcolonial space.

Humour and Satire

Although Purple Hibiscus is largely a serious and emotionally intense novel, Adichie skillfully incorporates humour and satire to expose social contradictions and critique ideological excesses. These elements provide narrative balance while simultaneously deepening the novel's sociopolitical commentary.

One important target of Adichie's satire is colonial mentality and the continued valorization of whiteness within postcolonial society. The parishioners of St. Agnes Church continue to refer to Father Benedict as "our new priest" even after several years, suggesting an

exaggerated reverence rooted partly in racialized perceptions of authority. Through subtle irony, Adichie critiques the persistence of colonial consciousness in religious and social institutions.

Similarly, Eugene's obsession with Englishness and Western validation becomes a source of satirical commentary. His rejection of the Igbo language and preference for English as a marker of sophistication reveal the psychological effects of colonial conditioning. Adichie exposes the absurdity of this mindset through scenes in which villagers are excessively praised merely for attempting to speak English, regardless of fluency or authenticity.

The satirical portrayal of Eugene is particularly effective because it reveals the contradictions embedded in his character. Although he publicly advocates justice and supports democratic ideals through his newspaper, he simultaneously reproduces violence and tyranny within his household. This contradiction underscores one of the novel's major thematic concerns: the coexistence of public morality and private oppression.

Humour and satire therefore function not merely as comic relief but as critical instruments for interrogating power, hypocrisy, colonial mimicry, and social dysfunction.

Characterization

Characterization is one of Adichie's greatest artistic strengths in Purple Hibiscus. The characters are psychologically complex and socially representative,

functioning both as individuals and as embodiments of broader ideological tensions within Nigerian society.

Eugene Achike, for instance, represents the intersection of religious fanaticism, patriarchal authority, and colonial alienation. Although he is publicly admired for his philanthropy and moral discipline, his domestic brutality exposes the contradictions underlying his identity. His character illustrates how violence can coexist with social respectability and religious devotion.

Kambili's characterization is equally significant. Her transformation from silence to self-expression reflects the broader thematic movement from repression to liberation. Through her emotional development, Adichie explores questions of identity formation, agency, and resistance within oppressive structures.

Aunty Ifeoma serves as a foil to Eugene. Unlike Eugene's rigid authoritarianism, Ifeoma embodies intellectual freedom, openness, and emotional warmth. Her household in Nsukka represents an alternative model of family and social interaction grounded in dialogue rather than fear. Through this contrast, Adichie dramatizes competing visions of postcolonial modernity and parenthood.

Jaja's gradual rebellion against his father also symbolizes emerging resistance against authoritarian control. His silence, defiance, and eventual sacrifice reveal the psychological cost of oppression within the family structure.

Adichie's characters are compelling because they are neither idealized nor entirely villainous. They possess emotional depth, contradictions, fears, and vulnerabilities that make them psychologically credible. This realism enhances readers' identification with the characters and strengthens the thematic impact of the novel.

Language

Language constitutes one of the most distinctive features of Adichie's narrative style. Although she writes primarily in English, her linguistic texture is deeply rooted in Igbo cultural consciousness. Her prose reflects what postcolonial critics describe as the "Africanization" of the English language—the adaptation of English to express indigenous experiences, worldviews, and speech patterns.

Adichie's language is notable for its clarity, rhythm, and cultural authenticity. She frequently incorporates Igbo expressions, proverbs, idioms, and forms of address into the narrative, thereby preserving cultural specificity while enriching the texture of the novel. This linguistic hybridity reflects the sociolinguistic realities of postcolonial Nigeria, where indigenous languages coexist with English in complex ways.

Her stylistic approach recalls Chinua Achebe's advocacy for a "new English" capable of carrying African experience without losing intelligibility. Like Achebe, Adichie manipulates English creatively to reflect

indigenous thought patterns and communicative traditions.

The use of code-switching and untranslated Igbo expressions also reinforces the authenticity of characterization and setting. Rather than domesticating African experience for Western readership, Adichie allows cultural meanings to exist within their original linguistic context. Contemporary postcolonial scholarship regards this strategy as an important form of linguistic resistance and cultural assertion.

Furthermore, Adichie's prose combines simplicity with emotional intensity. Her language remains accessible while simultaneously conveying profound psychological and political meanings. This stylistic balance contributes significantly to the novel's broad global appeal.

Structure of the Novel

The structure of Purple Hibiscus is carefully organized to sustain suspense, deepen thematic development, and reflect psychological progression. The narrative is divided into sections associated with religious seasons and temporal shifts, a strategy that reinforces the novel's religious undertones while simultaneously charting the gradual breakdown of authoritarian control within the Achike family.

Adichie employs a non-linear narrative structure that moves between past and present. The novel opens in medias res with Jaja's refusal to receive Holy Communion—a moment of crisis that immediately establishes tension and anticipates later conflict. The

narrative subsequently returns to earlier events to explain the circumstances leading to this act of defiance.

This structural fragmentation mirrors the instability and emotional repression within the family. It also allows Adichie to gradually reveal traumatic experiences rather than presenting them all at once. Such narrative pacing enhances emotional intensity and reader engagement.

The segmentation of the novel into distinct parts further reflects the gradual transformation of the characters, especially Kambili and Jaja. Their movement from Enugu to Nsukka symbolizes not merely physical relocation but ideological and psychological transition from fear toward self-awareness.

Symbolism and Irony

Symbolism and irony are central to the aesthetic and thematic construction of Purple Hibiscus. Adichie employs symbolic motifs to deepen the novel's exploration of freedom, repression, identity, and resistance.

The purple hibiscus itself functions as the central symbol of liberation and transformation. Unlike the conventional red hibiscus in Eugene's compound, the experimental purple hibiscus cultivated by Aunty Ifeoma represents freedom, change, and the possibility of alternative ways of living. It symbolizes the emergence of individuality beyond authoritarian structures.

Similarly, Nsukka operates symbolically as a space of intellectual and emotional liberation. It is in Nsukka that

Kambili and Jaja encounter laughter, open conversation, cultural flexibility, and emotional warmth. The environment therefore symbolizes renewal and psychological rebirth.

Jaja's refusal to receive Holy Communion is another powerful symbolic act. His defiance represents resistance against both paternal tyranny and rigid religious dogmatism. The act marks the beginning of psychological rebellion within the family and signals the eventual collapse of Eugene's authority.

Irony is also extensively employed throughout the novel. Eugene, who publicly advocates political freedom and condemns governmental oppression, becomes a domestic tyrant within his own household. This contradiction exposes the hypocrisy that often underlies moral absolutism and public respectability.

The deaths of Ade Coker and other dissident figures in the novel further symbolize the dangers associated with authoritarian political systems in postcolonial African states. Through these symbolic and ironic patterns, Adichie connects domestic violence with national political oppression, suggesting that tyranny operates across both private and public spheres.

Ultimately, Adichie's use of symbolism and irony enriches the novel's interpretive complexity and reinforces its critique of fanaticism, patriarchy, colonial mentality, and authoritarian power.

Half of a Yellow Sun

Half of a Yellow Sun remains one of the most significant African war novels of the twenty-first century. Set during the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), the novel revisits the Biafran conflict through an intimate exploration of memory, violence, nationalism, identity, and human survival. More than a historical reconstruction, the novel interrogates the psychological and emotional consequences of war on individuals and communities.

The continued relevance of the novel lies in its engagement with themes that transcend the Nigerian context: ethnic conflict, displacement, political failure, humanitarian crisis, and the fragility of national identity. In this regard, Adichie transforms a specifically Nigerian historical experience into a broader meditation on violence and human suffering in postcolonial societies.

Critics have frequently described Half of a Yellow Sun as a contemporary classic because of its successful fusion of historical realism and narrative artistry. The novel demonstrates Adichie's ability to combine political history with emotionally compelling storytelling without sacrificing literary sophistication. Rather than presenting history as mere documentation, she reconstructs it through personal experiences, memories, relationships, and fragmented narratives.

One of Adichie's major achievements in the novel is her use of descriptive realism. Her vivid depictions of starvation, displacement, bombings, rape, and social

disintegration immerse readers in the brutal realities of war. The narrative presents not only physical violence but also psychological devastation and moral collapse. Through detailed imagery and sensory narration, readers encounter the emotional texture of war rather than simply its historical facts.

Contemporary trauma theory provides an important framework for understanding the novel's narrative structure. Scholars of trauma literature argue that violent historical experiences are often represented through fragmented memory, repetition, silence, and nonlinear narration. Adichie employs these techniques effectively to depict the disorientation and instability associated with war. The result is a narrative that is historically grounded yet emotionally immediate.

The novel also demonstrates Adichie's remarkable ability to humanize history. Rather than focusing exclusively on military events or political leaders, she foregrounds ordinary individuals whose lives are transformed by conflict. Through characters such as Ugwu, Olanna, Richard, and Kainene, the novel explores multiple dimensions of the Biafran experience across class, gender, ethnicity, and nationality.

Language and Linguistic Style

Language remains one of Adichie's most distinctive artistic strengths in Half of a Yellow Sun. Her prose combines clarity, emotional depth, and cultural authenticity, allowing the novel to remain accessible

while preserving its historical and ideological complexity.

As in Purple Hibiscus, Adichie employs an Africanized English infused with Igbo expressions, idioms, proverbs, and speech rhythms. This linguistic hybridity reflects the postcolonial condition in which indigenous cultural realities are mediated through the English language. Her use of untranslated Igbo expressions reinforces cultural specificity and resists the complete domestication of African experience for Western readership.

Adichie's linguistic strategy aligns with postcolonial theories of language advanced by writers such as Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, who emphasize the political significance of language in African literature. By reshaping English to accommodate African thought patterns and oral traditions, Adichie asserts cultural agency within a historically colonial language structure.

Another important aspect of her language is its emotional precision. Her prose moves fluidly between tenderness and brutality, intimacy and horror. Scenes of war are narrated with restraint rather than sensationalism, which paradoxically intensifies their emotional impact. This stylistic control contributes significantly to the novel's realism and aesthetic power.

Furthermore, Adichie frequently juxtaposes ordinary domestic conversations with scenes of political violence. This contrast underscores the intrusion of war into everyday life and reinforces the novel's thematic concern

with the collapse of normalcy during periods of national crisis.

Point of View and Narrative Technique

One of the most innovative aspects of Half of a Yellow Sun is Adichie's use of multiple focalization and shifting narrative perspectives. Unlike Purple Hibiscus, which relies primarily on first-person narration, this novel adopts a third-person omniscient narrative structure that moves among several central characters.

The story is largely filtered through the perspectives of Ugwu, Olanna, and Richard, each of whom represents different social and ideological positions within the Biafran conflict. Through these shifting perspectives, Adichie avoids a simplistic or monolithic representation of history. Instead, the narrative presents war as a complex and contested experience shaped by class, ethnicity, gender, and personal memory.

Ugwu's perspective is particularly significant because it captures the transition from innocence to historical consciousness. As a village boy exposed gradually to intellectual life, military violence, and moral ambiguity, Ugwu becomes both witness and participant in history. His development reflects the broader disillusionment experienced during the war.

Olanna's perspective foregrounds the gendered dimensions of conflict. Through her experiences, Adichie explores displacement, sexual violence, motherhood, emotional trauma, and survival. Richard, as an outsider and foreign observer, complicates questions

of belonging, identity, and representation within postcolonial discourse.

The use of multiple narrative voices also enhances the historical realism of the novel. Contemporary historiography increasingly recognizes that history is not singular but constructed through competing perspectives and memories. Adichie's narrative technique reflects this understanding by allowing diverse voices to coexist within the text.

Importantly, the novel's alternating chronology contributes to suspense and emotional intensity. The narrative moves back and forth between the early 1960s and the later years of the war, gradually revealing the transformation of relationships, ideals, and identities under the pressure of violence. This nonlinear structure mirrors the fragmented nature of traumatic memory and prevents the narrative from becoming predictably historical.

Symbolism and Irony

Symbolism plays a central role in the thematic construction of Half of a Yellow Sun. The title itself derives from the emblem on the Biafran flag—a rising half of a yellow sun—which symbolizes hope, rebirth, national aspiration, and the dream of self-determination. However, the incomplete nature of the "half" sun also suggests unrealized potential and the tragic collapse of the Biafran project.

The recurring images of hunger and bodily deterioration symbolize the broader destruction of human dignity

during war. Starvation becomes not merely a physical condition but a metaphor for political abandonment and collective suffering. Similarly, repeated references to rape symbolize both personal violation and the symbolic violation of Biafra itself.

Professor Okeoma, modeled partly on the historical poet Christopher Okigbo, symbolizes intellectual nationalism and revolutionary idealism. His eventual death reflects the collapse of revolutionary optimism and the devastating human cost of ideological struggle.

Irony is equally significant in the novel. Political leaders who claim to defend the people frequently exploit the war for personal gain, while intellectuals advocating nationalism often remain powerless before military realities. Adichie uses these contradictions to critique corruption, elite opportunism, and the moral ambiguities of political struggle.

Religious hypocrisy is also subjected to satirical treatment in the novel. Certain religious figures exploit the vulnerability of displaced civilians while presenting themselves as moral authorities. Through such portrayals, Adichie critiques the manipulation of religion within moments of social crisis.

Plot Structure and Embedded Narrative

The structure of Half of a Yellow Sun reflects Adichie's sophisticated narrative craftsmanship. The novel alternates between pre-war and wartime periods, creating a layered temporal structure that gradually reveals the emotional and political consequences of the conflict.

This fragmented chronology serves several important functions. First, it sustains suspense by withholding key events until later sections of the narrative. Second, it allows readers to compare life before and during the war, thereby highlighting the magnitude of social collapse. Third, it mirrors the psychological disorientation produced by trauma and memory.

One of the most significant metafictional elements in the novel is the embedded text titled The World Was Silent When We Died. This internal narrative functions as a commentary on historical silence and global indifference toward African suffering. The gradual revelation that Ugwu—not Richard—is the actual author of the text carries important ideological implications. It reclaims narrative authority for Africans themselves and challenges colonial assumptions about who possesses the legitimacy to document African history.

The embedded narrative therefore transforms the novel into both a story about war and a meditation on historical representation itself. Adichie raises important questions concerning memory, authorship, voice, and the politics of storytelling.

Characterization

Characterization in Half of a Yellow Sun is exceptionally nuanced and psychologically compelling. Adichie creates multidimensional characters whose emotional complexities reflect the instability and contradictions of wartime existence.

Olanna and Kainene represent contrasting responses to privilege, gender expectations, and emotional survival. While Olanna is empathetic and emotionally expressive, Kainene is pragmatic, emotionally guarded, and economically resourceful. Their relationship reflects broader tensions involving class, femininity, and personal identity.

Ugwu's transformation constitutes one of the novel's most important character arcs. Initially naive and impressionable, he gradually becomes exposed to the moral ambiguities of war, including his participation in acts of violence. His development complicates simplistic notions of innocence and victimhood.

Kainene's disappearance near the end of the novel remains one of Adichie's most powerful narrative decisions. The unresolved nature of her fate reflects the incompleteness of historical closure after traumatic conflict. Her absence symbolizes the countless lives erased or permanently altered by war.

Adichie's characterization is particularly effective because her characters are deeply human rather than merely symbolic figures. They embody ideological tensions while retaining emotional credibility and psychological depth.

Satire and Social Critique

Adichie employs satire to expose corruption, opportunism, and moral hypocrisy during wartime. Political elites and military officials who profit from collective suffering are sharply criticized throughout the

novel. The narrative condemns the exploitation of humanitarian crises for personal enrichment and political ambition.

The novel also satirizes intellectual elitism and ideological romanticism. Some characters speak passionately about revolution and nationalism while remaining disconnected from the realities of suffering experienced by ordinary civilians. Through this critique, Adichie questions the ethical limitations of abstract political rhetoric.

Additionally, religious manipulation is presented critically through characters who exploit faith for social influence or personal gain during moments of desperation. This reinforces the novel's broader interrogation of institutional hypocrisy.

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Conclusion

Adichie's Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun demonstrate the centrality of narrativity in thematic

realization. Across both novels, she employs sophisticated narrative strategies—including focalization, symbolism, nonlinear chronology, descriptive realism, satire, and linguistic hybridity—to deepen thematic complexity and emotional engagement.

Her fiction illustrates that literary meaning emerges not merely from subject matter but from the artistic manner through which stories are told. Adichie's narrative techniques transform personal experiences into broader reflections on trauma, memory, violence, religion, nationalism, identity, and resistance within postcolonial African society.

Ultimately, Adichie's achievement lies in her successful fusion of historical consciousness, political critique, and aesthetic innovation. Her novels remain significant not only for their thematic relevance but also for their contribution to the evolution of contemporary African narrative form.

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DISPUTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OF DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between Dispute Management Strategy and Performance of Deposit Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objective is to determine the relationship that exists between Mediation and operational Efficiency of Money Deposit Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. The study was anchored on Mediation theory by John Stacey Adams (1963). The theory explains how fairness affects employee motivation and satisfaction in organizations. The study employed descriptive survey research design and enumeration-based method. The study population was 327 employees, which comprises; managers, human resources staff, teller staff, and customer service representatives from ten major banks in the region. The entire population was used. Out of 327 copies of questionnaire distributed, 317 were completely filled and retrieved. One hypothesis was raised and tested, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 23) at 5% level of significance. The finding revealed a significant positive relationship between mediation and operational efficiency, with a correlation coefficient of r = 0.711 and a p-value of 0.024, indicating that effective mediation practices are crucial for enhancing banks' operational performance. The study concludes that, prioritizing mediation not only improves employee satisfaction and engagement but also positions banks for sustainable growth and competitiveness in the rapidly evolving financial landscape. Based on the results, the study recommends that banks should implement

comprehensive training programs that focused on mediation techniques and conflict resolution skills, fostering a culture of proactive dispute management.

Keywords: Dispute, Dispute Management Strategies, Mediation, Performance, and
Operational Efficiency

Introduction

Dispute can generally be defined as a formal disagreement or grievance between two or more parties over rights, claims, or obligations arising from the party's relationships. Dispute starts when one party thinks that the other party might thwart their objectives. In organizations, the objectives of worker representatives are to guarantee that their members continue to have better conditions of service. Dispute may also occur as a result of the employer's desire to maximize profits due to noncompliance with collective bargaining agreements. Abalaka, Ajiteru and Sulaiman (2025) emphasize the rights of workers and the prerogatives of employers, which may lead to dispute if violated. Dispute management means improving on the number of solutions, broadening the understanding of the issue, striving to achieve consensus and a sincere commitment to decision making (Abalaka, Ajiteru and Sulaiman, 2025).

Dispute management strategies play a crucial role in shaping the performance of deposit money banks,

particularly in regions like Anambra State, Nigeria, where the banking sector is undergoing rapid transformation (Weiss, Schmidt and Hlava, 2023). In an environment marked by increasing competition, technological advancements, and evolving regulatory frameworks, banks face various disputes that can arise from customer grievances, employee conflicts, and contractual disagreements with stakeholders. Effective dispute management is essential not only for resolving conflicts but also for enhancing customer satisfaction, ensuring compliance with regulations, and maintaining a positive reputation (Salman, 2021). By implementing strategic dispute management practices, banks can mitigate the risks associated with unresolved conflicts, thereby fostering a more stable and productive banking environment.

To understand the impact of dispute management strategies on the performance of deposit money banks in Anambra State, it is important to examine the specific mechanisms employed by these institutions in handling disputes. These strategies may include formal processes such as mediation and arbitration, as well as informal approaches like negotiation and open dialogue (Kim, Yu, Wolters and Anderman, 2023).Unresolved dispute within an organization have far-reaching effects, leading to both high human and financial costs (Shehu-Usman,Uzochukwu, Gambo and Abubakar, 2024). Mismanagement of disputes can lead to tension, frustration, diminished self-confidence, low morale, communication breakdowns, missed deadline, reduced trust, absenteeism, and legal proceedings ((Usman,

Uzochukwu, Gambo and Abubakar, 2024). Banks that prioritize effective communication and transparent dispute resolution processes tend to experience better relationships with customers and employees alike. For instance, a bank that actively listens to customer complaints and resolves issues promptly not only enhances customer loyalty but also reduces the likelihood of negative word-of-mouth, which can significantly affect its market position. Furthermore, training employees in conflict resolution skills equips them to handle disputes more effectively, leading to improved operational efficiency and a more harmonious workplace (Kromidha, 2023).

Moreover, the performance of deposit money banks in Anambra State can be significantly influenced by their ability to manage disputes proactively. Banks that adopt a proactive approach to dispute management can identify potential conflicts before they escalate, thereby minimizing their impact on their operations and financial performance (Carbery & Cross, 2018). This proactive stance often involves the development of clear dispute resolution policies, regular training for staff, and the establishment of dedicated teams to handle conflict situations. As a result, these banks are better positioned to maintain regulatory compliance, enhance their service delivery, and ultimately achieve sustainable growth in a competitive market. By understanding the intricate relationship between dispute management strategies and bank performance, stakeholders can appreciate the value of fostering a dispute-aware culture that not only addresses conflicts effectively but also contributes to the

overall success of deposit money banks in Anambra State.

The banking sector in Anambra State, Nigeria, is increasingly confronted with a myriad of disputes that arise from various sources, including customer complaints, employee conflicts, and contractual disagreements with stakeholders. These disputes, if not managed effectively, can lead to significant negative repercussions, including decreased customer satisfaction, reduced employee morale, and potential regulatory non-compliance. Despite the critical importance of effective dispute management strategies, many deposit money banks in the region struggle to implement comprehensive frameworks that address conflicts proactively. This lack of effective dispute management can result in prolonged resolution times, increased operational costs, and a tarnished reputation in the competitive banking landscape.

Moreover, rapid digital transformation within the banking sector has introduced new challenges, such as cyber-related disputes and complexities in customer interactions through digital platforms. Banks that fail to adapt good dispute management strategies to these evolving challenges risk alienating their customer base and losing market share. The problem is further compounded by the cultural and socio-economic dynamics unique to Anambra State, which may influence how disputes are perceived and resolved. Consequently, there is a pressing need to investigate the relationship between dispute management strategies and the overall performance of deposit money banks in Anambra State.

This study, therefore, aims to examine the relationship that exists between dispute management strategy and performance of deposit money banks in Anambra State. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing tailored strategies that not only enhance operational efficiency but also foster customer trust and loyalty, ultimately leading to sustainable growth in deposit money banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to ascertain the extent of relationship that exists between mediation and operational efficiency of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Dispute Management Strategy

Dispute can be generally defined as a formal disagreement or grievance between two or more parties over rights, claims, or obligations arising from parties' relationships. Dispute starts when one party thinks that the other party might thwart their objectives. Dispute management strategies are essential frameworks that organizations utilize to prevent, address, and resolve conflicts that arise within various contexts, including workplaces, contractual relationships, and community interactions (Olannye and Aliku, 2022). These strategies encompass a wide range of practices, methodologies, and principles aimed at fostering a collaborative environment and promoting effective communication among stakeholders. At the core of dispute management

is the recognition that conflicts, if not managed properly, can escalate into more significant issues, leading to financial losses, damaged relationships, and a toxic organizational culture (Kromidha, 2023). Effective dispute management strategies often incorporate a combination of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and conflict resolution techniques, tailored to the specific needs of the parties involved. By proactively addressing potential disputes, organizations can enhance their operational efficiency, maintain positive relationships, and create a culture of trust and collaboration.

The implementation of a comprehensive dispute management strategy typically involves several key components. First, organizations must establish clear communication channels that facilitate open dialogue among stakeholders, enabling them to express concerns and grievances without fear of retaliation (Gastón, 2022). Training programs that focus on conflict resolution skills are also critical, equipping employees and management with the tools necessary to navigate disputes effectively. Additionally, organizations should develop formal policies outlining procedures for dispute resolution, ensuring that all parties understand their rights and responsibilities. By fostering an environment where disputes can be addressed constructively, organizations not only minimize the potential for escalation but also empower individuals to take ownership of their conflicts. Ultimately, a well-structured dispute management strategy not only resolves existing issues but also serves as a foundation for building a resilient organizational culture, capable of

adapting to change and thriving in the face of challenges (Carbery & Cross, 2018).

Mediation

Mediation is an essential dispute management strategy that plays a pivotal role in the operational performance of deposit money banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. This process, characterized by its collaborative and voluntary nature, involves a neutral third party, known as a mediator, who facilitates discussions between conflicting parties to help them reach a mutually acceptable resolution. In the banking sector, where disputes can emerge from a variety of sources—such as customer complaints regarding service delivery or transaction errors, employee conflicts over workplace policies, and contractual disagreements with vendors or partners—mediation offers a constructive alternative to traditional litigation (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). The advantages of mediation are particularly significant in the banking context, where maintaining customer trust and a positive reputation is paramount. Unlike litigation, which can be time-consuming, costly, and publicly scrutinized, mediation allows for quicker resolutions that minimize disruption to the bank's operations. Furthermore, the confidentiality inherent in mediation processes protects sensitive financial information, thereby safeguarding the institution's reputation and fostering customer loyalty (Robinson, 2008). By engaging in mediation, banks demonstrate their commitment to addressing stakeholder concerns and valuing their perspectives, which enhances customer satisfaction and employee morale.

Additionally, mediation encourages a culture of collaboration, enabling banks to resolve disputes amicably while preserving relationships, which is crucial in a competitive marketplace. In Anambra State, where the banking sector is increasingly influenced by digital transformation and changing customer expectations, effective mediation strategies can be instrumental in adapting to these challenges. By proactively implementing mediation as a core component of their dispute management frameworks, deposit money banks can not only resolve conflicts efficiently but also strengthen their operational performance and competitive advantage (Mayer, Oosthuizen & Tonelli, 2019). This proactive approach to dispute resolution aligns with the evolving dynamics of the banking industry, where agility, responsiveness, and customer-centric practices are vital for long-term success. Ultimately, mediation not only serves as a tool for resolving disputes but also as a means of fostering a positive organizational culture that values dialogue and collaboration, which are essential for navigating the complexities of the modern banking environment in Anambra State.

The mediation process includes; preparation stage, communication stage, negotiation stage and resolution stage. The mediator begins by understanding the context of the dispute, the parties involved, and their desired results. During the communication stage, each party has the opportunity to present their side of the story. The mediator then facilitates discussion, guiding the parties toward mutually beneficial solutions (Chen, 2025). In

the final stages, agreements are reached, and action plans are created to prevent future disputes.

Performance

Organizational performance refers to the achievements made by an organization over a period of operation, including business performance and economic efficiency. Therefore, performance is the extent to which an individual, group, or institution achieves predefined goals or objectives, measured through observable and quantifiable outcomes. Performance is a critical construct in management that affects the outcomes and behavior that contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives (Marshall, Aguinis and Beltran, 2024). Further, it is the degree to which an individual, organization or institution achieves its set goals and objectives through the effective utilization of resources and accomplishment of desired outcomes (Marshall, et., 2024).

The concept of performance has its roots in mechanics and sports, where it denoted exceptional or superior results that had the potential to be replicated or surpassed. When applied to other domains, performance shifted its focus to encompass achievement and quality rather than just efficiency. At its essence, "performance" entails the favorable evaluation of outcomes in relation to objectives, standards, or benchmarks. The understanding of performance is heavily influenced by contextual factors, leading to variations in definitions depending on the specific situation. In their study, Aguilera, et., al (2024), conceptualized organizational

performance as the extent to which an organization achieves its goals and objectives through the effective and efficient utilization of available resources while satisfying the expectations of stakeholders. It reflects the overall success of an organization in terms of financial outcomes; operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, innovation, and long-term sustainability. Sarwar and Khattak (2024) opined that performance is often measured through several dimensions, including:
The ability to achieve objectives with minimal waste of resources - .Efficiency
The extent to which predetermined goals are achieved - Effectiveness
The quantity and quality of output generated within a specified period - Productivity.
The degree to which products or services satisfy customer expectations - Quality of service.
The ability of an organization to perform its activities smoothly and achieve desired operational outcome - Operational Performance.
Achievement of financial objectives, such as profitability, returns on investment and revenue growth - Financial Performance - Financial Performance (Sarwar and Khattak, 2024).

Operational Efficiency

Operational efficiency is a critical factor that significantly influences the performance and competitiveness of deposit money banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. It refers to the ability of an organization to deliver services and products with minimal waste, optimal resource utilization, and maximum productivity.

For banks, achieving operational efficiency is essential not only for enhancing profitability but also for meeting the increasing demands of customers in a rapidly evolving financial landscape (Islam and Rimi, 2017). Additionally, operational efficiency is closely linked to the adoption of digital banking solutions, which allow banks to automate routine tasks, enhance data management, and offer services that meet the expectations of tech-savvy customers. By embracing innovations like mobile banking and online platforms, deposit money banks can not only improve their service delivery but also enhance their overall operational efficiency. Furthermore, a focus on operational efficiency fosters a culture of continuous improvement within organizations, encouraging employees to identify bottlenecks and suggest improvements that can lead to better performance outcomes. Ultimately, the pursuit of operational efficiency is not merely an internal objective but a strategic imperative that directly impacts customer loyalty, market share, and the long-term viability of deposit money banks in the region, making it a fundamental aspect of their overall business strategy (Donko, 2023). Operational efficiency is considered to be a determinant of banking performance as it pertains to how well an institution is able to control its costs, improve effectiveness, and provide superior services to its customers (Burhanuddin, Andi and Hery, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

Mediation Theory

This study was anchored on Mediation Theory developed by Baron and Kenny in (1986). Mediation theory is most commonly attributed to Baron and Kenny who formally developed and popularized it in 1986, through their land mark paper. Mediation theory explains the mechanism through which dispute management strategy influence operational efficiency through employee satisfaction. This theory suggests that dispute management improves employee satisfaction which, in turn improves operational efficiency.

Equity theory

Equity theory was developed by John Stacey Adams in (1963). Equity theory explains how fairness affects employee motivation and satisfaction in organizations. It suggests that when employees perceive fairness in the distribution of rewards and resources, they are more motivated and satisfied. This theory is relevant to understanding of organizational dispute and performance of deposit money banks in Anambra. As opined by Adams (1963), employees in the bank compare their rewards, such as salaries and promotions, with those of their colleagues. If they think that the rewards are distributed unfairly, it can lead to dissatisfaction and lower performance**.** For example, if employees feel that their peers who contribute less are being rewarded more, it creates a sense of injustice and lowers morale.

Empirical Studies

Gashion, Galoji, and Adamu (2025), examines the effects of conflict management and team coordination on organizational performance: moderating role of organizational commitment within the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) Bauchi office, Nigeria. Data is collected from 184 FIRS employees in Bauchi State using a cross-sectional survey design. In order to get quantitative data, questionnaires are distributed. Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) V. 26 is used to analyze quantitative data. To determine the significance of the variables, methods including frequencies, means, standard deviations, correlations, and regression analysis are used. To gain a more thorough knowledge of the correlations between the variables, partial least squares structural equation modeling, or PLS-SEM, is utilized. Findings reveal that conflict management greatly effects organizational success. Moreover, organizational commitment moderates the association between conflict management and organizational performance. These findings' theoretical ramifications highlight how crucial it is for corporations to include conflict management systems. Furthermore, the practical ramifications imply that using conflict management to improve organizational performance requires organizational commitment. In order to promote organizational performance within FIRS Bauchi state, this study emphasizes the critical significance that organizational commitment and effective conflict management play. The study recommends among others to include stressing the

developmental nature of conflict management procedures and incorporating conflict management systems at higher organizational commitment levels.

Shehu-Usman et.al (2024) Evaluate conflict management strategies and organizational performance of Federal Road Maintenance Agency in Abuja, Nigeria. The objectives of this study are to determine the relationship between conflict management strategies, specifically, avoidance strategy, collaboration, compromising and accommodation strategies and organizational performance. The research design employed a survey research technique, with a close-ended questionnaire serving as the principal instrument for data collection. The sample size for the study included 235 staff members of FERMA. Hypotheses were tested using regression analysis as the selected statistical method. The study found a significant positive relationship between organizational performance and all the examined conflict management strategies. Namely, avoidance strategy, collaboration strategy, accommodation strategy and compromising strategy. In light of the study's results, it is recommended that managers consider employing the identified conflict management techniques due to their demonstrated effectiveness in effectively handling conflicts within organizational setting.

Kalu and Queen (2024), examined the relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational performance of Oil and Gas Firms in Rivers State. The study adopted correlational survey research design. The population of the study comprised

twenty-five (25) Oil and Gas companies. The data for this study were collected through primary data source, the questionnaire were distributed in frame of 5 copies per firm. Reliability analysis weas performed on the data using Cronbach Alpha coefficient and it stood at 0.88. The data collected for the study were analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The Spearman Rank-Order Correlation was adopted. The findings revealed a significant relationship between accommodation strategy and organizational performance of Oil and Gas firms in River State. The study concludes that oil and Gas firms should embrace collaboration and accommodation strategy as preferred strategies for effective conflict management within the organizational context. The study recommends that all Oil and Gas firms should focus on increasing the utilization of conflict management strategies like collaboration, and accommodation strategy to increase organizational performance.

Afriyie, Donkor, Nimsah, and Danquah (2016) analyzed the impact of customer complaint management on customer satisfaction at Ghana Water Company Limited (GWCL). They surveyed 403 randomly selected GWCL customers in Kumasi, Ghana, using questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, correlation, and regression were conducted using SPSS. The study found that complaint handling practices had a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Poor communication was a major cause of complaints, while low employee morale resulted from complaints.

Constant dialogue between GWCL management and customers was effective in handling complaints. The researchers concluded that efficient complaint resolution improved GWCL's service performance. They recommended enhancing communication and interpersonal relationships between employees and customers to optimize results. Strengthening information sharing and improving interactions between staff and customers would help resolve complaints effectively and boost satisfaction.

Ampoma, et. al. (2022) investigates on the influence of conflict management in the performance of Guinness Ghana Limited, Accra-Headquaters as an organization. The study employed a quantitative research approach and descriptive survey and inferential statistics as the study design. The study was based on the views of 200 employees from the study institution with a self-administered questionnaire as the main research instrument. The study found that the higher the organization adopt negotiation, the more the performance increased, hence it helped improve the general working environment. It was also found that mediation has been used as a conflict management strategy and has proved to be an effective conflict management strategy. Finally, effective arbitration channel was in place and it had a direct influence on the level of organizational performance. In light of the finding, it was recommended that management should focus on increasing the utilization of of conflict management strategies such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration to increase organizational performance.

In addition, the use of negotiation, mediation and arbitration as form of conflict management strategy should be encouraged in resolving conflicts in the organization.

Olang (2017) empirically examined the influence of conflict management on organizational performance using Stima Sacco Society Limited as a case study Stima SacconSocietn Nairobi, Kenya.y Limited . A census survey research design was utilized to collect quantitative data with structured questionnaire distributed to all 153 employees. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics like correlation and linear regression modeling in SPSS. Results showed negotiation and third-party intervention were statistically significant in positively influencing performance, but communication was not. Therefore, the researcher concluded Stima Sacco had effective conflict management processes in place. However, recommendations included the management increasing utilization of productive strategies like negotiation and third-party intervention to boost organizational performance further. Improving sensitivity to conflicts and establishing communication channels were also suggested to enhance conflict management. This provided insight for Stima Sacco to continue optimizing performance through analyzing relationships between conflict handling approaches and results.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research design. The design was appropriate because it enabled the collection of first-

hand data from employees regarding their experiences and perceptions. The target population comprised staff of deposit money banks in five major government approved by Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and publicly declared commercial urban centers in Anambra State, which are Onitsha, Umunze, Awka, Ekwulobia and Nnewi. Records from the personnel departments of the five selected deposit money bank, operating in Anambra State, have a total population of 327 staff. The study made use of stratified random sampling technique in selecting the staff five selected deposit money banks, the reason for this is because it affords every member of the sample an equal opportunity to be selected and also to reduce bias to the barest minimum. Complete enumeration because the size is manageable. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire structured in Likert form. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Content and construct validity were established through expert review by scholars in management and department of Educational Evaluation. Reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha, producing coefficient above 0.80 for all major constructs, indicating strong internal consistency. Descriptive statistics was used to summarize responses, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypothesis with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (Version 23) at 5% level of significance.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Objective: To ascertain the extent of relationship that exists between Mediation and operational efficiency of Deposit money Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Distribution of responses for Mediation and operational efficiency

S/N	Questionnaire Items	A	SA	N	D	SD	No.	MEAN	Remark
	Mediation								
1.	I believe that mediation is an effective method for resolving disputes in my bank.	102	108	63	22	22	317	3.79	Accepted
2.	Mediation contributes to higher customer satisfaction in resolving complaints	42	68	121	58	28	317	3.11	Accepted
3.	The mediation process in my bank leads to quicker resolution of	192	80	23	12	10	317	4.36	Accepted

	disputes compared to traditional methods.								
4.	Mediation fosters better communication and engagement among employees in conflict situations.	14	19	38	111	135	317	1.95	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 shows the distribution of responses on how mediation relate to operational efficiency of the respondents. The object of analysis here is the mean with a threshold of 3 above meaning that any questionnaire item with a response with a mean of 3 and above should be accepted otherwise, it will be rejected. Starting with the questionnaire item used in measuring mediation, when they were asked if they believed that mediation is an effective method for resolving disputes in their bank, from the staff at work, a mean of 3.79, shows that they agreed. However, the questionnaire responses on how mediation contributes to higher customer satisfaction, has a mean of 3.11, also shows they agreed. The responses of respondents with 4.36 shows that mediation process in their bank leads to quicker resolution of dispute compared with traditional methods. However, they disagreed that mediation fosters better

communication and engagement among employees in conflict situation, with a mean of 1.95.

Table 2: Distribution of responses for Operational Efficiency

S/N	Questionnaire Items	A	SA	N	D	SD	No.		Remark
	Operational Efficiency								
5.	My bank has streamlined processes that enhance operational efficiency.	69	208	16	14	10	317	4.42	Accepted
6.	The use of technology in my bank significantly improves our operational efficiency.	72	48	112	60	25	317	3.18	Accepted

7.	Operational efficiency initiatives have positively impacted employee productivity in my bank.	38	18	70	115	76	317	2.39	Accepted
8.	Our operational efficiency directly contributes to faster customer service delivery.	102	108	58	31	18	317	3.79	Rejected

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 2: Shows that the distribution of responses on operational efficiency of the respondents. The object of analysis here is the mean with a threshold of 3 and above. That is, any questionnaire item with a mean of 3 and above should be accepted as happening or being entrenched in the selected banks, otherwise, it will be rejected. Starting with the questionnaire item 5, use in measuring operational efficiency, when they were asked if their bank has streamlined processes that enhance operational efficiency, from the colleagues at work, a mean of 4.42 shows that they agreed. The questionnaire responses on the use of technology in their bank significantly improves their operational efficiency has a

mean of 3.18, also shows they agreed. However, they disagreed that operational efficiency initiatives have positively impacted employee productivity in their bank, with a mean of 2.39. The responses of respondents with a mean of 3.79 shows that their operational efficiency directly contributes to faster customer service delivery.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

Ho_1: Mediation does not significantly relate with Operational Efficiency of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria.

H_a: Mediation do significantly relate with Operational Efficiency of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra Stat, Nigeria.

Correlation between Mediation and Operational Efficiency of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria

Table 3: Correlations Analysis

		Mediation	Operational Efficiency
Mediation	Pearson lation	1 .	711**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.024
	N	317	317
	Pearson lation	.711**	1

Operational Efficiency	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	
	N	317	317

Source: SPSS version 27 Outputs.

Result Summary

Table 3: Shows that there is a positive significant relationship between Mediation and Operational Efficiency of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria with r = 0.711, n = 317 and p value of 0.024 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accept the alternate hypothesis and conclude that mediation has positive significant relationship on operational efficiency of Money Deposit Bank in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The tested hypothesis indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between Mediation and Operational Efficiency of deposit money banks in Anambra State with r = 0.711, n = 317 and p value of 0.024 ($p<0.05$). Therefore, we accepted the alternate hypothesis and concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between Mediation and Operational Efficiency of deposit money banks in Anambra State, Nigeria. This finding is in congruent with the result of Olang (2017) which maintained that Mediation in organization had a significant positive relationship with Operational Efficiency in the study on influence of conflict management on organizational performance: a case of Stima Sacco Society Limited, Nigeria. Also, this corresponds with the views of Shehu-

Usman et.al (2024), who found that there is a positive significant relationship between conflict management strategies and organizational performance.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The hypothesis indicated that there is a positive significant relationship between Mediation and Operational Efficiency of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra State with r = 0.711, n = 317 and p value of 0.024 ($p<0.05$). This implies that effective mediation practices are crucial for enhancing banks' operational performance.

Conclusion

Prioritizing Mediation leads to a motivated workforce and the ability to pursue growth opportunities. Ensuring organizational justice fosters a positive work environment, enhances employee satisfaction, and drives goal achievement. By focusing on these aspects, deposit money banks position themselves for long-term success, improved performance, and a competitive edge in the banking industry.

Recommendation

The study recommended that Banks needs to implement comprehensive training programs for employees on mediation techniques and conflict resolution skills.

Contribution to Knowledge

The work offers a practical approach for banks to integrate mediation into their organizational culture, thereby providing a framework for future research on the impact of employee training on dispute management and operational performance in financial institutions. This insight can serve as a valuable reference for banks seeking to navigate the complexities of modern banking environments while maintaining high standards of service and efficiency.

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TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM AND THE QUALITY-CONVENIENCE DEBATE IN NOLLYWOOD: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BANDELE'S *ELESIN OBA: THE KING'S HORSEMAN* AND O'FRESH'S *SABBATH*

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Abstract

The rapid technological evolution in film production, particularly the advent of Smartphone as affordable and accessible tool has democratized cinematic storytelling.

This shift has challenged conventional notions of cinematic quality and professionalism, thus causing seeming tension between traditional, high-cost filmmaking methods and the rising trend of resourceful, Smartphone-based production. Questions arise regarding the quality, artistic integrity, and cultural authenticity of films produced with varying technologies, and how these choices shape perceptions within the industry and among audiences. This prompts an examination of how different technological approaches influence artistic expression, cultural representation, and industry standards. Hence this study analyzed the visual, thematic, and cultural outcomes of films made with professional equipment versus those shot predominantly with Smartphone using Biyi Bandele's *Elesin Oba ...* (2022) and Oladipo O'Fresh's *Sabbath* (2024) as case study. Guided by Marshal McLuhan's Technological Determinism Theory, the study posits that technological innovations significantly influence social and cultural practices. This perspective underscores that the adoption of Smartphone and other digital tools is reshaping filmmaking paradigms and creative possibilities. The study employed a qualitative methodology, which involved content analysis of case study films supported by data gathered from interview. Findings reveal that while high-end equipment yields polished, visually striking films aligned with traditional industry standards, Smartphone filmmaking offers unique aesthetic qualities that foster authenticity, immediacy, and grassroots storytelling. Both approaches have valid artistic and cultural contributions, with resourcefulness and post-production skills playing pivotal roles in overcoming technical

limitations. The study therefore recommends fostering skills in both traditional and mobile filmmaking, encouraging hybrid production models, revising industry standards to recognize diverse technological approaches, and supporting policies that democratize access to filmmaking resources. The study contends that technological choices are not merely technical decisions but strategic artistic tools that shape the future trajectory of Nigerian cinema. Embracing technological diversity while upholding artistic integrity can propel Nollywood filmmakers toward a more inclusive, innovative, and culturally rich cinematic landscape.

Introduction

The advent of digital technology has revolutionized on-screen storytelling, fundamentally altering the ways in which content is captured, produced, and consumed. Historically, filmmaking relied primarily on motion picture camera, which demanded considerable technical expertise, significant financial investment, and considerable time for editing and post-production. Before the advent of Nollywood, the Nigeria film industry depended on celluloid, a heavier, more technically, and cost involving equipment for production. That was probably why the population of filmmakers in Nigeria then was fewer. Evidently, celluloid film production was rigorous as affirmed by Hyginus Ekwuazi who states that “Francis Oladele, Ola Balogun, Eddie Ugbomah, Hubert Ogunde, Adamu Halilu etc all contributed significantly to the emergence and development of indigenous the feature film” which

were in 16mm, 35mm and 70mm celluloid formats" ("Nollywood: History as Economic Determinism …" 137). However, certain socioeconomic factors later caused the decline in celluloid film production. The emergence of the video format later opened the floodgate for what is today known as Nollywood. Barclays Ayakoroma, explains that;

> unlike the celluloid format, the video film convention offers the director near full control of his production in the sense that the outcome of his experimentations with picture composition, camera movements, sound, light, use of colours, costume and set design, acting and so on (all of which constitute the aesthetics of film), could be ascertained and corrected where necessary through immediate previews. Consequently, a director goes into post production of his work with some level of assurance that he has a good day's shoot. (22)

Becoming the preferred format of film production, the Nigerian film industry leveraged the advantages the video format provided to become a popular film culture globally. The industry's success is further attributed to its dynamic nature and adaptability to constant technological advancements that characterize the filmmaking industry.

Digital technology continues to revolutionize filmmaking globally and Nollywood benefits substantially from these evolving trends. Ebuka Ilukwe

explains that the film industry records "radical" transformations in its production, marketing, and distribution subsectors due to the constant upgrade in digital technology which paves way to innovative approaches to the practice of film and Nollywood, one of the significant film cultures in the world, is not left out. According to Ilukwe, "in spite of the challenge of funding, among other production constraints, which make it difficult for Nigerian film entrepreneurs to compete favourably with their counterparts in developed countries according to global best practices, the industry has nonetheless made efforts to keep in touch with trending innovations in film production" (81). In essence, economic cum technological factors influenced Nollywood's evolution, subsequent growth, and survival.

Therefore, Economy and technology are two major factors that determine the classification of filmmakers within the current Nollywood production landscape. While one of the groups is what the researchers term "conventionalists", the other belongs to the "experimentalists" group. Whereas the conventionalists use the camera as the primary tool for film production, the experimentalists adopt the Smartphone as a viable alternative. Part of the criticisms against mainstream Nollywood is the poor camera work and weak plots that characterize its films. Critics contend that despite the popularity of Nollywood right from the inception of video-film production, quality has been the reason it could not win accolades in international competitions. They claim that such mainstream productions were executed with minimal cast, crew, and cheaper

equipment as the goal was to minimize expenditure and maximize profit (Ekwuazi "Living in Bondage …" 305). It took the emergence of a new crop of filmmakers whose films standout in the global film market due to their professional cinematography and premium storylines, to change that narrative. Marked by sophisticated equipment, heavy budget and detailed plotlines, the filmmakers leveraged the technological innovations that characterize the filmmaking landscape to upgrade the industry's global reputation (Ilukwe and Ogaraku 260).

Matching the high-budget standard may not be attainable for some Nollywood filmmakers especially as Jonathan Haynes indicates that many of the "New Nollywood" producers are beneficiaries of million-dollar funding from multinational companies (58). However, the advent of Smartphone has democratized media production by serving as improvisational tool for Nollywood filmmakers, skit-makers, and social media content creators who undertake productions without the burden heavy-duty equipment. In fact, Ebuka Ilukwe and Sandra Ifejianyi attribute the decentralization and popularization of the skit-making industry to the advent of mobile and Internet technologies (421 – 422). In other words, the democratization of creative content production and distribution is attributable to advancements in ICT.

The proliferation of Smartphone with inbuilt high-definition camera now tends to challenge the prominence of traditional cinematographic equipment as these devices offer convenience, portability, and affordability,

allowing artists to shoot, edit, and distribute videos swiftly and with minimal resources. Sani Khan, Aaqib Butt, and Takrar Yattoo explain that the technological leap in Smartphone camera quality – such as higher megapixels, image stabilization, and advanced editing apps – has led to a paradigm shift in how visual stories are created and shared. According to them;

> The use of mobile devices for filmmaking has become increasingly popular in recent years, especially with the advancements in mobile technology. Smartphones and tablets have evolved to feature high-quality cameras, powerful processors, and sophisticated video editing software. This has made them a convenient and cost-effective alternative to traditional video cameras for content creators especially those who produce vlogs, short films, or other types of video content online. (885)

This shift is particularly significant within the Nigerian creative industry where filmmakers and content creators often grapple with balancing quality and convenience, especially when working within resource constraints or in fast-paced production environments. Hence, while conventional filmmakers like Biyi Bandele seeks to preserve high production standards and aesthetic quality through the use of traditional professional equipment to craft cinematic works, experimentalists like Oladipo O'Fresh leverage Smartphone technology to experiment and innovate while emphasizing immediacy and accessibility. This study therefore examines how the

industry evolves, how modern technology impacts on the growth of Nollywood, and individual narrative patterns using Bandele's *Elesin Oba: the King's Horseman (2022)* and O'Fresh's *Sabbath (2024) as paradigm..*

Statement of the Problem

While technological innovations have made film production more accessible, concerns persist regarding the trade-offs between convenience and quality. Some critics argue that Smartphone lack the technical capabilities necessary for high-end cinematic production, such as superior image resolution, dynamic range, and control over aesthetic elements like lighting and focus. Consequently, there is a perception that pictures produced with Smartphone may be of inferior quality, potentially affecting their artistic value and audience reception. Conversely, proponents of Smartphone cinematography emphasize the practical benefits – speed, affordability, and ease of use – especially in environments where traditional equipment is impractical, unavailable or unaffordable. They suggest that technological advancements have minimized quality gaps and that creative storytelling can compensate for technical limitations. In the context of the Nigerian film industry, this debate is further complicated by resource constraints, cultural considerations, and the desire to reach wider audiences rapidly.

Despite the necessity such scholarly discourse, there is limited empirical research assessing how these technological choices influence the artistic and cultural

impact of Nollywood films. This gap raises critical questions: Does reliance on Smartphone diminish the artistic quality or does it enhance storytelling accessibility and immediacy? How do these choices affect audience perceptions and critical evaluations of Nigerian cinematic works? This study therefore seeks to address these issues by examining the technological, artistic, and cultural implications of digital camera and Smartphone as cinematic tools in the production of *Elesin Oba …* and *Sabbath*.

Methodology

This research adopts a qualitative comparative methodology. Two Nollywood films were selected using the purposive sampling method. Whereas one is shot with a digital camera, the other was produced using a Smartphone. The selection provided the basis for a comparative study. Content analysis of case study films provided qualitative data for the study. Additional data were also gathered using interview as a qualitative instrument. Library and the Internet served as secondary sources of data gathering.

Theoretical Framework: Marshal McLuhan's Technological Determinism Theory

The theoretical underpinning of this study is Marshal McLuhan's Technological Determinism Theory, which posits that technology shapes and determines societal structures, cultural practices, and human behaviors. McLuhan's famous assertions that "the medium is the

message," and “the world is a global village” underline his theoretical postulation as they point to technology as the main determinant to world’s advancement. The theory emphasizes the idea that the technology of the media influence how societies communicate and perceive the world. Khan, Butt and Yattoo hold that McLuhan posited that every significant technological advancement spark a desire for exploration, often leading to experimentation with the medium itself, sometimes at the expense of content (886). The scholars further aver that “the contemporary age of science and technology has provided mankind with numerous avenues for expression facilitated by the rapid evolution of media platforms for sharing images. Social media giants like Instagram, Facebook, and Sina Weibo have become integral parts of people's lives, serving as new mediums for communication” (886). The theory’s core argument is that technology is the bedrock of social and cultural change. It posits that advancements in technology shape how people think, act, and organize things, and that society adapts to new tools available to it. A key idea is that technology develops along an inevitable course that directly influences historical progress.

This theory is directly linked to cinema in general, digital filmmaking in particular and the adoption of Smartphone as a filmmaking tool specifically. According to Işıkman,

> Cinema, which is in absolute relation with technology, constantly renewed and improved itself with new technological developments

> within the historical development process, and it has passed through many stages thanks to technological developments. Sound, color, and three-dimension in cinema narration are the results of technological developments. Besides digitization begun at the end of the 20th century and have made great progress in the early 21st century has also affected and will continue to influence the cinema as an art form. In the digital era, the equipment needed for audiovisual records have become much smaller, lighter and cheaper and therefore more accessible. Likewise, it has become much easier to edit these records and get them ready for broadcasting by means of digital systems including internet. Moreover, the availability of possibilities to copy these records easily and to publish them on the internet provides easy access to viewers. Therefore the recent informatics and communication technologies have rendered possible the production, distribution and the consumption of media contents for broader parts of the society. (97)

The central message here is that technology is the key driver of social, economic, cultural and political transformation. It argues that new media and technologies alter how individuals interact and communicate, and how society operates as a whole. Technology is in fact, according to the theory, the life wire of the society because prevalent innovations, at any point in history, determine how people communicate and

ultimately survive their environment. Using satellite as an example Danai Fasouli illustrates how technology propels social change. According to him;

> There was a time were the programming for cable TV systems was limited to off the air pickups from nearby broadcast stations and to programs imported by microwave from more distant stations. The variety of programs available to cable subscribers in the more populous metropolitan areas was not much greater than could be received off-the-air from local stations; and cable had little appeal in these areas. It was once a distant dream found only in sci-fi books. But for over half a century, satellite television pictures are now beamed into millions of homes around the world. We have already celebrated the half-century anniversary of the first public satellite television broadcast across the Atlantic from the United States to Britain and mainland Europe. The transmissions using a space satellite launched into orbit revolutionised popular entertainment and sparked an explosion in technological development. (2)

Akin to the transformations in broadcast communication propelled by satellite, digital technology continues to revolutionize filmmaking. Apart from the camera which constantly benefits from technological upgrades, the mobile phone has also felt the wave of the technological revolution blowing across the digital communication terrain. Today, the Smartphone has become an alternative filmmaking tool used by both Nigerian and

foreign filmmakers. Although a welcome development, owing to its contribution to the democratization of film production, media/performing arts, and social media content creation as a whole, it stirs debate bordering on quality, convenience and expertise.

In the context of videography/cinematography, McLuhan's theory suggests that the evolution of motion picture capture devices – moving from traditional film camera to digital camera and the Smartphone – has fundamentally transformed storytelling, production practices, and audience engagement. The emergence of the Smartphone as a primary production tool exemplifies how technological shifts can democratize media production, influencing cultural expression and consumption patterns. Furthermore, McLuhan's notion of "media extension" – where technology extends human senses – applies directly to video devices. Digital camera and Smartphone extend the filmmaker's capacity to capture reality, shaping the aesthetic and narrative possibilities of visual storytelling (Khan, Butt and Yattoo 887). This theory provides a lens to analyzing how technological innovations influence industry standards, artistic choices, and the democratization of video/film production.

Literature Review: Evolution of the Camera, Technological Revolution and the Emergence of Smartphone as Alternative Motion Picture Capture Device

The history of camera technology reveals a trajectory marked by continuous innovation aimed at improving

image quality, ease of use, and cost-efficiency. The earliest cameras were large, cumbersome, and required extensive technical knowledge, limiting access to a select few (Thompson and Bordwell 9). The invention of the camera was purely born out of scientific experimentations. Charles Okwuowulu explains that "the birth of film leans on the representation of dramatic images on a recordable playback device. The origin of early photography dates back to 1826; to a French man called Nicephore Niepce who captured temporary images on a metal plate with a device known as camera obscura" (64). Interest in motion picture later grew after the camera obscura was used by many to record still images over the years.

The advent of film cameras in the early 20th century brought higher resolution and cinematic quality but remained expensive and technically demanding. The 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of digital video cameras, replacing film with electronic sensors that allowed easier editing and distribution. Digital cameras rapidly improved in resolution, color quality, and portability, making high-quality video production accessible to a broader audience. The development of high-definition (HD) and 4K cameras further elevated production standards, bringing cinema-quality visuals to mainstream markets. These technological advancements also led to the proliferation of independent filmmaking, as filmmakers could produce professional-looking content with relatively modest investments (Ilukwe 81). Ekwuazi further states that "the relatively short distance between the disappearance of the reversal and the

appearance of the home video is paved with economic indicators which paint in bold relief the potential economic – cum – artistic viability of the video" ("Nollywood: History as Economic Determinism …" 138). Video has been a modest alternative to cine equipments, not just in Nigeria but also in America were film first blossomed. Thompson and Bordwell affirm that;

> The videocassette recorder also helped the film industry to new profits. Japan's Sony corporation began marketing the Betamax home machine in 1975, and Matsushita introduced its Video Home System (VHS) soon after. Home Video expanded rapidly throughout the world; by 1988, most U.S households had a VCR. (Thompson and Bordwell 702)

As technology advance, there are clearer transitions from analogue to digital production, a development that has revolutionized the industry, significantly reducing costs and production time. The technological transformation also facilitated the rise of online streaming platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Telegram, Netflix, Showmax, IrokoTV, FilmHouse, and Nollyland, which become digital film marketplaces (Ilukwe 78; 86). The technological revolution in mobile devices has radically altered the landscape of film production. Smartphone cameras, once rudimentary, have evolved into tools capable of capturing high-resolution images and videos comparable to professional digital cameras. Features such as optical image stabilization, autofocus, HDR, and 4K recording have made Smartphone a viable

alternative tool for film production. Işıkman affirms that Smartphone has democratized media production by lowering barriers to entry, enabling anyone with a mobile device to create and disseminate visual content. More so, persons with fundamental knowledge of filmmaking can turn their phones into a film recording device, shooting scenes and packing films without the constraints of standard equipment (98 – 99).

The proliferation of editing applications and social media platforms has further empowered users to produce polished videos with minimal technical expertise. Gourav Gill and Rahul Tiwari affirm that;

> The advent of digital photography, the quick evolution in data storage that followed, and the growth of the internet set the way for the era of digital film making. This change is being observed by us. it is noteworthy that film specialists from all over the world have been adjusting to the changes. Newer generation prospective filmmakers must be up to date on the most recent advances and should be knowledgeable of the numerous stages the filmmaking medium has undergone over the last 100 to 150 years. The majority of industry professionals believe that the current digital era is one of the most significant changes the film industry has experienced to yet. To draw viewers and advance the industry, new tools must be used. (233)

This shift has led to new production paradigms, including mobile journalism, viral content creation, and documentary filmmaking that leverage the convenience and immediacy of the Smartphone, emphasizing the device's role in authentic, accessible storytelling.

However, the emergence of Smartphone as an alternative cost-effective cinematographic tool has also sparked debates about quality standards, artistic integrity, and the future of professional filmmaking. Critics argue that while Smartphone enhance accessibility, they may compromise on technical quality, aesthetic depth, and cinematic storytelling. Conversely, supporters contend that technological innovation blurs the boundaries between amateur and professional, fostering new creative possibilities (Khan, Butt and Yattoo 889). Despite the ideological and scholarly contentions, the Smartphone has become part of the technological revolution that continues to reshape the film industry, challenging traditional notions of quality, professionalism, and artistic expression.

Synopsis of *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman* and *Sabbath*

Biyi Bandele's adaptation of Wole Soyinka's play, *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman*, serves as a poignant introspection into the complexities of tradition, culture, and the facade of societal norms. The story revolves around Elesin Oba, a eunuch and the King's horseman, who, bound by tradition and duty, must commit ritual suicide upon his king's death. This act is a testament to the cultural values of the Yoruba people, where loyalty

and duty to one's king supersede personal desires and aspirations. Bandele's adaptation brings forth a nuanced exploration of human nature, revealing the tensions between tradition and personal freedom, as well as the societal pressures that can dictate the course of a person's life. The conflict of the story is pitched in Pilkings, the British colonial officer's refusal to allow tradition prevail by letting Elesin to fulfilling the ritual of transition which entails committing suicide in order to accompany the Oba to the great beyond.

Sabbath, directed by Oladipo O'Fresh, is a thought-provoking film that delves into the complexities of power, corruption, and the religious institution. The story revolves around Iretomiwa Martins, a charismatic church leader who unexpectedly becomes the General Overseer of the Church of Nations. His rise to power is meteoric, and his ministry initially flourishes, drawing large crowds and capturing the hearts of the congregation. However, as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Iretomiwa's ascension was facilitated by unseen forces and hidden motivations, leading to a web of deceit and corruption that threatens to destroy the very foundations of the church. Through *Sabbath*, O'Fresh offers a scathing critique of the excesses of the religious establishment, highlighting the dangers of unchecked power and the exploitation of religious fervor.

Analysis of the Cinematographic Techniques in the Case Study Films

The cinematographic techniques in the films is a vital component of understanding the broader discourse on

film artistry, cultural representation, and the role of visual storytelling in conveying complex narratives. This discourse elucidates how technical choices in cinematography such as camera shots, angles, movements, and their accompaniments like lighting, composition, color palette are not merely aesthetic decisions but integral to the storytelling process that enhances cultural authenticity and emotional engagement.

Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman, is a visually engaging film that employs a range of cinematographic techniques to bring the Yoruba culture to life. The film's cinematography is a crucial aspect of its narrative, working in tandem with the story to evoke a sense of tradition, ritual, and cultural identity. The composition and framing in the film are noteworthy, as Bandele uses the camera to create a sense of ritual and tradition. Long takes and static shots are used to emphasize cultural motifs, create a sense of stillness and quiet contemplation, while rapid cuts and dynamic framing are used to convey the chaos and disorder that arises from the clash of cultural values and personal desires in the film. For example, during the sequence where Elesin Oba is preparing for his ritual suicide, the camera lingers on his face, emphasizing his introspection and emotional turmoil.

Camera angles and movement are utilized to create a sense of drama and tension. Low-angle shots and dynamic camera movements are used to convey the sense of ritual and tradition, while high-angle shots and

static camera positions are used to create a sense of detachment and objectivity. For example, during the sequence where Elesin Oba is being led to his ritual suicide, low-angle shots are used to emphasize cultural significance while heightening tension:

Plate 1: Elesin Oba dances and celebrates as he prepares for the ritual sacrifice.

The picture quality projects the splendor, vitality, and richness of the Yoruba and by extension African culture. Costume, music, and dance which are cultural markers of the Yoruba nation are given emphasis through shot composition as shown above. The use of lighting, color palette, camera angles and movement all work together to create a rich and immersive visual experience that underscores the cultural significance of the Yoruba people thus underscoring the importance of visual language in conveying complex cultural stories and advancing the artistic integrity of African cinema.

In the broader context of the discourse, cinematography acts as a bridge between the narrative's thematic depth and the audience's visual perception. By employing specific techniques, Bandele emphasizes the cultural rituals, traditional values, and emotional states of characters, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of Yoruba cultural identity. This aligns with the broader study of how visual elements can reinforce or challenge cultural paradigms within film. Furthermore, the cinematographic techniques adopted situate the film within the larger framework of African cinema, which increasingly leverages visual storytelling to assert cultural sovereignty and challenge Western cinematic dominance. The use of natural lighting, earthy color palettes, and deliberate framing reflects a conscious effort to portray indigenous aesthetics authentically, contributing to the discourse on decolonizing African narratives through film.

O'Fresh's *Sabbath* employs a distinctive array of cinematographic techniques that contribute significantly to its thematic depth and visual storytelling. The film's cinematography captures the raw emotion, social commentary, and cultural nuances that underpin the narrative. Meticulous composition and framing guide viewers' focus and evoke emotional responses in the film. Symmetrical framing is used in scenes depicting community gatherings, emphasizing social cohesion, while asymmetrical compositions highlight moments of conflict or disorder. Close-ups are frequently employed to capture raw emotional expressions, creating intimacy between characters and viewers. Wide shots, on the other

hand, are used to showcase the environment and social settings, grounding the narrative within its cultural context as shown below:

Plate 2: Worshippers singing the "I Surrender All" hymn in church as Iretinonwa kneels before the pastor to show total surrender.

Here framing is employed to convey the mood and atmosphere. The film's color palette is predominantly muted and earthy, with tones of brown, green, and gray dominating the scenes. This choice reinforces the themes of religion, decay, and social stagnation. Occasionally, vibrant colors are used selectively to symbolize moments of hope or religious renaissance. The restrained palette helps to create a somber, reflective mood that underscores the social commentary embedded in the narrative.

O'Fresh employs a variety of camera angles and movements to enhance the storytelling. Low-angle shots are used to depict authority and power dynamics, especially in scenes involving social or political figures. Conversely, high-angle shots often portray vulnerability

or social marginalization. The use of handheld camera work during tense or confrontational scenes adds a sense of immediacy and realism, immersing viewers into the characters' experiences. Smooth tracking shots are employed during moments of reflection or community gathering, emphasizing collective identity. Selective focus and depth of field are used to highlight specific characters or objects, directing viewers' attention to critical narrative elements. For example, isolating a character in sharp focus against a blurred background emphasizes their emotional state or importance in the scene, reinforcing the film's thematic concerns about individual agency within social structures.

The cinematographic techniques in O'Fresh's *Sabbath* work synergistically to deepen the narrative and evoke emotional engagement. The deliberate use of lighting, composition, color, camera angles, and focus not only enhances the visual aesthetic but also underscores the social and cultural themes explored in the film. This technical mastery contributes to the film's overall impact, making it a compelling example of how cinematography can serve as a powerful tool in storytelling. O'Fresh's use of Smartphone for filming highlights an innovative approach to cinematography that challenges traditional notions of cinematic technology. This choice significantly impacts the execution and aesthetic of the film's cinematographic techniques.

Furthermore, the adoption of Smartphone for the shoot demonstrates how accessible, portable technology can be harnessed to achieve a cinematic quality that aligns with

the film's thematic concerns of authenticity, immediacy, and social realism. Smartphone's capabilities; such as its mobility, ease of use, and ability to shoot in various lighting conditions, allowed for spontaneous, intimate, and unobtrusive shots, which are evident in the film's naturalistic lighting and candid framing. It also influenced the composition and movement. With its lightweight design, O'Fresh deployed dynamic camera angles, handheld shots, and quick repositioning, contributing to the film's visceral realism and emotional immediacy. This flexibility enhanced the use of close-ups and selective focus, enabling the filmmaker to capture raw emotions and social nuances effectively. Furthermore, the limited depth of field and the unique lens options available to mobile devices fostered a distinctive visual style evident in *Sabbath*.

In essence, O'Fresh's innovative use of Smartphone underscores a broader trend in contemporary filmmaking, where technological accessibility democratizes film production and allows for more authentic, culturally embedded storytelling. It exemplifies how cinematographic techniques such as natural lighting, composition, and camera movement can be effectively achieved through non-traditional tools, thereby expanding the creative possibilities for filmmakers working within resource constraints or aiming for a raw, unfiltered visual style. This approach aligns with the film's thematic emphasis on social realities and collective identity, emphasizing that impactful storytelling is not solely dependent on high-end equipment but rather on creativity and deliberate

technical choices. O'Fresh's *Sabbath* is a testament to the evolving landscape of cinematography, demonstrating that innovative techniques can produce compelling visual narratives aligned with the film's artistic and thematic intentions.

Comparative Analysis of the Production Quality in *Elesin Oba …* and *Sabbath*

The production quality of a film significantly influences its visual impact and audience perception. In examining *Elesin Oba …* and *Sabbath*, it becomes evident that their differing approaches to filmmaking – conventional versus experimental – produce markedly different outcomes in picture quality, which in turn reflect their respective technical and artistic philosophies.

Elesin Oba …, directed with a more conventional methodology, utilizes digital cameras and sophisticated filmmaking equipment. This approach allows for higher resolution, better control over lighting, color grading, and overall image clarity. Consequently, the picture quality is sharp, detailed, and polished, aligning with the standards of mainstream cinematic production. The technical investment in high-end equipment results in a visually crisp and immersive viewing experience, suitable for capturing intricate details of costumes, set design, and facial expressions, which are crucial for storytelling in cultural and historical contexts.

In contrast, O'Fresh's *Sabbath* employed an entirely different methodology, relying on a Smartphone – specifically an iPhone 15 Pro Max, according data

gathered through an interview with the filmmaker. This choice reflects an experimental and resource-efficient filmmaking practice, emphasizing authenticity, immediacy, and social realism over technical perfection. The inherent limitations of Smartphone cameras, such as lower resolution and reduced control over image quality, are evident in the comparatively softer and grainier visuals of *Sabbath*. However, these qualities contribute to the film's raw aesthetic, intensifying its thematic focus on everyday life and social realities.

O'Fresh's deliberate adoption of a Smartphone for production underscores a philosophical departure from conventional filmmaking. He explained during an interviewer with the researchers that this approach provides him with greater flexibility and creative freedom. According to him, using a Smartphone allows him to be more spontaneous and experimental, adding that he can shoot in real environments without the intimidating presence of bulky equipment, which makes filmmaking more flexible and economically viable for him (online interview). Furthermore, O'Fresh explained that he undertook specific research and training on the use of Apple-enabled Apps and software for film production. These skills enable him to enhance image quality through post-production editing, color correction, and stabilization, thereby maximizing the potential of his mobile device.

The difference in production quality between the two films manifests not only in resolution but also in the overall aesthetic and narrative tone. *Elesin Oba …*'s high production value creates a more formal, polished visual

experience, aligning with its traditional storytelling approach. Conversely, *Sabbath*'s experimental visual style fosters an intimate, immediate connection with viewers, emphasizing social realism and experimentation as shown in the plate below:

Plate 3: Scenes from *Elesin Oba* … and *Sabbath* respectively.

This comparative analysis underscores how technological choices influence filmmaking outcomes. While *Elesin Oba…* benefits from advanced equipment and a conventional approach to achieve high technical quality, *Sabbath* leverages the flexibility of Smartphone filmmaking, supported by targeted training and research, to produce distinct aesthetics that complement its thematic objectives.

Both approaches demonstrate valid artistic and practical philosophies. The choice of technology – whether sophisticated or flexible – shapes not only the visual quality but also the narrative style and emotional engagement of the audience. O'Fresh's innovative use of Smartphone technology exemplifies how experimental techniques, supported by research and skill development, can produce compelling cinema outside conventional paradigms.

Summary of Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive comparison of two distinct filmmaking approaches in Nigerian cinema – namely, the conventioanl, professional method exemplified by *Elesin Oba: The King's Horseman*, and the experimental, resourceful approach demonstrated by *Sabbath*. The core findings reveal significant insights into how technological tools influence production quality, artistic expression, and cultural representation.

The study found that the two films adopted unique technological approaches which yielded unique

Outcomes. *Elesin Oba* was produced using high-end digital cameras and sophisticated filmmaking equipment, which facilitated the achievement of high technical standards. The resultant visuals exhibit sharp resolution, vibrant colors, controlled lighting, and detailed framing, all contributing to a polished cinematic aesthetic. These technical qualities align with industry standards for professional filmmaking and are instrumental in conveying cultural rituals, traditional values, and emotional nuances effectively.

In contrast, *Sabbath* was shot primarily using an iPhone 15 Pro Max. This choice reflects an experimental and resource-conscious approach that emphasizes spontaneity, authenticity, and social realism. The visuals are softer, with a grainier texture, and may lack the crispness associated with high-end equipment. However, these visual characteristics serve an artistic purpose – they evoke intimacy, immediacy, and a raw depiction of social realities. The deliberate aesthetic reinforces the film's thematic focus on authenticity, community life, and cultural resilience.

The study also found that filmmaker perspectives and technical mastery shaped the two films analyzed in this study. O'Fresh's interview reveals that his decision to use a Smartphone was motivated by the desire for flexibility, experimentation, and immediacy. He emphasizes that with targeted training on Apps and post-production software, image quality, color grading, and stabilization can be enhanced, effectively bridging the perceived quality gap. This indicates that technical limitations of Smartphone can be mitigated through

skillful post-production work, challenging traditional notions that only expensive equipment guarantees cinematic quality.

The study further observed that filmmaking approach impacts on artistic and cultural narratives. The contrasting approaches highlight that technological choices are intertwined with artistic intent and cultural storytelling. *Elesin Oba ...*'s high production values reinforce its formal, traditional aesthetic, aligning with a cultural preservation narrative. Conversely, *Sabbath*'s looser aesthetic and mobile filmmaking techniques support its themes of social realism, immediacy, and grassroots storytelling, thus democratizing cinematic expression.

These findings have broader theoretical implications. They support McLuhan's Technological Determinism Theory, which suggests that technology shapes societal and cultural practices. The evolution from traditional film camera to Smartphone exemplifies this phenomenon, influencing how stories are told, who can tell them, and how audiences engage with visual content. The proliferation of affordable mobile devices has lowered barriers to entry, enabling a more diverse range of voices, especially from resource-constrained environments.

Based on the findings of this study, the study therefore recommends the following:

Need to Encourage Technological Diversification and Skill Development: Filmmakers should be encouraged

to embrace both high-end equipment and innovative mobile cinematography techniques. Training programs and workshops should be expanded to include modules on Smartphone filmmaking, post-production editing, color correction, stabilization, and sound integration using accessible tools and applications. Such capacity-building initiatives will empower filmmakers to exploit the full potential of affordable technology, thereby democratizing film production and broadening creative horizons.

Promotion of Hybrid Production Models: Industry practitioners should consider adopting hybrid production approaches that combine the strengths of traditional cinematic equipment with the flexibility and immediacy of the Smartphone. For instance, high-budget productions can utilize professional cameras for scenes requiring high resolution and aesthetic finesse, while leveraging Smartphone for spontaneous, social documentary segments or logistical convenience. This integrated approach can optimize resource allocation, enhance storytelling diversity, and foster innovation.

Call to Revise Industry Standards and Accreditation: Industry regulators and film certification bodies should revisit standards to recognize and validate the artistic and cultural legitimacy of films produced with Smartphone and other low-cost devices. This includes developing guidelines that focus on creative storytelling, technical competence, and cultural authenticity rather than solely on equipment specifications. Such recognition will encourage emerging filmmakers to experiment without fear of being marginalized for their choice of technology.

Foster a Culture of Research and Innovation: Academic institutions, research organizations, and industry bodies should collaborate to conduct ongoing research on the evolving role of technology in filmmaking. This includes exploring how emerging tools such as AI-powered editing, 4K Smartphone, and affordable stabilizers can enhance production quality. Additionally, case studies and best practices should be documented and disseminated to inspire innovative approaches within the industry.

Need to Support Policy Frameworks for Resource-Constrained Filmmakers: Policymakers should prioritize policies that facilitate access to affordable filmmaking technologies, training, and distribution channels. Establishing grants, subsidies, and equipment leasing schemes for small-scale filmmakers will help mitigate resource constraints and foster grassroots creativity. Such support will ensure that technological democratization translates into meaningful artistic and cultural expression.

Cultivate a Discourse on Artistic Standards and Innovation: Industry forums, film festivals, and academic conferences should serve as platforms for dialogue on the evolving standards of cinematic quality, artistic expression, and technological innovation. Such discourses will help redefine perceptions of professionalism, emphasizing creativity, cultural relevance, and emotional impact over equipment specifications.

Need to Recognize and Celebrate Diverse Filmmaking Approaches: Finally, the industry should establish awards, festivals, and platforms that celebrate both polished, high-budget productions and raw, socially realistic works produced with Smartphone. Recognizing diverse aesthetic styles will foster an inclusive environment that values artistic innovation, cultural authenticity, and technical experimentation equally.

These recommendations advocate for a balanced and inclusive approach to technological adoption in Nigerian filmmaking. By fostering skill development, redefining industry standards, and promoting innovation and cultural authenticity, stakeholders can ensure that Nigerian cinema continues to thrive as a dynamic, diverse, and globally relevant art form. On the whole, the study illustrates that technological choices are not merely technical decisions but strategic artistic tools that influence the narrative, aesthetic, and cultural dimensions of filmmaking. Both approaches – conventional and experimental – are valid and contribute uniquely to the richness of Nigerian cinema.

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