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THE EDITORIAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Role of Intelligence Gathering and Technology in Curbing Jailbreaks in Nigeria

Halliru Tijjani

Department of Criminology and Security Studies
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Corresponding Email: thalliru@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Jailbreaks in Nigeria have become a recurring security challenge, undermining public safety, and eroding confidence in the criminal justice system, and exacerbating crime rates. This study examines the role of intelligence gathering and technology in curbing jailbreaks within the Nigerian correctional system. The paper is anchored on the Routine Activity Theory (RAT) and the Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT), both of which provide analytical lenses for understanding how intelligence gathering and technology can deter and prevent jailbreaks. Drawing on a mixed-methods approach, the research combines qualitative interviews with (20) key informants, correctional officers, security experts, and intelligence personnel, alongside quantitative analysis of jailbreak incidents with (90) participants. Findings reveal that inadequate intelligence-sharing mechanisms, weak inter-agency collaboration, and obsolete surveillance equipment contribute significantly to prison break vulnerabilities. The study highlights how proactive intelligence gathering—through informant networks, inmate profiling, and risk assessment—can identify early warning signs of planned escapes. Similarly, technological interventions such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) monitoring, biometric access controls, drone surveillance, and real-time communication systems have proven effective in prevention when adequately deployed and maintained. Another finding reveals that challenges such as corruption, poor maintenance culture, insufficient funding, and lack of personnel training limit the optimal use of these tools. The research argues for an integrated security architecture that combines human intelligence (HUMINT) and technological intelligence (TECHINT) to provide a robust defence against jailbreaks. Policy recommendations include the institutionalisation of intelligence-led corrections management, capacity building for prison personnel, increased budgetary allocation for security technology, and strengthened coordination between the Nigerian Correctional Service, the police, and other security agencies. This study contributes to national security discourse by demonstrating that intelligence and technology, when strategically aligned, can significantly reduce the incidence of jailbreaks in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Jailbreaks, Intelligence Gathering, Security Technology, Nigerian Correctional Service, Prison Security*

1.   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Jailbreaks in Nigeria have exposed enduring weaknesses in custodial security, ranging from porous perimeter defenses to fragmented intelligence flows. Academic work increasingly frames effective prevention as a **s**ystems problem that fuses human-sourced information with technology, rather than a narrow hardware procurement issue (das Neves, Liberado, & Reis, 2019; Daramola, 2021).

Within corrections scholarship, dynamic security—the everyday, professional engagement between staff and people in custody that generates reliable situational awareness—provides the foundation for prison intelligence (structured collection, analysis, and timely sharing of information). Robust evidence suggests that when these practices are institutionalised, prisons are better able to detect early warning cues, disrupt organised plots, and manage extremist risk (das Neves et al., 2019; Williams, 2023). In the Nigerian context, empirical accounts argue for exactly this pivot to intelligence-led corrections, emphasising staff reporting, informant handling, and inter-agency liaison as core capabilities for thwarting escapes (Daramola, 2021).

Technology is the necessary companion to human intelligence. Four strands of academic literature are particularly relevant. First, CCTV: multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that CCTV produces a modest but significant crime-reduction effect, with the most substantial impacts where cameras are coupled with capable guardianship and rapid response—conditions analogous to well-run custodial operations (Piza, Welsh, Farrington, & Thomas, 2019; Thomas, McGee, & McGuire, 2022). While these syntheses are largely community-setting evaluations, their mechanism—enhanced surveillance, detection, and deterrence—maps onto prison needs when feeds are actively monitored and integrated into incident command.

Second, electronic monitoring (EM) and digital supervision tools, though focused on community corrections, offer transferable insights: a 2020 systematic review finds EM can reduce recidivism when embedded in clear procedures and supportive case management (Belur et al., 2020). Translating the lesson to prisons underscores that

devices alone do not deliver outcomes; outcomes depend on the institutional routines wrapped around the tech. Third, biometrics strengthen identity assurance and post-incident attribution. Foundational work by Jain (2015) details how fingerprint and related modalities support reliable person recognition across law-enforcement and forensic domains—capabilities directly relevant to identifying escapees and preventing impersonation or fraudulent access within facilities. Applied corrections research similarly documents biometric use in supervision workflows (Ross, 2023).

Fourth, the emergent "smart prison" literature surveys barriers and enablers for deploying integrated platforms (IoT sensors, access-control logs, analytics dashboards). Reviews highlight that technology must be matched by governance: data standards, cyber-security, staff training, power reliability, and maintenance (Imandeka, 2024). African and Nigeria-specific studies echo this, proposing web-based inmate information systems to improve classification, incident logging, and inter-agency coordination (Olusanya et al., 2024; Ugwuegbu et al., 2020).

Synthesizing these strands yields a coherent framework for Nigeria: (1) embed dynamic security to generate high-quality HUMINT; (2) stand up prison intelligence units to transform raw reports and technical feeds into actionable assessments; (3) integrate TECHINT (CCTV analytics, access-control and movement logs, biometrics, radio/incident telemetry) with trained operators and rehearsed response protocols; and (4) institutionalize information-sharing with police and security agencies for pre-emptive disruption and post-escape manhunts. Where such integration is absent, technology underperforms—either underused, poorly maintained, or decoupled from decision cycles (das Neves et al., 2019; Daramola, 2021).

Finally, the social-organizational climate of prisons matters. Recent criminological research shows that different prison climates produce distinct hierarchies and patterns of (non)violence, with implications for intelligence reliability and staff safety (Williams, 2023). This strengthens the case for coupling people-centric practices **with** technology-enabled situational awareness: a facility that cultivates trust and professional order will generate better intelligence and make better use of its tools

2.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In recent years, Nigeria has experienced a surge in jailbreaks, revealing systemic weaknesses in prison security, operational preparedness, and inter-agency coordination. Between 2020 and 2022 alone, multiple high-profile prison breaks—including the Kuje Correctional Centre incident—have raised concerns over the capacity of correctional facilities to anticipate and prevent coordinated escape attempts (Daramola, 2021). These incidents underscore the urgent need for intelligence-led corrections, where early warning signs from human sources and technical systems are synthesised into actionable strategies.

Despite global evidence that dynamic security and prison intelligence units significantly improve the detection and prevention of escape plots (das Neves, Liberado, & Reis, 2019), Nigeria's custodial operations remain largely reactive. Intelligence gathering is often ad-hoc, poorly structured, and disconnected from real-time decision-making, thereby allowing organized escape plans to progress undetected.

Technological tools such as closed-circuit television (CCTV), access-control systems, biometric identification, and electronic monitoring have been shown to reduce crime opportunities and improve response speed in both community and custodial settings (Piza, Welsh, Farrington, & Thomas, 2019; Jain, 2015). However, in Nigeria, these tools are either absent, under-utilized, or suffer from poor maintenance, erratic power supply, and inadequate staff training (Olusanya et al., 2024; Imandeka, 2024). The absence of integrated platforms for monitoring, data analysis, and incident reporting further limits the effectiveness of existing security infrastructure.

Furthermore, intelligence sharing between the Nigerian Correctional Service, police, and other security agencies remains fragmented, often hampered by bureaucratic bottlenecks and limited technological interoperability (Ugwuegbu et al., 2020). This lack of coordination allows critical information about planned attacks or movements of high-risk inmates to be lost, delayed, or misinterpreted.

The result is a cycle of reactive crisis management rather than proactive risk prevention. Each successful jailbreak not only undermines public confidence in the criminal justice system but also creates significant security risks, as escapees—often violent offenders—reintegrate into criminal networks, thereby fueling further crime and insecurity (Williams, 2023). Without the integration of structured intelligence gathering and modern security technology into prison management, Nigeria's custodial facilities will remain vulnerable to both internal collusion and external assaults.

This study therefore seeks to address the critical question: *How can intelligence gathering and technology be systematically integrated into Nigeria's correctional operations to curb jailbreaks?*

3.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Managing security at prison level the prison security framework should be supported by an agreed local security strategy which reflects the needs of each prison manages identified local risks and meets the requirements set out in the framework. Good practice is to make the local security strategy available to all local staff.

Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence

Contemporary corrections research emphasizes dynamic security—professional staff–inmate engagement that generates everyday situational awareness—as the foundation for prison intelligence (collection, analysis, and timely sharing of security-relevant information). The UNODC Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence (2015) argues that escapes are best prevented when overt and covert information streams are systematically analyzed and converted into preventive action, rather than relying on static hardware alone.

The local security strategy in each prison should set out arrangements for meeting the requirements of each of the four or more functions covered in the national security framework. This document, drawn up by local prison management, should specify procedures that enable compliance with the national framework while reflecting the

particular security needs and resources of the individual prison concerned. In particular, the procedures set out in the local security strategy should: 1 Take account of local risk analysis 2 Reflect local physical and procedural security 3 Consider the categories of prisoners held in the prison 4. Identify staff, equipment and resources necessary to carry out each task Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence (2015).

The balance within each prison between the different types of security (physical, procedural and dynamic) should be based on such features as the presence of external patrols, towers, security barriers or detection devices; the type of accommodation within the institution; internal security features; and the staff-to-inmate ratio. At prison level, the crucial requirement for prison management is to ensure that all staff is aware of the concepts of physical, procedural and dynamic security, and to create the necessary structures to enable staff to feel supported in the exercise of their authority. Good practice indicates that there should be four components to a local security management structure: the prison director who has overall operational responsibility for the security of the prison; a security committee—to advise the director on the full range of security issues; a security manager and a security department with responsibility; and prison staff who are collectively and individually responsible for the maintenance of proper levels of security at all times. It is often rightly stated on notices within prisons that "security is everyone's responsibility". Clarke, R. V. (1997).

Security audits Investigations into escapes from prisons reveal few instances in which malfunctioning locks or electronic detection systems, insufficient razor wire, or other deficiencies in physical plant or technology were responsible. Most serious security breaches have occurred because one or more staff members have taken a "shortcut", did not know what was expected of them, or simply had failed to follow established security procedures. Though weaknesses in the physical plant may have contributed to the problem, it was usually the failure of staff to attend to security-related activity that was at the heart of the incident. In other words, people-system failures, not physical-system failures account for most security breakdowns. This reality points to the need to establish a comprehensive security auditing programme. A security audit is a process for

determining the extent to which policy, procedure, standards and practice combine to provide a safe and secure prison environment. Included in this process is a detailed evaluation of every major aspect of a prison's security programme. The security audit focuses on security operations. Although standards and policy are important aspects of such audits, the primary focus is the security systems and their operational implementation on a daily basis (Clarke, R. V. 2008).

The audit is a practical experience that, when properly conducted by persons who are intimately familiar with security principles, identifies weaknesses in prison security arrangements that create risk to safety and security of staff and the community. The benefits of security audits to the prison administration and individual prisons are many: weaknesses, deficiencies, inadequate procedures and areas of vulnerability in the institution's operation are identified; compliance with the national security framework and prison level standards, policies and procedures is assessed; equipment, locking mechanisms, tool and key systems, etc. that are inoperable, inappropriate or inadequate are identified; the efficient and effective application of security resources is reviewed; and good practices are identified and are shared throughout the prison administration. In some jurisdictions, a combination of internal audits and external audits are mandated. Internal audits (those conducted by staff within a prison) are sometimes required between external audits (audits conducted by a team or staff from outside the institution). In other jurisdictions, internal audits are pre-audits and are conducted by institution staff just prior to the external audit. Internal audits are not recommended as the sole audit activity. Auditors often find it difficult to objectively identify shortcomings by friends, fellow workers, and supervisors. In addition, they may not identify risk or vulnerability as they audit conditions in which they work every day, because they are too familiar with it and are unable to be dispassionate (National Correctional Service, 2025).

In some jurisdictions, "peer-to-peer" audits take place (where staff from one prison audit another prison), which helps to overcome some of these problems. External audits tend to be more objective and thorough. They may be announced or unannounced. An advantage of unannounced audits is that they allow the institution to be viewed in an

operational condition more closely approximating normal. An advantage of announced audits is that the institution has an opportunity to prepare and correct conditions that they know to be deficient before the audit occurs. Some jurisdictions have found a combination of announced and unannounced audits to be effective, a schedule of unannounced audits sometimes being established on a random basis. Many jurisdictions use a security audit checklist which is often a statement of the security objectives and baselines set out in the national security framework. Information is recorded related to each baseline and space provided for an auditor's comment (Pont, J. 2008).

The auditor should make an assessment for each baseline and identify whether the prison complies or does not comply with the baseline. An overall assessment score for each prison should be given at the end of the audit which reflects the level of compliance with the national security framework and security baselines. Experience has proven that the development and implementation of a comprehensive security audit programme is a major step in reducing the security risks that can be endemic in prison operations (Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence, 2015).

Covert testing

Covert testing is the planned, managed, realistic but unannounced test of security processes, procedures and equipment. The primary purpose of the covert testing policy, according to Allen (2003). is to:

1 Test delivery of processes and procedures designed to maintain security and prevent escape

2 Test technical aids designed to maintain security and prevent escape

3 Prevent the entry of unauthorised items and identify vulnerable areas/inadequate equipment

4 Identify management and system inadequacies that need reinforcing, and reward and recognise good practice

5 Respond and test identified intelligence and/or risk assessment concerns

6 Identify training needs • Identify failings and ensure they are addressed appropriately

7 Offer assurances on a prison's ability to deliver core security responsibilities

Covert testing is a tool to give assurance to prison directors that staffs are vigilant and that security procedures are conducted in accordance with national procedures. Used appropriately, covert testing is a dynamic and realistic test of security arrangements. For example, covert testing may include:

1 Asking a member of staff to try and smuggle an illicit item into the prison and seeing whether it is detected

2 Taking a prisoner from a work party without informing the responsible member of staff and seeing how long it takes to identify that a prisoner is missing

3 Asking a trusted prisoner or member of staff to smuggle something out of the kitchen and seeing if he is able to do it

4 Leaving a gate unlocked and closely monitoring it to see how long it takes before it is discovered (Allen, 2003).

Concentric circles of protection of Correctional Services

There is always a risk that elements of physical and procedural security may fail. Physical security arrangements may be breached, power may fail, and equipment breaks down. Staff may not follow procedures, be subject to conditioning, manipulation, and corruption or human error may occur. In order to reduce the risk associated with failures in physical and procedural security, an underlying principle for providing good security involves a concept called "concentric circles of protection". This concept involves the use of multiple "rings" or "layers" of security. The application of this concept ensures that, even if one layer or element of security fails, prisoners will need to overcome a number of security measures to escape. Having multiple layers decreases the probability that a prisoner will be able to escape or that an intruder will be able to gain access.

The first layer is located at the boundary of the prison, and additional layers are provided as you move inward through the prison towards its most secure area. The more layers that exist between the outside world and a prisoner, the better the security is likely to be. At each layer, there is an opportunity to deter, detect, disrupt and delay a prisoner or intruder. For example, prisoners and intruders attempting to penetrate a layer can be detected and intercepted with an appropriate security response. It is possible to decrease the prisoner's/intruder's chance of success by adding layers, or by increasing the effectiveness of each layer, or by doing both. Relying on a single layer to provide security is hardly ever effective, because it requires a level of perfection that is unattainable. While the chances of breaching any single layer may be good, the chance of breaching three or more successive layers becomes exponentially more difficult. Layers of security can take many forms. Physical barriers (walls, fences, gates, bars) and detection and surveillance systems (CCTV, movement detection systems, watchtowers, guard posts, tracking systems) can provide primary layers. Simple procedures can provide additional security layers at little or no cost. Staff security awareness can also create an invisible, yet very effective, security layer. Intervention arrangements can be considered to be a security layer as effective and swift intervention by staff can stop an escape attempt (Pont, J. 2008).

The multiple layers concept also provides for redundancy in case there is a breakdown in procedures. For example, a member of staff may fail to lock a piece of equipment in a cabinet as per established procedures, but instead leave the equipment lying out openly on a desk. If the area is locked, and access to the area (workshop) is controlled, the equipment is still protected. While the chance of a breakdown in any single procedure may be good, the chance of a breakdown in three or more successive procedures is considerably less likely. An absolute minimum of three layers should exist between the outside world and a prisoner, with five or more layers being desirable (Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence, 2015).

The concept of concentric circles of protection underpins the decision of many jurisdictions to create high-security units within the perimeter of larger prisons—a prison

within a prison. High-security prisoners would need to get out of the high security unit and then get through the security measures in the main prison before achieving their escape. The security measures in the high-security unit should replicate rather than replace or rely on the security measures in the main prison. For example, all staff, prisoners and materials entering the high-security unit should be searched, even though they may have been searched in the main prison.

Professional and constructive relationships with prisoners Prison staff should develop and sustain professional relationships with prisoners. Many indicators of a prison system's success are shown in the efforts of prison staff to work constructively with prisoners, and to exercise their judgement and discretion in doing so. Dynamic security occurs when corrections officers interact and engage with prisoners during the course of their work by: 1. Regularly walking through the area in which they are posted; 2. Talking to prisoners, gaining their trust, and building rapport; 3. Checking prisoners' physical welfare during musters and head checks; 4. Maintaining a consistent approach to inappropriate behaviour; 5. Encouraging positive behaviour and addressing negative behaviour; 6. Engaging in case management process; 7. Following up on requests in a timely manner; and 8. Remaining calm during incidents. Australian Capital Territory, Corrections Management (Management of Prisoners) Policy, 2011.

Dynamic security is much more qualitative than static physical and procedural security measures. Where there is regular contact with prisoners, an alert staff member will be responsive to situations which are different from the norm and which may present a threat to security. Staffs who are engaged with prisoners in these ways will be able to prevent escapes and incidents occurring. Placing an emphasis on the need for prison staff to establish positive relationships with prisoners is key to dynamic security. This concept rests on the notion that engaging with prisoners and getting to know them can enable staff to anticipate and better prepare themselves to respond effectively to any incident that may threaten the security of the prison and the safety of staff and prisoners. The nature of relations between staff and prisoners is also key to dynamic security. For example, the way in which prison staff address prisoners, how searches are carried out

and their frequency, whether prisoners' privacy is respected when they are required to remove clothing, whether restraints are used unnecessarily and in a humiliating way, whether privacy in toilets and showers is respected (Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence, 2015).

Incidents of Jailbreaks in Nigeria

These incidents illustrate a troubling trend: jailbreaks in Nigeria stem from a mixture of violent attacks, civil unrest, and infrastructure collapse. The cumulative effect has compromised national security and underscores the need for comprehensive reform in prison management, infrastructure, and intelligence integration.

Year	Location	Number Escaped	Highlights
2010	Bauchi	721	Boko Haram attack, insurgent-related
2012	Damaturu	40	Militants attack, prisoner deaths recorded
2013	Ondo (Akure)	175	Armed robbery-linked breach
2014	Kogi, Ekiti, Minna	144, 341, 270	Coordinated gunmen attacks across central Nigeria
2020	Edo, Oko, Ondo	1,993; 58	Escapes during nationwide #EndSARS protests
2021	Imo, Plateau, Kogi Oyo, Kwara	Large numbers	Militant attacks, including coordinated assault and escapes
2022	Kuje, Agbor	879; 3	Militant attack and weather-related breach
2024	Suleja, Maiduguri	119; 281	Infrastructure failures due to weather/climate disaster
2025	Keffi	16	Local custodial breach

Source: Researchers compilations 2025

Causes of Jailbreaks in Nigeria

Jailbreaks in Nigeria are driven by a complex interaction of structural, security, and systemic justice factors. One major cause is coordinated militant and criminal attacks aimed at freeing detained members. Groups such as Boko Haram, the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), and the Eastern Security Network (ESN) have orchestrated high-profile assaults on custodial centres, notably the Owerri Correctional Centre attack

in April 2021 and the Kuje Correctional Centre breach in July 2022 (Adelaja & Okafor, 2023; Onuoha, 2022).

Another significant factor is overcrowding, largely resulting from prolonged pre-trial detention. Reports indicate that about two-thirds of Nigeria's prison population is composed of awaiting-trial inmates, creating management difficulties and fuelling unrest (Akinseye, 2024; National Correctional Service [NCoS], 2025). This is compounded by aging infrastructure and poor physical security, as many facilities—some dating back to the colonial era—lack modern perimeter defences and are in disrepair (Eze, 2024).

Technological and funding gaps also exacerbate vulnerabilities. Many custodial centres lack functional surveillance systems such as CCTV cameras, motion sensors, and alarm systems, which hinders early detection of escape attempts or coordinated attacks (Olabisi, 2023). Furthermore, staffing shortages and inadequate training limit effective dynamic security and emergency response capacity (Nwankwo & Ojo, 2023).

Another contributing factor is poor inmate classification and management. Mixing high-risk terror suspects with low-risk offenders increases the potential for internal radicalisation and coordinated escape plans (Ugwu, 2023). Corruption and internal collusion have also been reported, with some jailbreaks facilitated by compromised personnel (Akinola, 2022).

According to Tsuwa and Okoh (2016), "the population of awaiting trial persons is a major challenge to the realisation of the goals of correction due to the punishment of the wrong people for a long time". From observation and various reports on prison congestion across Africa, awaiting trial has become the attribute of criminal justice in developing nations like Nigeria and others in Africa. Nigeria's scenario has been noted as having human rights implications for prison officers and the prisoners themselves. Bateman (2003 in Emeka et al, 2019) avers that accused persons in developing countries suffer the snag of legal service accessibility. This problem does not mean that there is a scarcity of lawyers in the countries concerned but simply a question of affordability; and society

needs to be hastier in prosecuting cases involving political officeholders and other privileged citizens

Finally, broader national insecurity—including insurgency in the North-East, banditry in the North-West, and separatist militancy in the South-East—provides both the motive and operational capability for attacks on custodial centres (Okeke, 2024). In certain cases, environmental hazards such as structural collapse due to heavy rainfall, as occurred in Suleja Correctional Centre in 2024, have also triggered mass escapes (Ibrahim, 2024).

Prison intelligence

Importance of prison intelligence

The intelligence function is a critical component of any organization. Within law enforcement agencies, the military and commercial business, intelligence and analysis are used by senior managers in the decision-making process. Intelligence helps to reduce uncertainty and to focus resources in the right areas. Imprisonment is not necessarily a deterrent to continued criminal behaviour. Some prisoners continue with their criminal activity while in prison. This can take the form of operating illicit businesses, attempting to radicalize other prisoners, and sustaining gang related activity in the prison. They may also seek to maintain their outside criminal activity, including directing terrorist operations, operating drug syndicates and serious crime gangs. International trends show that criminal networks also continue to exist within prisons.

Criminals make contacts while in prison and, in some cases, extend, their criminality beyond the prison system. Some prisoners will also plan escapes and initiate activities intended to undermine the good order of the prison. Others will seek to corrupt or manipulate staff and attempt to have things smuggled into the prison. In order to ensure that the prison authorities can identify these activities, all prisons should have in place a structured prison intelligence system to enable security and related information to be gathered and evaluated in a secure environment, consistent with national legislation, in order to meet security and intelligence objectives. All prison staff should have the responsibility to actively gather security information and pass this information to the

security department. This is a key aspect of dynamic security and requires staff to actively engage, and maintain professional relationships, with prisoners if they are to obtain good quality information. Prison intelligence systems have been in existence for many years. Indeed, although it has only recently been formalized in many jurisdictions, many of the basic (and intuitive) approaches of intelligence work are the same. For instance, prison staff have always attempted to identify the common thread that links clues about what is happening in prison, or keep a mental note of the habits of particular prisoners, or cultivate special relationships with some prisoners who provide inside information. This has always been simply considered to be good prison work (Handbook on Dynamic Security and Prison Intelligence, 2015).

Benefits of effective prison intelligence

Effective prison intelligence involves the systematic gathering, analysis, and use of information to maintain order, prevent escapes, and dismantle criminal activities within and beyond correctional facilities (Gill, 2022). When implemented strategically, it provides significant operational, security, and social benefits such benefits includes: Contribute to preventing escapes, riots and disturbances**, i**dentification and prevention of criminal activity and the contravention of prison rules**,** identification and prevention of criminal activity in the external community and detection of staff corruption and smuggling**,** identification of organized criminal and/or terrorist groups and the nature of their activity within the prison system and the individuals in those groups who lead or facilitate criminal activity.

The primary goal of the intelligence process is to reduce the element of chance. It should never be confused with some "magical" ability to read the future. Intelligence within the prison context can be defined as follows: The prison intelligence function seeks, through objective strategic and operationally driven planned collection, to identify those prisoners, visitors, staff and organizations planning to engage in activity, or who are engaged in an activity that may be a threat to the good order, safety and security of a prison before the event occurs. Prison intelligence looks at specific individuals (such as prisoners, prison visitors, staff employed by the prison administration) and groups of

individuals (such as prison gangs) in order to identify both criminal activity and threats to the good order, safety and security of the prison. The objective is to identify threats before they manifest themselves in actions, by analysing information and reducing uncertainty, so that managers can make appropriate decisions. Such events could be identifying the possibility of escape by a prisoner; in which case, the prisoner is moved to a more secure institution, their classification changed or additional measures put in place to manage the risk.

Another example is the trafficking of drugs by a visitor to a prisoner, which should result in the prisoner being placed on closed (restricted contact) visits or their visitor being thoroughly searched prior to the visit. It enables, when effective information sharing takes place with the police, the police to search the visitor prior to a visit and make an arrest if drugs are in possession. Prison intelligence can also be used to assist during and after the event, which is where the greatest interface between intelligence officers and investigators occurs. For example, tactical intelligence may require an immediate response to events such as a riot or serious assault within the prison.

Covert surveillance techniques deployed in prison settings

In prison security management, covert surveillance refers to discreet, hidden, or undercover monitoring methods designed to detect escape plans, contraband smuggling, or violent plots without alerting inmates or corrupt staff. Unlike overt measures such as CCTV in plain sight, covert methods are concealed to maintain an element of surprise and gather intelligence undetected. This can be done by using the following strategies: recording of telephone calls, interception of post/mail, use of listening devices, use of tracking devices, use of dedicated surveillance teams, use of photographic surveillance, and use of video surveillance.

4.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Routine Activity Theory (RAT) and the Situational Crime Prevention Theory (SCPT), both of which provide analytical lenses for understanding how intelligence gathering and technology can deter and prevent jailbreaks.

Routine Activity Theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) posits that crime occurs when three elements converge: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. In the context of correctional facilities, motivated offenders are inmates seeking escape, the "target" is the prison's security system, and "capable guardians" refer to well-trained correctional officers, surveillance systems, and inter-agency intelligence networks. Intelligence gathering acts as an anticipatory form of guardianship by identifying potential threats before they materialize. At the same time, technological tools like CCTV, biometric access controls, and alarm systems enhance guardianship by escaping attempts more visible and more complex to execute (Piza et al., 2019).

Situational Crime Prevention Theory

This theory is a criminological framework developed primarily by Ronald V. Clarke in the late 1970s and 1980s. It is rooted in the idea that crime is not only the product of offender motivation, but also of opportunity structures in the environment. By reducing opportunities, increasing the risks of detection, and decreasing potential rewards, SCP seeks to prevent crime before it occurs (Clarke, 1997).

Clarke, (1997) complements RAT by focusing on strategies to reduce opportunities for crime through environmental design, target hardening, and increasing the perceived risks for offenders. In prison settings, situational prevention involves measures such as improved perimeter fortification, electronic monitoring of inmate movements and rapid communication systems between correctional facilities and external security agencies. Research indicates that the presence of visible and functional surveillance systems not only deters criminal activity but also aids in incident investigation and prosecution (Gill, 2022).

The integration of these theories suggests that a combined approach—where intelligence gathering proactively identifies risks and technology strengthens guardianship—can significantly reduce jailbreak occurrences. As Ratcliffe (2016) emphasizes in the Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) model, proactive intelligence analysis should be central to resource allocation and operational planning. Applying ILP principles within

correctional management ensures that intelligence and technology are not stand-alone measures but are embedded within a broader crime-prevention strategy.

Thus, the theoretical grounding of this study assumes that jailbreak prevention is most effective when correctional facilities function within a proactive, intelligence-led, and technologically reinforced security model that disrupts the convergence of motivated offenders, vulnerable targets, and insufficient guardianship.

5. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts a **mixed-methods design**, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate comprehensive insights. The quantitative component focuses on statistical analysis of jailbreak trends, while the qualitative component explores in-depth perspectives from stakeholders involved in correctional security and intelligence operations.

Population of the Study

The population comprises Correctional Service personnel officers working in intelligence units, surveillance, and operational security. Law enforcement personnel such as police officers, Department of State Services (DSS) operatives, and other security agents involved in jailbreak prevention and investigation. Technology providers – experts involved in installing and maintaining prison surveillance and biometric systems.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling strategy is used to select respondents with direct knowledge and experience. The total sample size is 120 participants. Quantitative survey 90 respondents with 50 correctional officers (from 5 selected facilities across different geopolitical zones) 25 police/DSS operatives in the study area and 15 technology experts/vendors while the Qualitative interviews (KIIs) was carried out with 20 key informants 8 prison intelligence officers, 5 police/DSS senior officers, 3 correctional facility administrators,

four technology/security experts and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) of 2 sessions with the groups of 5 participants each (total 10), involving community stakeholders and victim families.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined how intelligence gathering and security technology jointly curb jailbreaks in Nigeria. Findings from the quantitative analysis, triangulated with interview insights, converge on four core results, first institutionalized intelligence capacity is strongly associated with lower jailbreak risk, two actively monitored CCTV and layered access-control systems reduce escape attempts and improve post-incident response, three biometrics add value primarily through identity assurance and recapture rather than deterrence, while structural constraints—overcrowding, staffing deficits, and maintenance gaps—attenuate the benefits of both intelligence and technology.

That is why descriptive statistics showed that respondents rated the overall effectiveness of intelligence-led measures higher than stand-alone technology (means: Intelligence scale $\approx 4.0/5$; Technology scale $\approx 3.5/5$), while perceived barriers (maintenance, power, training) scored high on a constraints index. This aligns with scholarship stressing the primacy of HUMINT/dynamic security even where TECHINT exists (das Neves et al., 2019; Daramola, 2021).

The findings also reinforce a socio-technical interpretation that prison security technology reduces opportunity but performs best when embedded within organised intelligence routines and adequate staffing (Trist & Emery; Davis, 1989; Imandeka, 2024). The stronger, more robust effect for CCTV (relative to biometric systems) is consistent with evaluations that show visible, actively monitored cameras deter and enable faster response—especially when feeds cue human operators and patrols (Piza et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2022). The weaker (marginal) statistical effect for biometrics likely reflects the technology's primary role in post-incident identification rather than immediate deterrence, echoing Jain's (2015) distinction between identity assurance and real-time incident prevention.

Crucially, the independent protective effect of a dedicated intelligence unit corroborates Ratcliffe's (2016) intelligence-led policing logic transplanted into corrections: institutionalised HUMINT/analysis changes operational behaviour and resource allocation, leading to earlier disruption of escape planning. Nigerian-focused analyses (Daramola, 2021; Olusanya et al., 2024) similarly argue that the absence of structured intelligence units explains why isolated technology investments underperform.

There is a strong positive association between overcrowding and perceived escape risk, which reiterates a recurring theme in Nigerian prison studies: physical and population pressures undermine both dynamic security and the feasibility of effective tech monitoring. In short, technology and intelligence reduce risk but cannot fully substitute for adequate capacity and humane population levels.

Prison intelligence looks at specific individuals (such as prisoners, prison visitors, staff employed by the prison administration) and groups of individuals (such as prison gangs) in order to identify both criminal activity and threats to the good order, safety and security of the prison Quantitative findings from this sample supports a central proposition of the literature as the intelligence gathering and technology together reduce jailbreak risk, but their effectiveness depends on institutionalization, active monitoring, and structural adequacy (das Neves et al., 2019; Piza et al., 2019; Ratcliffe, 2016; Jain, 2015; Daramola, 2021). Policy should therefore prioritise integrated, sustained investments—people, procedures, and power/maintenance—as much as hardware procurement.

7.   CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role that intelligence gathering and technology play in enhancing prison security and preventing jailbreaks in Nigeria. Evidence suggests that jailbreaks in the country are often facilitated by poor intelligence coordination, outdated security infrastructure, and inadequate surveillance systems (Okoli & Orinya, 2022; Adebayo, 2021). Intelligence-led policing, when effectively applied in correctional settings, enables the early detection of escape plans, identification of high-risk inmates, and prevention of external collusion (Ratcliffe, 2016). Furthermore, integrating modern

technologies such as closed-circuit television (CCTV), biometric access controls, and digital inmate monitoring systems enhances the capacity of prison authorities to deter and respond to escape attempts in real-time (Ajayi, 2020).

The findings indicate that a combined approach—leveraging both human intelligence (HUMINT) and technological intelligence (TECHINT)—is the most effective strategy for mitigating jailbreak risks. However, these measures require sustained investment, adequate training for personnel, and a coordinated framework linking correctional services, law enforcement, and intelligence agencies. Without addressing systemic issues such as corruption, overcrowding, and poor inmate welfare, technology alone cannot guarantee jailbreak prevention.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

To curb jailbreaks in Nigeria, correctional facilities should strengthen prison intelligence units and adopt advanced surveillance technologies such as AI-enabled CCTV, biometric access control, and electronic inmate tracking. Interagency collaboration between the Nigerian Correctional Service, law enforcement agencies, and security services must be enhanced to ensure timely intelligence sharing. Regular staff training on intelligence gathering and the use of technology should be prioritised, alongside periodic security audits to identify vulnerabilities. Addressing structural issues such as overcrowding, corruption, and inadequate inmate welfare will also significantly reduce jailbreak risks

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Reimaging Nigeria's Development Crisis: Governance, Economic Structures, and the Weaponisation of Poverty

Philip Taiwo OREBIYI, Anthonia Hafunjoh OKONYE, Seun BAMIDELE and Olusola Matthew Ojo

Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution,
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

Corresponding Email: torebiyi@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Nigeria represents a profound paradox in Africa's developmental narrative. Despite its vast oil wealth and initial promise to emerge as a leading industrial power comparable to the Asian Tigers, Nigeria has largely failed to realise its economic potential. Since gaining independence in 1960, the country's real income per capita has remained stagnant at approximately $250. Its banking sector is fragile, and rampant capital flight undermines prospects for sustained economic recovery. While macroeconomic indicators have occasionally shown improvement, widespread poverty persists, affecting the majority of Nigerians. The path to meaningful progress lies in establishing good governance—encompassing effective management of the economy, legal frameworks, and institutional integrity. Poverty in Nigeria has evolved into a critical barrier hindering national development and poses serious socio-political challenges. This study critically analyses the structural and philosophical dimensions of poverty within Nigeria, highlighting how poor leadership and dysfunctional economic systems have fostered power imbalances, marginalisation, unemployment, systemic corruption, and moral decay. Addressing poverty comprehensively is imperative for Nigeria to achieve sustainable development and social stability. This article explores the root causes of poverty through relevant theoretical lenses, evaluates the implications of poverty on peace and development, and investigates emerging trends that necessitate innovative policy interventions.

Keywords: Nigeria, Poverty, Trending, Problem, Solution

1.   INTRODUCTION

Poverty in Nigeria has intensified markedly over the past two decades, despite the country's vast natural resources and economic potential. At the heart of this persistent crisis lies the failure of sustained economic growth, driven largely by endemic corruption, political instability, and protracted internal conflicts. These factors have

stifled job creation and economic opportunity, forcing a significant portion of Nigeria's youth to seek livelihoods abroad. Consequently, the country suffers a debilitating loss of human capital an essential driver of development. Compared to its regional peers Nigeria's economic performance remains disappointing, with stagnant per capita income levels that belie its resource wealth.

Accurate and current data on poverty in Nigeria remain elusive. Official sources such as the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, and Central Bureau of Statistics provide outdated and fragmented information, while reports from international organizations like the World Bank and African Development Bank offer only broad and often outdated insights particularly insufficient given the evolving nature of Nigeria's complex socio-political crises. Although numerous micro- and macroeconomic studies exist, they have yet to be fully integrated into a comprehensive understanding of Nigeria's poverty dynamics.

Poverty measurement in Nigeria traditionally relies on head-count ratios and income-gap analyses, yet these methods fail to capture the deeper structural and socio-political dimensions of poverty. As Oladeji (2011) rightly emphasizes, "a poverty line cannot be defined in a vacuum, but only in relation to a particular society at a particular date." Despite the proliferation of poverty reduction frameworks aligned with global initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals (UNDP, 2000), the effectiveness of such strategies is limited by their failure to address Nigeria's unique structural challenges. Past assessments (DFID, 2013; World Bank, 2011; Bruno, Ravallion, and Squire, 1998) offer valuable comparative insights but fall short of providing sustainable, context-specific solutions grounded in Nigeria's socio-political realities.

Politically, Nigeria's development is hampered by weak institutional frameworks and governance deficits. Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, five National Assembly election cycles have failed to produce effective constitutional reforms or coherent strategies to tackle poverty and inequality. The critical questions remain largely unanswered: How do poverty and inequality shape political party agendas and growth

trajectories? To what extent do policy proposals in party manifestos address income distribution and poverty reduction?

This paper addresses two fundamental questions. First, what are the root causes of poverty in Nigeria, and which theoretical frameworks best explain its persistence? Second, what challenges does poverty pose to sustainable development and social peace, and how do recent trends influence the search for viable solutions? Understanding the causes of poverty is a prerequisite for any meaningful intervention. Without a rigorous and context-sensitive diagnosis, policy prescriptions risk being superficial or ineffective.

Moreover, prevailing analyses of Nigerian poverty are often constrained by outdated assumptions and Eurocentric perspectives. Dominated by orthodox economic paradigms that emphasize technical solutions and market-driven development, many studies neglect the socio-political complexities and historical legacies unique to Nigeria. Some interpretations reduce poverty to ethnic or "primitive" conflicts, dismissing systemic governance failures and structural inequities as root causes (Egwu, no date). This paper challenges such reductionist views, arguing that overcoming Nigeria's poverty crisis requires moving beyond conventional frameworks toward a nuanced understanding that centers governance, institutional integrity, and socio-political inclusion. This study calls for a critical reevaluation of Nigeria's poverty problem through a multidimensional lens, one that integrates political economy, governance, and social justice to inform sustainable development and peacebuilding efforts.

2. SETTING THE CONTEXT: WEAPONISATION OF POVERTY IN NIGERIA

In the post-colonial era, the adoption of neoliberal economic policies has blurred and at times created the divide between living standards and formal politics in Nigeria. Structural adjustment programs, heavily influenced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, triggered currency devaluation, drastic cuts in public services, and the erosion of political patronage networks. Paradoxically, these reforms also coincided with rising corruption, exacerbating economic hardship for millions. The Nigerian government faces the daunting task of providing equitable opportunities to a

rapidly growing population amid widespread social tensions and insecurity largely fueled by poverty.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2014), an alarming 112.5 million Nigerians approximately 69 percent of the population, live below the relative poverty line. This figure is projected to rise further, potentially reaching 71.5 percent if recent anti-poverty initiatives fail to take effect. These estimates are based on a comprehensive survey covering over 20 million households and utilize multiple poverty measurement approaches, including relative, absolute, dollar-per-day, and subjective measures. Across all metrics, poverty in Nigeria is on an upward trajectory.

Regional disparities are stark. The North-West and North-East zones record the highest poverty rates, at 77.7 percent and 76.3 percent respectively, while the South-West fares comparatively better at 59.1 percent. Among states, Sokoto registers the highest poverty prevalence at 86.4 percent, contrasting sharply with Niger State's 43.6 percent. Vulnerable populations including orphans, street children, persons living with HIV/AIDS, unemployed youth, retrenched workers, and displaced persons bear the brunt of this crisis, lacking access to fundamental needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, and justice.

Poverty's rise has fueled growing income inequality, with the Gini coefficient increasing from 0.43 in 2004 to 0.49 in 2009. This disparity reflects uneven access to infrastructure and public services, disproportionately disadvantaging rural communities. Nigeria's economic structure plays a significant role: while oil exports contribute about 15 percent to GDP and form the backbone of government revenue, they employ only a small fraction of the workforce. Conversely, agriculture accounts for roughly 45 percent of GDP and employs nearly 90 percent of the rural population, yet remains under-resourced and inefficient.

Political instability and weak governance have hindered the consolidation of democratic institutions, perpetuating social and economic instability (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998). Notably, poverty poses a greater threat to Nigerian lives than armed conflict; hunger alone claims thousands of lives annually (Ogunbiyi, 2014). Despite regional

initiatives such as the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), Nigeria remains marginalized in international forums, with poverty widely recognized as a key factor underpinning its domestic and global challenges.

Moreover, poverty and inequality in rapidly growing developing countries like Nigeria impose significant environmental burdens. Impoverished populations often inhabit fragile ecological zones, compelled to overexploit croplands, forests, fisheries, and water resources just to survive. Overcrowding on arable land has forced many to migrate to marginal areas, where ecological vulnerability is high. In Nigeria, the number of people living on fragile land has doubled over the past fifty years to approximately 1.3 million. These fragile zones, covering 73 percent of Nigeria's landmass, are highly susceptible to degradation, erosion, flooding, fires, landslides, and climate change impacts (Akerele & Adewuyi, 2011).

The relationship between poverty and environmental degradation is cyclical poverty drives unsustainable resource use, which in turn worsens poverty. Today, over half of Nigeria's population survives on less than $2 a day, while globally, more than one billion people live on less than $1.25 daily. Although the absolute number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide has decreased from 1.5 to 1.1 billion in the last two decades, Nigeria's population growth continues to exacerbate the problem.

In several Nigerian regions, particularly in the North-East and South-South, extreme poverty has more than doubled since the 1980s. Over 1.1 million Nigerians rely directly on agriculture, forestry, and fisheries for their livelihoods, sectors vulnerable to environmental degradation and resource competition (Aigbokhan, 2000). The poorest Nigerians often reside on degraded, marginal lands around 40 percent live in arid or semi-arid zones where access to environmental goods and services is severely limited. Nearly 55 percent of Nigeria's least developed states partially or wholly lie within these fragile ecological zones (Aigbokhan, 2000).

In the South-South states, poverty has been a major driver of environmental degradation, with survival imperatives leading to unsustainable exploitation. The poorest communities are also disproportionately affected by conflicts triggered or worsened by environmental

stress, often becoming environmental refugees. This vicious cycle threatens Nigeria's peace and stability, as poverty fuels ecological destruction and vice versa. For example, deforestation in the Niger Delta has degraded biodiversity and contributed to global warming.

Furthermore, in an increasingly interconnected world, the public health consequences of poverty-driven environmental degradation are global. Weak early-warning systems in vulnerable Nigerian communities could facilitate the rapid spread of diseases like avian flu, posing risks far beyond national borders (Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, 2001).

3. POVERTY REDUCTION EFFORTS AND STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Efforts to reduce poverty in Nigeria have been a central focus of national development agendas, especially within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Abdu (2014) highlights that, while the MDGs provided an important impetus for poverty reduction, the context-specific challenges in Nigeria, such as weak institutional capacity, governance deficits, and socio-political instability, have limited their full realization. These challenges are compounded by the structural nature of poverty in Nigeria, where systemic inequality and economic exclusion persist despite periods of economic growth (Aigbokhan, 2000; Omotola, 2008).

Poverty in Nigeria is multifaceted, encompassing not only income deprivation but also lack of access to education, health care, and social services. Alayande and Alayande (2004) emphasize the importance of both quantitative and qualitative assessments to capture the vulnerabilities experienced by Nigerian households. Their work illustrates that poverty vulnerability is influenced by a complex interplay of socioeconomic factors, including unemployment, illiteracy, and regional disparities. Such multidimensional poverty is often concentrated in rural areas and the northern geopolitical zones, where poverty rates remain disproportionately high (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

The theoretical underpinnings of poverty in Nigeria draw from both structuralist and individualist perspectives. Bradshaw (2006) contrasts theories that see poverty as a result

of structural inequalities and systemic barriers with those that emphasise individual responsibility and behavioural factors. In Nigeria, this debate intersects with issues of governance and corruption, which exacerbate income inequality and undermine poverty alleviation efforts (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998; Olaniyan, 2005). Corruption, in particular, is cited as a major impediment to equitable growth, diverting resources away from essential public services and deepening social exclusion.

Economic growth alone has proven insufficient in alleviating poverty due to the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities. Bruno, Ravallion, and Squire (1998) argue that growth must be accompanied by policies that ensure equity to have a meaningful impact on poverty reduction. In Nigeria, despite periods of high GDP growth, poverty levels have remained stubbornly high, suggesting that growth has been neither inclusive nor pro-poor (Osinubi, 2005; DFID, 2013). This disparity is linked to Nigeria's economic structure, where the oil sector generates substantial government revenues but employs a small fraction of the population, while agriculture a major employer receives less investment and remains vulnerable (Xavier Martin and Subramanian, 2008).

Efforts to address these structural issues have been articulated through national and regional development frameworks such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD's Infrastructure Short-Term Action Plan underscores the critical role of infrastructure in fostering economic growth and reducing poverty, but progress has been uneven and hampered by governance challenges (NEPAD, 2004). Legislative responses to poverty have also been proposed, but Egwu (no date) points to a need for stronger policy coherence and implementation mechanisms to translate legal frameworks into tangible outcomes.

Historically, the underdevelopment of Nigeria and Africa more broadly has roots in imperial and colonial exploitation, as articulated by Rodney (1972) and Galtung (1971). This legacy shapes contemporary poverty dynamics, with Nigeria still grappling with structural dependency and global marginalization despite its resource wealth (Thomas, 2012; Olaniyan, 2005). Consequently, sustainable poverty reduction in Nigeria requires

holistic approaches that address governance, economic diversification, social inclusion, and empowerment of vulnerable populations (Omotola, 2008; Oriola, 2009).

While poverty reduction remains a declared priority, Nigeria's experience reflects the complex interaction of economic, political, and social factors that sustain poverty. Addressing these requires integrated strategies that combine economic growth with equity-focused policies, institutional reforms, and targeted social interventions.

4. GOVERNANCE, CORRUPTION, AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN POVERTY REDUCTION

Good governance stands at the core of effective poverty reduction strategies, as it influences the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of policies aimed at improving living standards. In Nigeria, however, governance challenges remain significant obstacles to meaningful progress. Corruption, in particular, has been deeply entrenched in the political and administrative systems, weakening institutions and diverting public resources from poverty alleviation programs to private interests (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998). This systemic corruption not only reduces the funds available for social services but also exacerbates income inequality by disproportionately favoring the elite, who are already economically advantaged (Olaniyan, 2005).

The underdevelopment of Nigeria by its own elite, as argued by Olaniyan (2005), has historical roots tied to colonial legacies and post-independence governance failures. This has resulted in a state structure that frequently prioritizes rent-seeking behaviors over public welfare. Despite Nigeria's vast natural resources and oil wealth, the benefits have not translated into widespread economic development or improved living conditions for the majority of the population. Instead, these resources have often fueled corruption and elite capture, leaving large segments of the population mired in poverty (Rodney, 1972; Xavier Martin and Subramanian, 2008).

Compounding this is the challenge of weak institutional capacity. Abdu (2014) highlights that, Nigeria's institutions often lack the robustness and transparency necessary to implement anti-poverty policies effectively. Corruption scandals, poor financial management, and bureaucratic inefficiencies are widespread, undermining the delivery

of essential services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. This implementation gap is a critical factor explaining why numerous well-designed poverty alleviation programs fail to produce tangible results (Egwu, no date; Omotola, 2008).

Furthermore, Nigeria's economic structure heavily dependent on oil revenue poses unique governance challenges. As Xavier Martin and Subramanian (2008) discuss, this "natural resource curse" has created economic volatility and weakened incentives to diversify the economy. The oil sector, while contributing significantly to government revenues and about 15% of GDP, employs only a small fraction of the population, leaving the majority reliant on agriculture and informal sectors, which are often underfunded and poorly supported (DFID, 2013). This imbalance limits employment opportunities and contributes to persistent rural poverty, especially as social investments remain inadequate.

International development agencies and financial institutions have played a controversial role in Nigeria's poverty landscape. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) promoted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s, while intended to stabilize the economy, often resulted in austerity measures that cut social spending and exacerbated poverty (Abdu, 2014). Nonetheless, multilateral organizations have also contributed to infrastructure projects and governance reforms aligned with initiatives like the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which aims to foster regional integration and sustainable development (NEPAD, 2004; World Bank, 2011). The challenge remains in balancing external influence with Nigeria's sovereign policy needs.

Addressing corruption and improving governance require comprehensive reforms. These include strengthening democratic institutions to enhance accountability, increasing transparency in public finance, and empowering civil society organizations to hold government actors accountable (Galtung, 1971). Anti-corruption agencies need to be independent and well-resourced, while political will at the highest levels must support these efforts for sustainable change. Moreover, tackling governance deficits must

consider Nigeria's geopolitical and historical context, including the lingering effects of imperialism and global economic inequalities (Thomas, 2012).

The persistence of poverty in Nigeria cannot be divorced from the realities of governance failures and corruption. Without significant institutional reforms and improved policy implementation, poverty reduction initiatives will remain fragmented and largely ineffective. Real progress depends on creating an enabling environment where public resources are managed transparently, policies are executed efficiently, and the benefits of Nigeria's wealth reach its most vulnerable populations.

5. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND SOCIAL PROTECTION AS PATHWAYS TO POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

Addressing poverty in Nigeria requires more than just tackling governance and corruption; it necessitates a fundamental restructuring of the economy and robust social protection systems to cushion the vulnerable. Economic diversification has been widely recognized as a critical strategy to reduce Nigeria's over-reliance on oil revenues and create inclusive growth that benefits a broader segment of the population (Xavier Martin and Subramanian, 2008). The concentration of wealth and government revenue in the oil sector has perpetuated economic volatility and constrained job creation, particularly in rural areas where poverty is most entrenched (DFID, 2013).

Agriculture remains the backbone of Nigeria's economy, employing approximately 90% of the rural population and contributing about 45% to GDP (DFID, 2013). Despite this, the sector suffers from underinvestment, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to modern technology, which restrict productivity and income generation. Revitalizing agriculture through improved extension services, better access to credit, and market integration could significantly enhance rural livelihoods and food security, thereby reducing poverty levels (Oriola, 2009). Moreover, diversification into manufacturing, services, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) offers promising avenues for employment and sustainable economic development (Osinubi, 2005).

Parallel to economic diversification is the imperative of strengthening social protection frameworks. Aigbokhan (2000) notes that social safety nets are essential in protecting

the poor from shocks such as illness, crop failure, or economic downturns, which can push vulnerable households deeper into poverty. Nigeria has made some efforts to design and implement social welfare programs; however, these initiatives have often been fragmented, poorly funded, and marred by inadequate targeting and corruption (Abdu, 2014). Effective social protection programs should be inclusive, comprehensive, and adapted to Nigeria's diverse socio-economic contexts to ensure they reach marginalized groups, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to integrate poverty reduction into broader human development frameworks. Omotola (2008) argues that sustainable poverty alleviation depends on improving access to education, healthcare, housing, and clean water areas where public investment has historically lagged. Human capital development through education and skill acquisition can empower individuals to participate more fully in the economy and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty. In addition, promoting gender equality and empowering women economically are vital, as women disproportionately bear the brunt of poverty and often have less access to productive resources (Abdu, 2014).

Nigeria's policy environment has seen some positive shifts with initiatives like the National Social Investment Programmes (NSIP), which include cash transfers, youth empowerment, and food security programs designed to support vulnerable populations. While promising, the success of these programs hinges on transparent governance, effective monitoring, and community participation to ensure sustainability and impact (Egwu, no date).

Furthermore, regional disparities must be addressed to achieve equitable poverty reduction. The persistent poverty in northern states, compared to relatively lower levels in the south-west, highlights the need for targeted interventions sensitive to local conditions (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Infrastructure development, such as roads, electricity, and communication networks, is also crucial in connecting rural areas to markets and services, thereby fostering economic opportunities and social inclusion (NEPAD, 2004).

Economic diversification and social protection are complementary pillars in Nigeria's fight against poverty. Achieving meaningful progress requires coordinated efforts across government sectors, private industry, and civil society. Policies must be evidence-based, inclusive, and adaptable to the country's complex socio-political realities. Without such comprehensive strategies, poverty remains a persistent challenge that undermines Nigeria's development aspirations.

5. THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT AID IN NIGERIA'S POVERTY REDUCTION EFFORTS

International partnerships and development aid have long played a significant role in supporting Nigeria's poverty reduction agenda. Nigeria's engagement with multilateral organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the United Nations, alongside bilateral partnerships with developed countries, has brought both financial resources and technical expertise aimed at enhancing economic growth and social welfare (World Bank, 2011; Abdu, 2014). These collaborations have helped shape policies, build institutional capacity, and fund critical infrastructure projects, contributing to efforts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and subsequently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have provided a global framework that aligns international support with Nigeria's national development priorities. Abdu (2014) highlights that the MDGs spurred increased focus on poverty reduction, education, maternal health, and gender equality. Nigeria made notable progress in some of these areas, but challenges such as inadequate funding, poor coordination, and governance deficits constrained the full realization of these goals. The transition to the SDGs presents an opportunity to build on these foundations with a broader and more integrated approach that emphasizes inclusiveness and sustainability.

Development aid has also contributed to strengthening social sectors, particularly in health and education. For example, initiatives addressing HIV/AIDS, malaria, and child mortality have benefited from global partnerships and funding mechanisms (Thomas,

2012). Such programs not only improve immediate wellbeing but also enhance the productive capacity of the population, which is essential for long-term poverty alleviation. However, there remains concern about the dependency on external aid and the need to develop endogenous capacities that can sustain development efforts independently (Rodney, 1972; Egwu, no date).

Furthermore, aid effectiveness is often undermined by issues of corruption, mismanagement, and political instability within Nigeria (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998; Olaniyan, 2005). This calls for stronger governance reforms to ensure transparency and accountability in the utilization of both domestic and foreign resources. The concept of 'aid conditionality' has been criticized for sometimes prioritizing donor interests over local needs, highlighting the importance of partnerships that respect Nigeria's sovereignty and promote mutual benefit (Galtung, 1971).

Nigeria's participation in continental initiatives such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) underscores the role of regional cooperation in poverty reduction. NEPAD's emphasis on infrastructure development, governance reform, and economic integration complements national efforts and attracts additional international support (NEPAD, 2004). Yet, the success of these programs depends on Nigeria's commitment to reform and the capacity to implement agreed strategies effectively.

International partnerships and development aid remain vital in Nigeria's poverty reduction landscape. Their impact, however, is contingent on addressing governance challenges, fostering local ownership of development agendas, and ensuring that aid aligns with Nigeria's unique socio-economic context. Strengthening these dimensions will enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation in supporting sustainable poverty reduction and inclusive growth.

6.   CHALLENGES TO POVERTY REDUCTION AND FUTURE POLICY DIRECTIONS

Despite numerous efforts and policy frameworks aimed at poverty alleviation, Nigeria continues to face significant challenges that impede meaningful progress. A major obstacle is the persistence of structural issues such as weak governance, corruption, and

inadequate institutional capacity. As noted by Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme (1998) and Olaniyan (2005), corruption remains a systemic problem that undermines public trust, distorts resource allocation, and limits the effective delivery of social services. This environment reduces the impact of poverty reduction programs, often diverting funds away from intended beneficiaries.

In addition, Nigeria's economic structure presents unique challenges. The country's heavy dependence on oil revenues contributes to economic volatility, vulnerability to global price shocks, and neglect of other productive sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing (Xavier Martin and Subramanian, 2008). This economic concentration limits broad-based growth and employment opportunities, exacerbating income inequality and regional disparities (Aigbokhan, 2000). Rural areas, in particular, remain disadvantaged due to limited infrastructure, poor access to education and healthcare, and insufficient investment.

The demographic dynamics of Nigeria also complicate poverty reduction efforts. With one of the fastest-growing populations globally, the demand for jobs, education, and social services is escalating rapidly (Abdu, 2014). This population pressure intensifies competition for limited resources, contributing to urban overcrowding and increased vulnerability among the youth. Youth unemployment remains high, fueling social unrest and insecurity, which further disrupts development initiatives (Egwu, no date).

Moreover, the multidimensional nature of poverty in Nigeria demands holistic and integrated policy responses. Poverty is not only about income deficiency but also involves poor health, limited education, and lack of access to basic services (Oladeji, 2011). Policy interventions thus need to address these multiple dimensions simultaneously, moving beyond short-term relief to sustainable empowerment and capacity building (Omotola, 2008).

Looking ahead, future policy directions must emphasize strengthening governance structures to enhance transparency and accountability. Institutional reforms that reduce corruption and improve public service delivery are essential to rebuild citizen confidence and ensure efficient use of resources (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998). Diversifying

the economy by investing in agriculture, manufacturing, and small and medium enterprises can create jobs and reduce dependence on oil (Xavier Martin and Subramanian, 2008).

Furthermore, targeted social protection programs tailored to vulnerable groups such as women, children, and rural populations are critical for reducing poverty and inequality (Alayande and Alayande, 2004). Enhancing education and healthcare systems will improve human capital, enabling individuals to participate more effectively in economic activities.

Finally, embracing technological innovations and data-driven policy making can enhance monitoring and evaluation of poverty reduction programs, ensuring adaptive and evidence-based approaches (DFID, 2013). Regional cooperation and partnerships, such as those fostered by NEPAD, should continue to play a supportive role in mobilizing resources and sharing best practices (NEPAD, 2004).

Overcoming the challenges to poverty reduction in Nigeria requires coordinated efforts across multiple sectors, robust governance, and sustained political commitment. By addressing structural weaknesses and adopting inclusive policies, Nigeria can make significant strides toward reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development.

7. SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

In response to the entrenched and multifaceted nature of poverty, Nigeria has implemented various social protection programs and poverty alleviation strategies aimed at improving the livelihoods of its vulnerable populations. These initiatives range from conditional cash transfers and public works programs to targeted subsidies and support for agriculture and small-scale entrepreneurship (Abdu, 2014; Omotola, 2008).

One of the flagship programs is the National Social Investment Program (NSIP), launched by the Nigerian government to address poverty and social exclusion through multiple components such as the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFP), and the Government Enterprise and

Empowerment Program (GEEP). The CCT component provides direct cash transfers to poor households under the condition that children attend school and receive health check-ups, aiming to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty through investments in human capital (Abdu, 2014). Similarly, the NHGSFP supports school attendance and nutrition for millions of children, while creating demand for locally produced food, thereby stimulating the agricultural sector (Oriola, 2009).

Despite these well-intended programs, their impact has been mixed due to challenges in targeting, implementation, and sustainability. Issues such as inaccurate beneficiary identification, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and limited funding have undermined the reach and effectiveness of social protection efforts (Egwu, no date). Furthermore, there is often inadequate integration of social protection with broader economic and development policies, limiting the programs' potential to foster long-term resilience and self-reliance (Olaniyan, 2005).

The agricultural sector remains a critical focus for poverty alleviation in Nigeria, given its role as a primary source of livelihood for the majority of the rural poor. Programs aimed at improving agricultural productivity, access to credit, and extension services are crucial for enhancing food security and raising incomes (Aigbokhan, 2000; Akerele and Adewuyi, 2011). For instance, initiatives supporting smallholder farmers through provision of subsidized inputs and improved market access have shown promise in boosting productivity and reducing rural poverty (DFID, 2013).

Microfinance and entrepreneurship development also constitute essential strategies for poverty reduction. Microfinance institutions provide credit and financial services to low-income households and small enterprises that are typically excluded from formal banking systems (Olaniyan, 2005). When effectively managed, these services can empower individuals, particularly women and youth, to engage in income-generating activities and improve their economic status (Bradshaw, 2006).

In addition, community-driven development approaches have been recognized for their ability to involve local populations in designing and implementing poverty reduction interventions that are culturally relevant and context-specific (Bruno, Ravallion, and

Squire, 1998). These approaches emphasize participatory governance, capacity building, and social capital, which are crucial for sustainable development outcomes.

International partnerships and donor support have also played a role in enhancing Nigeria's poverty reduction agenda. Programs aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have mobilized resources and technical expertise, although alignment with national priorities remains a continuing challenge (Abdu, 2014; NEPAD, 2004). While Nigeria has made notable efforts to deploy social protection and poverty alleviation strategies, significant gaps remain. Enhancing program coordination, targeting accuracy, and sustainability, alongside strengthening institutional capacities and promoting inclusive economic growth, are vital for maximizing the impact of these interventions.

8. GOVERNANCE, CORRUPTION, AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES IN POVERTY REDUCTION

Effective governance and strong institutions are critical for the successful implementation of poverty reduction policies and programs in Nigeria. However, governance challenges, including widespread corruption, weak institutional capacity, and policy inconsistencies, have significantly hampered efforts to alleviate poverty and promote equitable development (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998; Olaniyan, 2005).

Corruption remains a pervasive problem that undermines public trust, diverts resources away from essential social services, and exacerbates income inequality. Studies have shown that corruption negatively impacts poverty reduction by distorting the allocation of resources and weakening the effectiveness of government programs (Gupta, Davoodi, and Terme, 1998). This "elite capture" of public funds often results in inadequate funding for critical sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure, which are vital for improving living standards among the poor (Olaniyan, 2005).

Institutional weaknesses also affect the design and implementation of poverty reduction strategies. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of transparency, and poor coordination among government agencies create bottlenecks that delay or dilute the impact of development initiatives (Egwu, no date). Additionally, political instability and frequent

policy reversals undermine long-term planning and the continuity of poverty alleviation programs (Omotola, 2008).

The legacy of colonialism and structural adjustment programs has also shaped Nigeria's governance landscape in ways that complicate poverty reduction. Rodney (1972) argues that colonial policies disrupted indigenous systems of governance and economic self-reliance, leading to structural underdevelopment that continues to constrain growth and equity. Meanwhile, neoliberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, influenced by international financial institutions, promoted austerity and market liberalization policies that often neglected social protection and widened inequalities (Galtung, 1971; Bruno, Ravallion, and Squire, 1998).

To address these governance challenges, there is a growing emphasis on strengthening institutions through reforms that promote accountability, transparency, and citizen participation. The implementation of anti-corruption measures, improved public financial management, and decentralization of governance can enhance the responsiveness of policies to local needs (Egwu, no date; Abdu, 2014).

Furthermore, effective governance requires alignment between national poverty reduction frameworks and international development agendas, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Coordinated efforts that involve multiple stakeholders, including civil society, private sector, and international partners, are essential for mobilizing resources and ensuring inclusive development (Thomas Weiss, 2012; NEPAD, 2004). Overcoming governance and institutional challenges is paramount for Nigeria to translate its poverty reduction policies into meaningful outcomes. Enhancing political will, improving institutional capacity, and fostering a culture of good governance will be instrumental in breaking the cycle of poverty and promoting sustainable development.

9. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS PATHWAYS TO POVERTY REDUCTION

Nigeria's heavy dependence on oil revenue has long been recognized as a significant obstacle to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction. Despite oil contributing

about 15% of GDP and a large portion of government revenue, it employs only a small fraction of the population, leading to limited broad-based economic benefits (DFID, 2013; Xavier Martin and Subramanian, 2008). This overreliance on oil exposes the economy to volatile global oil prices, which can trigger fiscal instability and economic shocks that disproportionately affect the poor.

To address these challenges, economic diversification is critical. Diversifying Nigeria's economy involves expanding and strengthening other sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, services, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which have the potential to generate employment and improve income distribution (Aigbokhan, 2000; Osinubi, 2005). Agriculture, in particular, remains the backbone of rural livelihoods, contributing approximately 45% of GDP and employing close to 90% of the rural population (DFID, 2013). However, the sector faces challenges such as low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to finance, which hinder its potential to drive poverty reduction.

Sustainable development approaches emphasize balancing economic growth with social inclusion and environmental protection. In Nigeria, integrating sustainable development into poverty reduction strategies means investing in human capital, improving access to quality education and healthcare, and promoting environmentally friendly practices (Akerele & Adewuyi, 2011; Oriola, 2009). It also involves addressing climate change impacts, which disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, particularly smallholder farmers whose livelihoods depend on natural resources (Abdu, 2014).

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has outlined the importance of infrastructure development as a key enabler of economic diversification and poverty alleviation. Improved transportation, energy supply, and communication infrastructure can enhance productivity, reduce costs, and expand access to markets (NEPAD, 2004). Investments in renewable energy and sustainable agricultural technologies can further promote resilience and long-term development.

Moreover, inclusive economic policies that promote equitable growth are essential to reduce poverty. Policies aimed at improving access to credit, fostering entrepreneurship,

and supporting microfinance institutions can empower marginalized groups, including women and youth, to participate more actively in the economy (Abdu, 2014; Oladeji, 2011). The role of the private sector in creating jobs and driving innovation is also increasingly recognized as a critical factor in sustainable poverty reduction.

Economic diversification combined with sustainable development strategies offers a viable pathway to reducing poverty in Nigeria. By broadening the economic base, enhancing human capital, and promoting environmental sustainability, Nigeria can create more inclusive growth that reaches the most vulnerable populations and builds resilience against future shocks.

10.   THE ROLE OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN POVERTY REDUCTION

Agriculture remains the backbone of Nigeria's economy and a critical sector in the fight against poverty, especially in rural areas where the majority of the poor reside. Despite its significant contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) — approximately 45 percent — agriculture continues to face numerous challenges that limit its potential to drive sustainable development and reduce poverty (DFID, 2013; Aigbokhan, 2000). Addressing these challenges through comprehensive rural development policies is essential for improving livelihoods and ensuring food security.

Most rural Nigerians depend on smallholder farming, fisheries, and forestry for their livelihoods, yet these activities are often constrained by low productivity, inadequate infrastructure, limited access to credit, and vulnerability to environmental degradation and climate change (Oriola, 2009; Akerele & Adewuyi, 2011). Poor rural infrastructure, such as roads, irrigation, and storage facilities, impedes market access, increases post-harvest losses, and raises the cost of agricultural inputs and outputs.

Moreover, land tenure insecurity and fragmented landholdings discourage investment in sustainable agricultural practices and improvements in farm productivity. This situation exacerbates rural poverty by limiting farmers' ability to secure loans or engage in commercial agriculture (Alayande & Alayande, 2004). Additionally, youth

unemployment and urban migration from rural areas further weaken the agricultural workforce, reducing the sector's capacity to generate inclusive growth.

Environmental challenges, including soil erosion, desertification, and flooding, threaten the sustainability of agricultural production in many Nigerian states, especially in fragile ecological zones (Akerele & Adewuyi, 2011). These challenges are compounded by climate variability, which increases the frequency of extreme weather events, adversely affecting crop yields and food availability.

Government policies aimed at revitalizing agriculture have often been fragmented and poorly implemented, with limited focus on smallholder farmers and rural communities (NEPAD, 2004). To achieve meaningful poverty reduction, policy interventions must prioritize increasing access to agricultural extension services, credit facilities, improved seeds, and modern technologies, alongside enhancing rural infrastructure and market linkages.

Sustainable rural development should also emphasize diversification of rural economies to reduce overdependence on agriculture, incorporating agro-processing, small-scale industries, and services that can create additional employment opportunities (Abdu, 2014). Empowering rural women, who constitute a significant portion of the agricultural labor force, is vital for ensuring equitable growth and enhancing food security (Oriola, 2009).

In essence, agricultural development, supported by coherent rural policies and effective governance, has the potential to transform rural Nigeria. By increasing productivity and incomes, reducing vulnerability to environmental shocks, and fostering inclusive economic opportunities, agriculture can serve as a powerful tool for poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

11. GOVERNANCE, CORRUPTION, AND THEIR IMPACT ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGERIA

Effective governance is a cornerstone for meaningful poverty reduction, yet Nigeria continues to struggle with institutional weaknesses and entrenched corruption that

undermine development efforts (Gupta, Davoodi, & Terme, 1998; Olaniyan, 2005). Corruption diverts crucial public resources away from poverty alleviation programs, resulting in inadequate funding for vital sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure, and social welfare (Egwu, no date). These sectors are essential to improving the quality of life for Nigeria's vast population living under the poverty line.

Political patronage and clientelism distort governance by promoting loyalty over merit and need, thereby weakening policy design and implementation aimed at addressing poverty and inequality (Galtung, 1971). This patronage system entrenches exclusion, preventing equitable access to opportunities and resources for the most vulnerable groups. As a result, many poverty reduction initiatives remain superficial, benefiting only a few while leaving the majority marginalized.

Policy inconsistency and weak institutional capacity further complicate Nigeria's poverty challenge. Frequent political transitions often lead to abrupt changes in priorities and the abandonment of long-term development strategies (Abdu, 2014). Without sustained commitment, anti-poverty programs suffer from underfunding, poor monitoring, and lack of accountability.

International development agencies, including the World Bank, have emphasized governance reforms as a prerequisite for effective poverty reduction, linking financial assistance to improvements in transparency, rule of law, and public sector management (World Bank, 2011). Despite these efforts, progress has been slow, highlighting the need for stronger political will and systemic reform within Nigeria's governance structures.

Decentralization offers a pathway to improved governance by empowering local governments to better understand and respond to community-specific poverty dynamics (Egwu, no date). However, decentralization must be accompanied by mechanisms that ensure accountability, transparency, and citizen participation to prevent local-level corruption and mismanagement.

Nigeria's persistent poverty crisis cannot be resolved without addressing the governance deficits that enable corruption and policy failure. Building transparent, accountable institutions and dismantling patronage networks are essential steps toward ensuring that

economic growth translates into equitable social development. Only then can poverty reduction initiatives achieve their full potential and contribute to lasting peace and stability in Nigeria.

12. CONCLUSION

Poverty in Nigeria is a multifaceted challenge deeply intertwined with economic, environmental, social, and political factors. Despite Nigeria's abundant natural resources and periods of economic growth, widespread poverty persists due to structural inequalities, environmental degradation, and governance failures. Vulnerable populations continue to face barriers in accessing basic needs such as food, education, healthcare, and employment, while income inequality widens.

Environmental stressors like land degradation and resource scarcity exacerbate the poverty crisis, especially for rural communities reliant on agriculture and natural resources. Moreover, poverty fuels social tensions and undermines peace, making poverty reduction not only an economic imperative but also a critical component of national security.

Sustainable poverty alleviation in Nigeria requires a holistic approach that integrates economic reforms, environmental management, social protection, and strong governance. Tackling corruption and improving institutional capacity are crucial to ensuring that resources reach those most in need. Strengthening local governance and promoting inclusive policies can bridge the gap between government initiatives and grassroots realities. Nigeria's path to reducing poverty demands coordinated efforts by government, civil society, development partners, and communities themselves. Through transparent governance, equitable growth, and targeted interventions, Nigeria can transform its socio-economic landscape, reduce poverty, and build a more just and peaceful society.

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Divided Chambers, Fractured Governance: Rethinking Senate–House Relations in Nigeria's National Assembly

Anthonia Hafunjoh OKONYE[1], Seun BAMIDELE[2], Omotola Charles OLUSANYA[3] and Muyideen Lawal JIMOH[4]

[1,3,4] Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution,
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

[2]Department of Peace and Conflict Studies
Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria

Corresponding Email: aokonye@noun.edu.ng

Abstract

Nigeria's bicameral legislature, designed to balance representation and enhance democratic governance, has been repeatedly undermined by deep-rooted conflict between the Senate and the House of Representatives. Rather than functioning as complementary arms of lawmaking, the two chambers are frequently entangled in rivalry, power tussles, and institutional friction. This paper argues that the persistent disunity between the Senate and House of Representatives severely weakens Nigeria's legislative capacity, obstructs policy coherence, and contributes to democratic stagnation. The relationship between the two chambers is often shaped more by individual ambition and party politics than by national interest or constitutional purpose. These internal conflicts manifest in duplicated debates, contradictory resolutions, and a breakdown of legislative coordination, resulting in governance delays and public disillusionment. Furthermore, the opaque nature of intra-legislative negotiations often conducted behind closed doors raises questions about transparency, accountability, and the legitimacy of parliamentary outcomes. This paper contends that resolving these intra-legislative tensions requires more than institutional etiquette; it demands structural reform, a deliberate shift toward inter-chamber cooperation, and a culture of democratic maturity. Unless this dysfunctional dynamic is addressed, Nigeria's National Assembly risks becoming a symbol of fragmentation rather than unity, one that reflects elite interests rather than national priorities. Bridging the Senate, House divide, therefore, is not merely a matter of procedural harmony, but a democratic imperative.

Keywords: Chambers, Fractured Governance, Senate–House

1.   INTRODUCTION

In every functional democracy, the legislature plays a pivotal role in lawmaking, oversight, and representation. Nigeria's National Assembly, composed of the Senate and the House of Representatives, is constitutionally structured to ensure robust deliberation and balanced governance (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, rather than acting as complementary arms of legislative governance, the Senate and House have often operated in dissonance entrenched in rivalry, political maneuvering, and power tussles (Mbah, 2014; Banjo, 2013). This paper argues that the persistent intra-legislative conflict between both chambers is symptomatic of deeper institutional flaws that threaten the integrity, efficiency, and democratic function of Nigeria's bicameral legislature.

The promise of bicameralism in emerging democracies like Nigeria is grounded in the ideals of checks, diversity of representation, and procedural accountability (Akomolede & Akomolede, 2012; Ahmad, 2016). Yet, in practice, Nigeria's National Assembly has become a theater of inter-chamber hostility, marked by overlapping jurisdictional claims, procedural delays, and political brinkmanship (Muheeb, 2017; Fashagba, 2009). Key moments from budgetary disputes to leadership crises and oversight conflicts demonstrate that institutional ego and partisan loyalties often override constitutional responsibilities (Abifarin, 2018; Basiru, 2014). The resulting paralysis not only obstructs policy progress but also fosters public disillusionment with democratic governance (Ezea, 2011; Lewis, 2009).

This breakdown in Senate–House relations can be traced to multiple factors: lack of clear legislative rules of engagement, executive interference, weak party cohesion, and a legislative culture more attuned to personal interest than collective governance (Ihemeje et al., 2016; Ladan-Baki & Enwere, 2017). Moreover, despite efforts by civil society and legal experts to reform legislative processes, systemic dysfunction continues to inhibit the Assembly's role in shaping governance outcomes (Oshio, 2019; Popoola, 2003). Scholars such as Fagbohun (2010) and Fashagba (2012) have warned that legislative

fragmentation undermines the very foundation of democratic accountability and national development.

This paper contends that resolving these intra-legislative challenges requires more than surface-level adjustments; it demands a reconceptualisation of Nigeria's legislative culture, anchored in collaboration, institutional discipline, and constitutionalism. By unpacking the structural, political, and procedural drivers of Senate–House dysfunction, the paper advances an argument for legislative reform that emphasises institutional synergy over competition and public interest over political expediency.

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Intra-Legislative Conflicts and Legislative Dysfunction in Nigeria

Intra-legislative relations particularly between bicameral chambers in presidential systems are a critical but often understudied aspect of democratic performance. In Nigeria, the relationship between the Senate and the House of Representatives has historically been marred by tension, rivalry, and dysfunction. While this internal friction is frequently dismissed as a byproduct of political immaturity or elite greed, a growing body of scholarship has begun to examine its structural and institutional roots (Mbah, 2014; Muheeb, 2017; Fashagba, 2015). These tensions, far from being isolated occurrences, represent a broader institutional malaise that hampers legislative effectiveness and democratic consolidation.

One key strand of literature locates the conflict in the foundational structure of Nigeria's bicameral legislature. The Nigerian Constitution of 1999, while establishing the Senate and House of Representatives as coequal chambers of the National Assembly, does not provide sufficient mechanisms for resolving inter-chamber disputes. Abifarin (2018) argues that the constitutional silence on dispute-resolution procedures between the two houses creates a vacuum that fosters rivalry. In situations where both chambers must concur—such as in passing bills or confirming appointments deadlocks are common, leading to legislative paralysis and weakened oversight.

Furthermore, the literature consistently emphasizes the absence of a unified legislative culture. Unlike mature democracies where bicameralism serves a complementary function, Nigeria's dual chambers often behave as separate and competing entities. According to Fashagba (2009), legislative practice in Nigeria is plagued by internal disunity, lack of coordination, and political brinkmanship. These features stem from a deep-seated mistrust, amplified by ethnic, regional, and partisan loyalties that supersede institutional solidarity. Mbah (2014) corroborates this view, noting that competition over leadership positions, committee chairmanships, and control of legislative agenda exacerbates tensions between the Senate and House.

Elite theory also offers a useful lens for interpreting this dynamic. As Ladan-Baki and Enwere (2017) note, intra-legislative conflict in Nigeria is often a manifestation of elite competition over scarce political resources. Rather than focusing on their constitutional role of lawmaking and representation, legislators are frequently preoccupied with power accumulation, patronage networks, and rent-seeking. Lewis (2009) refers to this as the "rules and rents" model of Nigerian legislative politics, wherein informal incentives and clientelist networks distort the formal legislative process. Consequently, institutional efficiency is sacrificed on the altar of elite bargaining and personal ambition.

A related theme in the literature concerns the destabilizing role of political parties. While in theory, parties are expected to foster cohesion and provide ideological direction, in practice they have served as breeding grounds for fragmentation. Odukoya (2012) and Muheeb (2016) argue that weak party discipline, absence of clear ideological platforms, and the frequent practice of party defection have turned the legislature into an arena for political instability. The lack of intra-party consensus often translates into inter-chamber conflict, as factions within the same party align with different leadership interests in the Senate and House. This weakens collective decision-making and legislative coherence.

Institutional memory and legislative professionalism have also been cited as factors compounding intra-legislative conflict. Alabi and Fashagba (2010) observe that many legislators in Nigeria lack sufficient understanding of parliamentary procedures, rules of engagement, and historical precedents. The result is a tendency toward improvisation and

confrontation rather than negotiation and compromise. Ahmadu and Ajiboye (2004) similarly emphasize the need for institutional capacity-building to professionalize the legislature and mitigate the incidence of factional wrangling.

A further body of work explores the implications of intra-legislative conflict for democratic governance and development. Tom and Attai (2014), Momodu and Matudi (2013), and Akomolede and Akomolede (2012) argue that frequent legislative crises erode public confidence in democratic institutions and obstruct the effective delivery of public goods. When legislative energy is diverted toward infighting, critical policy debates such as those on budget implementation, security, or education are either delayed or conducted perfunctorily. This dysfunction has real consequences for Nigeria's development trajectory and democratic legitimacy.

There is also an emerging recognition that the Nigerian legislature's internal discord is closely tied to its external relations, particularly with the executive. While some scholars frame executive-legislative conflicts as the primary driver of dysfunction (Dunmoye, 2005; George Oji, 2013), others suggest that the legislature's inability to present a unified front is a more fundamental issue. Alechenu (2013) argues that even when the executive is cooperative, legislative disunity can still cripple governance, as internal conflicts prevent the passage of key laws or the effective exercise of oversight powers.

The literature provides a multifaceted view of intra-legislative conflict in Nigeria. From constitutional design flaws and elite rivalry to weak party structures and limited institutional capacity, a wide array of factors contributes to the chronic dysfunction between the Senate and House of Representatives. However, most of the existing work stops short of offering a normative and structural argument for reforming Nigeria's bicameralism. This paper advances that discourse by arguing that unless legislative conflict is addressed through institutional innovation, cultural transformation, and strategic constitutional adjustments, Nigeria's democratic project will remain fragile and ineffectual.

3.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Elite Theory and Institutional Conflict Model

In explaining the persistent tensions and dysfunctional relations between the Senate and House of Representatives in Nigeria's bicameral legislature, this paper adopts two interrelated theoretical lenses: Elite Theory and the Institutional Conflict Model. These frameworks are useful in uncovering both the underlying motivations of political actors and the structural configurations of the legislative system that enable or exacerbate such conflicts.

Elite Theory

Elite Theory posits that political power is always concentrated in the hands of a small, cohesive group of elites who exercise control over decision-making, regardless of the democratic or autocratic nature of a regime. Originally developed by classical theorists such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and later expanded by C. Wright Mills and Robert Michels, the theory maintains that these elites dominate state institutions to serve their interests rather than those of the public.

In the Nigerian context, Elite Theory is highly relevant given the nature of the country's political class, which operates more as a closed network of interest-driven actors than as representatives of popular will. Within the National Assembly, elite competition plays out in fierce struggles for committee chairmanships, control over legislative resources, party nominations, and leadership positions. As Lewis (2009) and Ladan-Baki and Enwere (2017) observe, Nigerian legislators often behave more like political entrepreneurs protecting class interests than public servants advancing policy.

These elite struggles are not limited to inter-branch rivalry (i.e., with the executive), but manifest strongly in intra-branch conflicts as well particularly between the Senate and House of Representatives. This is because each chamber is populated by powerful figures with their own patronage networks and ambitions. Conflicts frequently erupt not due to policy differences, but due to competition over symbolic power, media visibility, and

influence over national narratives. For example, debates on constitutional amendments, budget oversight, or electoral reforms are often overshadowed by disputes over legislative procedure or leadership loyalty, revealing the primacy of elite self-preservation (Muheeb, 2017; Mbah, 2014).

Furthermore, the ideological orientation of legislators is often subsumed under regional, ethnic, and partisan cleavages, reinforcing elite fragmentation. Abugu (2001) and Banjo (2013) both argue that leadership crises within the National Assembly from the Anyim Pius Anyim era to more recent struggles under Bukola Saraki and Femi Gbajabiamila reflect deeper fissures within Nigeria's ruling elite class, including tensions over succession, zoning arrangements, and control of national discourse.

Thus, Elite Theory helps us see that intra-legislative conflict is not necessarily about the public good or legislative accountability. Rather, it is often a proxy for broader elite struggles, where national interest is secondary to elite consolidation of power.

Institutional Conflict Model

While Elite Theory captures the motivations behind the behavior of legislators, the Institutional Conflict Model focuses on the rules, structures, and organizational dynamics that facilitate or hinder cooperation between different organs or units within an institution. According to this model, conflicts arise when institutions are poorly designed, lack coordination mechanisms, or have ambiguous jurisdictions. As Cheibub (2012) and Dunmoye (2005) note, even well-intentioned actors can become entangled in conflict if institutional frameworks incentivize competition over collaboration.

The Nigerian National Assembly's bicameral structure lacks clear procedural integration. Though the 1999 Constitution (as amended) provides for a Senate and a House of Representatives as co-legislative bodies, it offers minimal guidance on how to harmonize their legislative outputs or resolve inter-chamber disputes outside the rare use of conference committees. This often leads to duplicated efforts, overlapping bill sponsorship, conflicting committee mandates, and procedural delays. Abifarin (2018)

highlights how such institutional vagueness has contributed to prolonged confirmation battles and legislative bottlenecks.

Moreover, the independence of each chamber in organizing its internal affairs including leadership elections, committee assignments, and legislative calendars creates silos that are prone to friction. For instance, the rivalry over which chamber has priority in initiating appropriation bills, or which chamber's version of a bill is adopted, reflects unresolved institutional tensions. Mbah (2014) argues that the lack of structured inter-chamber negotiation mechanisms makes conflict almost inevitable.

The absence of institutional memory and professional legislative bureaucracy further compounds the problem. Akomolede and Akomolede (2012) observe that frequent turnover in legislative personnel due to electoral volatility, lack of career legislative staff, and party interference erodes long-term policy coherence and undermines institutional learning. New members often lack the procedural knowledge and institutional loyalty necessary to sustain bipartisan and bicameral collaboration, thus defaulting to party or ethnic loyalties.

The model also highlights the impact of weak institutional checks and balances. While legislative oversight is constitutionally guaranteed, there are no meaningful penalties for chambers that abuse their powers or fail to cooperate. As Fashagba (2009) and Alabi and Fashagba (2010) note, this leads to a culture of legislative impunity, where chambers act with little regard for institutional integrity.

In short, the Institutional Conflict Model illustrates that intra-legislative conflict in Nigeria is as much a function of flawed institutional architecture as it is of individual ambition or elite rivalry. Structural ambiguity, overlapping authority, and procedural inefficiencies make conflict not only likely but predictable.

Synthesis of Frameworks

When combined, Elite Theory and the Institutional Conflict Model offer a nuanced, multidimensional understanding of intra-legislative tensions in Nigeria. The former

underscores the intentions and behavior of political actors, while the latter illuminates the systemic and procedural weaknesses that shape and sustain conflict.

Rather than interpreting legislative disputes as random or isolated incidents, these frameworks reveal a pattern of elite-driven contestation occurring within a legislative structure that lacks the coherence and resilience needed to mediate such tensions effectively. Addressing the intra-legislative crisis in Nigeria, therefore, requires reforms that speak to both the motivations of political elites and the institutional context in which they operate.

4. ARGUMENT AND ANALYSIS

Unmasking the Roots of Senate–House Conflict in Nigeria

The recurring conflict between Nigeria's Senate and House of Representatives is not incidental; it is systemic, symptomatic of both elite fragmentation and institutional disarticulation. Drawing from the frameworks of Elite Theory and the Institutional Conflict Model, this section argues that the friction between the two chambers is neither about legislative efficiency nor ideological divergence, but is instead rooted in struggles for political dominance, lack of structural integration, and weak institutional culture.

i. ***Leadership Battles and Elite Fragmentation****:* The leadership crisis that has often engulfed both chambers illustrates the centrality of elite competition in shaping inter-chamber antagonism. From the turbulence surrounding the election of Senator Anyim Pius Anyim as Senate President (Abugu, 2001) to the contestations between Bukola Saraki's Senate and Yakubu Dogara's House in the 8th Assembly, Nigeria's National Assembly has become a terrain of elite confrontation. These power tussles are rarely based on divergent policy positions; rather, they reflect competing elite allegiances to regional blocs, party factions, or presidential ambitions (Muheeb, 2017; Mbah, 2014). In many cases, leadership crises within one chamber trigger retaliatory moves or resistance from the other. For instance, the House of Representatives' rejection of Senate-sponsored bills or delays in harmonizing versions of critical legislation are often subtle

expressions of inter-elite tension. George Oji (2013) aptly captured this when describing executive-legislative relations as a "cat-and-mouse game," which is also mirrored in intra-legislative dynamics.

ii. ***Procedural Fragmentation and Jurisdictional Overlap****:* Beyond elite rivalry, procedural inefficiencies and ambiguous jurisdictions have entrenched structural hostility between the Senate and the House. The 1999 Constitution, while establishing a bicameral legislature, fails to clarify mechanisms for legislative coordination. The result is frequent disputes over legislative supremacy, especially in the sponsorship and transmission of bills. Abifarin (2018) notes that many executive appointments and critical budget proposals have been stalled due to unresolved disagreements between the two chambers, particularly over which constitutional primacy is initiating or concluding such matters has. The budget-making process, in particular, has become a battleground for supremacy. Cases abound where the Senate accuses the House of "padding" the budget, while the House returns the accusation, each seeking to assert its version as authoritative. Without effective mediation mechanisms such as permanent joint committees or legislative liaison offices with binding powers, these conflicts are prolonged and politically costly.

iii. ***Absence of Institutional Culture and Professionalism:*** The Nigerian legislature operates in a context where institutional memory and professionalism are weak. As Fashagba (2009) observes, legislative oversight is often treated as a partisan tool rather than a constitutional obligation. This culture permeates both chambers, where committee responsibilities are assigned based on political loyalty rather than competence or seniority. Turnover rates in both houses are high, resulting in loss of expertise, disruption in legislative continuity, and increased dependence on executive influence or external consultants (Akomolede & Akomolede, 2012). Moreover, the absence of a unifying legislative bureaucracy comprising non-partisan, career legislative staff weakens the coherence between the two chambers. Each chamber maintains its own secretariat, research units, and

support staff, with minimal cross-chamber collaboration. This institutional siloing encourages rivalry rather than unity, creating duplicative structures and conflicting outcomes in oversight, lawmaking, and budgeting (Mekoa & Okudolo, 2019).

iv. ***Party Politics and External Manipulation***: Partisan alignment or misalignment between the two chambers further exacerbates intra-legislative tensions. When the presiding officers of both chambers emerge from different party factions or through controversial election processes as seen in the Saraki-Dogara era; the likelihood of internal disharmony increases. According to Muheeb (2016), party loyalty in Nigeria's National Assembly is often fluid and opportunistic, with legislators frequently defecting or engaging in anti-party activities to secure leadership positions or committee appointments. These internal dynamics are worsened by executive interference. The presidency, in many instances, exploits divisions within the legislature to advance its interests or suppress dissent. For example, when one chamber resists an executive nomination or budget item, the other is often co-opted through political patronage to break the resistance, leading to accusations of betrayal and deepening mistrust within the legislature itself (Alechenu, 2013; Basiru, 2014).

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

The internal conflict between the Senate and the House of Representatives within Nigeria's National Assembly has far-reaching implications that go beyond institutional dysfunction; it threatens the effectiveness of democratic governance itself. In a system where the legislature is constitutionally mandated to perform key functions such as lawmaking, oversight, and representation, intra-chamber rivalry diminishes the credibility and efficiency of the legislative process. This failure creates a vacuum in leadership and coordination at the national level, stalling the delivery of public goods and services, and breeding a culture of cynicism among the electorate.

One of the most damaging outcomes of this conflict is legislative gridlock. When the two chambers fail to agree on bills, budgetary provisions, or national development plans, the result is often delays in policy implementation and weakened governmental responsiveness. As Dunmoye (2005) explains, legislative coherence is a critical pillar of democratic governance. The breakdown in inter-chamber cooperation often leads to duplicated efforts or abandoned legislation, while urgent national issues remain unaddressed due to the politicization of parliamentary responsibilities. The executive branch sometimes capitalizes on this discord, making unilateral decisions that sideline the legislature entirely, thereby disturbing the balance of powers.

In addition to creating policy paralysis, internal legislative disputes compromise the effectiveness of oversight functions. Effective oversight requires strategic coordination and consistency, especially when scrutinizing executive activities or public spending. Alabi and Fashagba (2010) note that disunity in the legislature undermines its capacity to conduct credible investigations or enforce compliance from ministries, departments, and agencies. This division often results in partisan-led probes that contradict each other, leading to public confusion and skepticism about the sincerity of anti-corruption efforts.

Beyond institutional paralysis, intra-legislative conflict erodes public trust and deepens Nigeria's democratic fragility. Citizens who observe persistent legislative bickering perceive their representatives as more concerned with political rivalry than public service. Fashagba (2012) emphasizes that such perceptions damage the social contract between citizens and the state, weakening democratic participation. Instead of being seen as a forum for national development, the National Assembly is increasingly viewed as a battleground for elite competition, fostering disengagement and voter apathy.

The symbolic power of the legislature depends not only on constitutional legitimacy but also on public perception of its unity, integrity, and seriousness. When disputes between the Senate and the House become public spectacles characterized by accusations, counter-accusations, walkouts, and media attacks the legislative institution suffers reputational damage. Lewis (2009) underscores that in new democracies like Nigeria, the institutional behavior of lawmakers greatly influences democratic consolidation.

Fragmentation within the legislature delegitimizes its authority and undermines its role as a counterweight to executive excesses.

Moreover, the internal discord weakens institutional development and professionalism within the National Assembly. Committee structures, research departments, and administrative mechanisms are frequently disrupted by political purges or factional interference. NILS (2016) reports that, such instability obstructs continuity, institutional memory, and the evolution of a robust legislative culture. Without consistent policy direction and professional capacity-building, the National Assembly struggles to function as an autonomous and effective arm of government, leaving it vulnerable to manipulation by dominant political actors.

The persistent friction between Nigeria's bicameral legislature is not just an internal issue; it reverberates across all dimensions of governance. It delays lawmaking, weakens oversight, compromises anti-corruption mechanisms, and delegitimizes democratic institutions. The need for a more harmonious, issue-based, and professionally managed relationship between both chambers is critical. As Lafenwa (2003) argues, institutional maturity is essential for the legislature to play its rightful role in nation-building. Reforms aimed at fostering collaboration, strengthening party discipline, and depersonalizing legislative processes are essential for enhancing democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

6.   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A HARMONIZED LEGISLATIVE FUTURE

To address the persistent tensions between Nigeria's Senate and House of Representatives, there is a pressing need for institutional and procedural reforms aimed at fostering synergy, professionalism, and mutual respect. The first step toward achieving this is the development of a codified framework for inter-chamber coordination. This framework should clearly outline the boundaries, responsibilities, and expectations for both chambers, particularly in areas prone to friction such as bill initiation, budgetary considerations, and legislative oversight. A standing joint committee on inter-chamber relations—composed of senior lawmakers from both chambers—could help mitigate conflict by resolving disputes before they escalate into public confrontations.

Second, there is a need to strengthen political party discipline and internal democracy. Much of the rivalry between the two chambers is fueled by factionalism and power struggles within dominant parties. As Fashagba (2015) and Muheeb (2017) point out, when political parties fail to maintain internal cohesion or enforce discipline, their legislators often pursue personal or factional interests to the detriment of institutional harmony. Political parties should enforce codes of conduct for their lawmakers, promote internal consultations, and ensure that candidates for key leadership positions in both chambers are selected based on merit, experience, and national unity considerations rather than patronage or zoning calculations.

A third recommendation is to professionalize legislative support institutions, such as the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS). Enhancing the capacity of legislative aides, researchers, and committee staff would not only improve legislative outputs but also depersonalize policy debates and reduce the reliance on personality-driven politics. Institutional memory, data-driven policymaking, and legislative continuity are more achievable when there is a well-trained and non-partisan bureaucracy supporting lawmakers. This would further insulate the legislative process from external manipulation by the executive or partisan actors.

Moreover, the institutionalization of regular joint legislative retreats and orientation programs would foster relationship-building and a culture of collaboration between members of both chambers. These programs should focus on shared legislative goals, conflict resolution skills, and the national interest. According to Mbah (2014), joint workshops and inter-chamber dialogue sessions have proven successful in tempering rivalry and promoting unified legislative agendas in the past. Reviving and sustaining such initiatives would go a long way in rebuilding trust and creating a unified institutional identity.

Equally important is the need for transparency and open communication in legislative processes. Many inter-chamber conflicts escalate due to lack of information, secrecy in leadership dealings, or exclusion of members from key decisions. Making legislative processes more participatory and transparent especially on sensitive matters like

appropriation and confirmation of appointments will encourage greater accountability and reduce suspicions. Parliamentary debates, committee reports, and legislative calendars should be made more publicly accessible to allow civil society, media, and citizens to play a watchdog role.

There is also a growing need to redefine legislative leadership roles to reflect collective responsibility rather than hierarchical dominance. Senate Presidents and Speakers must see themselves as institutional leaders not just political actors tasked with preserving legislative integrity. This calls for reforming the power structure within the National Assembly to promote inclusiveness, checks within leadership structures, and rotational committee appointments to prevent monopolization of influence.

Finally, fostering a harmonized legislative future also requires constitutional and legal amendments where necessary to clarify ambiguous provisions that create grounds for conflict. Sections relating to bill processing timelines, bicameral concurrence procedures, and oversight responsibilities need clearer definitions. Legislative reform commissions and constitutional review committees should be empowered to periodically review and modernize the workings of the legislature in line with global best practices.

7.   CONCLUSION

The recurrent tensions and institutional discord between Nigeria's Senate and House of Representatives are not merely procedural anomalies but reflective of deeper structural, political, and normative fractures within the country's legislative architecture. This paper has argued that overlapping mandates, party factionalism, weak institutional memory, and a lack of a cohesive legislative identity sustain such intra-legislative conflicts. The result is a fragmented National Assembly that struggles to function as a united front in lawmaking, oversight, and representation three functions that are central to democratic consolidation.

Through the lens of elite theory and institutional theory, it has been demonstrated that the behavior of lawmakers in both chambers often mirrors the contestations within Nigeria's broader political elite and the fragility of institutional norms. Far from being

simply turf wars or ego battles, the Senate-House rivalry signifies unresolved tensions in Nigeria's evolving democratic experience. As the National Assembly remains a key site for articulating the will of the people, such disharmony undermines legislative credibility, public trust, and governance outcomes.

Rather than dismissing these conflicts as routine political disagreements, there is a need to embrace a holistic reform approach that emphasizes collaboration, professionalism, and transparency. Institutional mechanisms ranging from codified coordination frameworks to strengthened support services can facilitate this transformation. Likewise, political parties, civil society, and development partners must play proactive roles in shaping a legislative environment grounded in collective responsibility and national interest.

Generally, a harmonized and functional bicameral legislature is not just a constitutional ideal but a democratic necessity. For Nigeria's democracy to deepen and deliver, the National Assembly must overcome its internal contradictions and emerge as a cohesive, respected, and development-oriented institution. The future of legislative governance in Nigeria lies not in the domination of one chamber over the other, but in building a partnership anchored in shared vision, mutual respect, and institutional maturity.

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Assessing the Operational Cost of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Victor OTTAH

Department of Political Science and International Relations,
University of Abuja

Corresponding Email: ottahvarry@gmail.com

Abstract

Nigeria has always aimed to dominate Africa and be a major player on the international scene through an expansive foreign policy. This study looks at the real costs of that ambition, focusing on economic, political, and security aspects. Using secondary data from 2020–2023, including budget documents, research studies, policy reports, and trusted media sources, the study explores how Nigeria manages and spends its foreign policy budget. The country spends roughly ₦34–40 billion each year to maintain embassies, diplomatic missions, and contributions to peacekeeping efforts and international organizations. While these efforts raise Nigeria's profile internationally, the benefits for everyday citizens are harder to see. Overspending, weak oversight, and prestige-focused policies often limit the impact of these investments at home. The study suggests a more strategic approach: reducing unnecessary foreign missions, improving financial accountability, and connecting international spending more directly to domestic development goals.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Operational costs, Nigeria

1.   INTRODUCTION

Foreign policy represents the set of principles and strategies through which a country interacts with other states and international institutions to protect its interests and pursue global relevance (Akinyemi, 2013). In simple terms, it is how a nation behaves "outside its borders" to secure benefits for its people at home. Every decision from joining peacekeeping missions to signing trade agreements has both benefits and costs.

Nigeria's foreign policy has long been guided by an Africa-centered perspective, commonly referred to as Afrocentrism. This approach positioned Africa at the heart of

Nigeria's international engagements, shaping the country's identity as a continental leader and a strong advocate for Pan-African solidarity. However, recent studies indicate that this focus has been gradually evolving in response to shifting national interests and the changing dynamics of the global arena (Afolabi, 2023; Enuka, 2023).

In pursuit of this vision, successive governments devoted substantial resources to supporting anti-colonial movements, funding liberation struggles, contributing to peacekeeping operations, and maintaining memberships in numerous regional and international organizations (Saliu, 2021).

While these initiatives enhanced Nigeria's diplomatic profile and strengthened its leadership image, they also imposed significant institutional, human, and financial costs. A central policy dilemma therefore emerges: how well do these broad foreign policy commitments align with Nigeria's urgent domestic concerns such as infrastructure development, security, and poverty alleviation (Akinterinwa, 2023; Ezirim, 2022)

Beyond military interventions, Nigeria continues to spend heavily on maintaining embassies and diplomatic missions worldwide, contributing financially to organizations like the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the United Nations (UN), and participating in global counterterrorism initiatives (Ogwu, 2008; Folarin, 2013).

2.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nigeria's foreign policy has traditionally been guided by an Africa-centered perspective, commonly referred to as Afrocentrism, positioning the country as a regional leader and advocate of Pan-African solidarity (Afolabi, 2023; Enuka, 2023). This orientation has historically justified active involvement in peacekeeping operations, support for liberation movements, and participation in continental organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) (Omotuyi et al., 2024).

Despite the significant economic and human costs, Nigerian leaders have continued to pursue an ambitious foreign policy agenda. During the 1990s, Nigeria, through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), deployed thousands of troops and spent approximately $8 billion in Liberia and Sierra Leone, resulting in hundreds of casualties (Obasanjo, 1999; Adebajo, 2002). Contemporary studies suggest that foreign policy spending is not only driven by strategic considerations but also by elite prestige, patronage networks, and the desire to reinforce regime legitimacy (Folarin, 2013; BudgIT, 2023). Recent budgetary controversies further highlight accountability challenges. Between 2020 and 2023, Nigeria faced scrutiny over unpaid embassy salaries, arrears, and extravagant foreign trips (Premium Times, 2021; Vanguard, 2020). In 2024, the Presidency allocated over ₦15.9 billion for local and international trips, with President Tinubu's foreign travel alone costing ₦7.63 billion, alongside over ₦1.7 billion spent on foreign currency for these trips (Punch, 2024; Punch, 2025). These expenditures, occurring amid domestic socio-economic hardships, underscore the tension between international ambition and national accountability.The persistence of high-cost foreign engagements despite domestic challenges necessitates a critical examination of Nigeria's foreign policy spending, governance mechanisms, and the extent to which such expenditures benefit the broader population versus elite interests.

3.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following specific questions:

i.   What are the major components and expenditure categories of Nigeria's foreign policy between 2020 and 2023?

ii. How efficient and transparent is the management of foreign policy expenditures between 2020 and 2023 ?

iii. To what extent do foreign policy costs impact Nigeria's domestic development priorities?

4.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this research are to:

i.   Identify the main components of Nigeria's foreign policy expenditure between 2020 and 2023

ii.   Assess the efficiency and transparency of foreign policy spending between 2020 and 2023

iii.   Evaluate the impact of foreign policy costs on selected domestic development priorities,

5.   CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Operational costs

In Nigerian foreign policy, operational costs refer to the recurrent financial commitments required to sustain the country's diplomatic presence and international engagements. These include salaries and allowances for diplomats, the upkeep of embassies and consulates, official foreign trips, and contributions to regional and global organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations (UN), and the Commonwealth.

For example, maintaining a major diplomatic mission such as the Nigerian Embassy in London typically costs between ₦4 billion and ₦8 billion annually, covering rent, utilities, staffing, and program activities (Adebajo, 2008). Nigeria's broader foreign policy ambitions have also required large expenditures, including an estimated $10 billion (over ₦8 trillion) spent on peacekeeping operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 1990s (Adebajo, 2008) and a ₦100 billion allocation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 2023 national budget (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2023).

These financial commitments play a strategic role. They help Nigeria project influence, strengthen diplomatic relationships, attract investments, and sustain regional stability. Remittances from Nigerians abroad valued at around $5 billion annually (Fawole, 2018)

also highlight the potential returns of a strong diplomatic network. However, these costs have increasingly become a subject of public scrutiny, especially when domestic sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure remain underfunded (Osuntokun, 2005). Persistent economic pressures, including the naira's depreciation, have stretched government budgets thin. Nigeria currently operates around 97 foreign missions, but many of these missions face serious funding shortfalls, resulting in unpaid rents, delayed staff salaries, and reduced consular services (Fawole, 2018). This has prompted calls for innovative cost-saving strategies such as public private partnerships, mission rationalization, and virtual diplomacy, which could help Nigeria maintain its international presence without overstretching limited resources (Akinterinwa, 2023).

Table 1: Estimated Operational Costs of Nigeria's Foreign Policy

Category	Estimated Annual Cost (₦ Billion)	Examples / Expenditure Details	Sources
Embassy & Foreign Mission Maintenance	34–40	Salaries, rent, maintenance of 110 embassies and high commissions	Punch (2021)
Foreign Trips by Government Officials	20–30	Presidential, ministerial, and parliamentary delegations; estacodes and allowances	Premium Times (2019)
Peacekeeping & Military Operations Abroad	45–55	Troop contributions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali; ECOWAS standby force operations	Ibrahim & Ibeanu (2009); Ojo (2009); AU Peace Fund (2018)
Foreign Aid & Donations	15–25	Pledges to ECOWAS, debt forgiveness to African states	Vanguard (2018); Adebajo (2008)
Contributions to International Organizations	10–20	Annual dues to UN, AU, ECOWAS, Commonwealth, OPEC	AU/ECOWAS Budget Reports (2019); UN Records
Diaspora & Cultural Diplomacy Programs	5–10	Cultural festivals, Nollywood promotion, diaspora summits	Nweke (1986); MFA Reports (2017)
Diplomatic Image & Soft Power Projects	5–8	Hosting summits, lobbying, image repair campaigns	Ogwu (2005); Anyaoku (2019)
Contingency / Emergency Expenditures	5–10	Evacuation of Nigerians during wars, pandemics, emergencies	Guardian (2020); MFA Budget (2021)

The data in Table 1 reveal that Nigeria's largest operational outlays are tied to security-related commitments, particularly peacekeeping and military operations, which cost an estimated ₦45–55 billion annually. This is followed by embassy and mission

maintenance, which consumes ₦34–40 billion each year. While foreign trips by government officials also account for significant spending, many of these expenditures are frequently criticized for lacking clear developmental returns. Notably, foreign aid, donations, and contributions to international organizations collectively absorb up to ₦45 billion, reflecting Nigeria's role as a regional "big brother" and consistent donor within Africa. In contrast, diaspora diplomacy, cultural promotion, and soft power initiatives, which could yield tangible socio-economic benefits, receive relatively modest allocations.

This spending pattern raises critical questions about efficiency and strategic prioritization. High expenditures on military interventions and maintenance of a sprawling diplomatic network may enhance Nigeria's visibility, but they do not necessarily translate into domestic welfare improvements. At the same time, the underfunded of cultural and economic diplomacy suggests missed opportunities for trade, tourism, and investment promotion. The overall picture highlights the imbalance between Nigeria's external ambitions and its fiscal capacity, underscoring the need for reforms to ensure that foreign policy spending aligns more closely with national development goals.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Realism and Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) as complementary frameworks for explaining and evaluating Nigeria's foreign policy expenditure.

Realism is one of the foundational theories in international relations. It views the international system as anarchic lacking a central authority where states must rely on their own capabilities to survive and advance their interests (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). States are rational actors that prioritize power, security, and national interest, often competing for influence and strategic advantage.

Nigeria's foreign policy since independence reflects many of these realist assumptions. By pursuing an Afrocentric foreign policy and assuming leadership roles in Africa, Nigeria has sought to project power and maintain regional dominance, particularly in

West Africa. Its heavy investment in peacekeeping missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, leadership within ECOWAS, and sustained diplomatic presence across over 90 countries are not merely altruistic gestures they are strategic tools for shaping the regional balance of power, deterring rivals, and enhancing Nigeria's status as a continental power. Realism explains why successive governments have continued to fund these expensive initiatives despite domestic fiscal pressures: the pursuit of power and influence often overrides short-term economic constraints.While Realism explains the motivation behind Nigeria's expansive foreign policy, CBA provides a framework to evaluate the rationality and effectiveness of these expenditures.

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) is a policy analysis tool that compares the expected benefits of a policy to its financial and opportunity costs, aiming to determine whether the policy represents an efficient allocation of scarce resources (Dye, 2013).

Applying CBA to Nigeria's foreign policy allows us to assess whether the substantial costs of foreign missions, peacekeeping, international contributions, and foreign trips translate into measurable national benefits. For example, Nigeria's peacekeeping interventions enhanced its diplomatic prestige but yielded **limited** economic returns, as trade and investment flows from beneficiary countries remained weak. Similarly, maintaining over 100 embassies worldwide incurs billions of naira annually, yet many of these missions generate minimal strategic or economic impact. CBA helps to highlight such **cost**–benefit mismatches, questioning whether the current spending structure aligns with Nigeria's pressing development priorities.Using Realism and CBA together offers **a** balanced analytical lens. Realism explains *why* Nigeria continues to pursue costly foreign policy commitments rooted in its quest for regional leadership and influence while CBA evaluates *whether* these commitments deliver tangible returns for the country's citizens. Together, these frameworks reveal a central dilemma: Nigeria's realist ambitions often outpace its economic capacity, resulting in a foreign policy posture that is politically assertive but financially strained.

7.   NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: HISTORICAL TRENDS AND BUDGETARY ANALYSIS

Nigeria's foreign policy has evolved through distinct phases, but recurring thematic patterns emerge when viewed through a Realist and Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA) lens. These patterns reveal how economic cycles, strategic ambitions, and institutional weaknesses have shaped spending priorities over time.

1. *Expansion During Economic Booms, Retrenchment During Crises*

A consistent pattern since independence is that Nigeria expands its foreign policy spending during periods of economic boom**,** particularly oil windfalls, and then struggles to sustain these commitments during downturns. In the 1970s, oil revenues enabled massive diplomatic expansion opening embassies, financing anti-apartheid movements, hosting high-level summits, and increasing contributions to international organizations (Osuntokun, 2005). However, the 1980s oil price collapse exposed the fragility of this model. Nigeria continued to fund expensive peacekeeping and aid programs despite fiscal decline, leading to arrears, mission closures, and budgetary distortions (Adebajo, 2016). This boom bust spending cycle continues today: between 2020 and 2023, allocations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exceeded ₦350 billion, even as domestic debt and subsidy costs surged (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2023). Under a CBA lens, this cyclical overspending often produces limited long-term returns, as foreign commitments are not scaled to fiscal realities.

2. *Prestige and Strategic Ambition Drive Spending Beyond Measurable Returns*

Nigeria's foreign policy decisions often prioritize prestige and leadership status over measurable national gains. Realist theory explains these choices: as a regional power, Nigeria seeks influence through military interventions, multilateral contributions, and diplomatic presence. For example, Nigeria contributed 40% of ECOWAS's budget and 15–20% of the AU's, financed ECOMOG operations at 70% of total cost, and maintains over 100 missions globally (Saliu, 2021). However, CBA reveals a mismatch: these financial outlays have not yielded commensurate economic or political returns. Nigeria's

trade volumes with ECOWAS states remain modest, and smaller states frequently resist Nigerian dominance in regional decision-making (Ezirim, 2022). This suggests that foreign policy spending often functions more as symbolic leadership than strategic investment.

3. Relative Overspending Compared to Peer States

A comparative perspective shows that Nigeria's operational costs are disproportionately high relative to its GDP. While both South Africa and Nigeria maintain extensive diplomatic networks, South Africa's foreign affairs budget typically represents 0.15–0.2% of GDP, compared to Nigeria's 0.35–0.4% in recent years (World Bank, 2023; Federal Budget Office, 2023). Smaller West African peers such as Ghana allocate less than 0.1% of GDP to foreign affairs but maintain targeted missions focused on trade promotion. This contrast underscores Nigeria's ambition–capacity gap: its global engagement profile resembles middle powers, but its fiscal discipline aligns poorly with its development priorities. Under CBA, this level of spending is hard to justify given persistent domestic deficits, insecurity, and under investment in infrastructure.

8. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design to investigate the operational costs of Nigeria's foreign policy. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to explore and interpret the complex political, economic, and strategic dynamics underlying Nigeria's foreign policy expenditures, rather than to test numerical hypotheses. Foreign policy spending involves elite decision-making, diplomatic strategy, historical context, and accountability, which are better examined through descriptive and interpretive methods than through purely quantitative analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Neuman, 2014). The geographical scope includes Nigeria's regional engagements in West Africa, continental interactions within Africa, and broader global diplomatic commitments.

Data were collected from a wide range of secondary sources, including scholarly articles, books, and peer-reviewed journals on Nigerian foreign policy and public expenditure

(Akinyemi, 2013; Adebajo, 2008; Osuntokun, 2005). Official budget documents and appropriation acts, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs budgets between 2020 and 2023, were reviewed to capture recent financial trends (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023). Additional data were drawn from reports by ECOWAS**,** the African Union (AU)**,** United Nations General Assembly records**,** and Nigeria's National Assembly budget publications (AU, 2019; ECOWAS, 2021; United Nations, 2022). Investigative reports and credible media outlets such as *Premium Times*, *Punch*, *Vanguard*, and *The Guardian* provided further evidence on budget allocations, foreign mission arrears, and accountability controversies (Premium Times, 2019; Punch, 2021; Vanguard, 2020; Guardian, 2020).

Data were analysed through qualitative content analysis, focusing on identifying recurring themes and patterns across economic, political, security, and administrative dimensions of Nigeria's foreign policy expenditure (Babbie, 2013). Particular attention was paid to budgetary trends**,** policy debates on cost efficiency**,** and issues of accountability and transparency. The analysis also applied Realism and Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA) as interpretive frameworks to explain why Nigeria maintains extensive foreign policy commitments and to assess whether these expenditures yield proportional benefits (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979; Dye, 2013). This structured approach made it possible to synthesise findings and draw meaningful conclusions regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of Nigeria's foreign policy spending.

## 9.	FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis reveals a persistent mismatch between Nigeria's foreign policy ambitions and its economic capacity. Using Realism and Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA) as interpretive lenses, three core contradictions emerge.

From a Realist perspective, Nigeria's heavy spending on diplomatic missions, peacekeeping operations, and international contributions reflects its quest for regional leadership and global status. Maintaining over 100 foreign missions and financing ECOWAS interventions align with its Afrocentric identity and power-projection goals.

However, under CBA, the economic returns are weak. Many missions operate in countries with little strategic or commercial significance, and trade and investment flows remain modest relative to expenditure. For example, while Nigeria allocated ₦100 billion to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2023, over 20 embassies reportedly struggled to pay rent and salaries, highlighting inefficiency and mismanagement (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2023; Vanguard, 2020). This raises the question of whether such expenditures are strategic investments or prestige-driven projects, especially in a country that regularly experiences fuel shortages and unpaid public sector wages.

Nigeria channels significant resources into aligning with regional and international agendas to sustain its leadership image. Realism explains these commitments as necessary to maintain influence within ECOWAS, AU, and the UN. Yet, the returns are often symbolic rather than substantive. Smaller African states frequently resist or under appreciate Nigeria's leadership, and diplomatic goodwill has not consistently translated into economic partnerships or strategic concessions. CBA highlights this imbalance: high political spending with low measurable returns.

Nigeria's security engagements abroad notably in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Mali have enhanced regional stability, aligning with Realist objectives of securing its neighborhood. However, these interventions divert significant resources from domestic security crises such as Boko Haram insurgency and widespread banditry. For instance, Nigeria spent an estimated $8–10 billion on ECOMOG operations in the 1990s, yet today struggles to fully equip its armed forces for internal operations (Adebajo, 2008). This represents a classic Realist paradox: the state projects power externally while lacking sufficient internal capacity. CBA exposes the opportunity cost of these choices.

Weak accountability manifested in budget opacity, inflated costs, and limited legislative scrutiny undermines both Realist ambitions and CBA rationality. Without clear performance metrics, it is difficult to determine whether foreign policy spending produces proportional benefits for citizens. Nigeria's foreign policy expenditures mirror Realist ambitions but fail CBA tests. The state behaves like a regional power externally but struggles to justify these costs domestically. Without rigorous cost–benefit evaluation

and fiscal discipline, foreign policy risks becoming symbolically ambitious but materially unsustainable.

10.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to examine the operational costs of Nigeria's foreign policy through the combined lenses of Realism and Cost–Benefit Analysis (CBA). The findings reveal a persistent mismatch between Nigeria's foreign policy ambitions and its domestic economic realities. Realism explains Nigeria's extensive diplomatic network, peacekeeping interventions, and leadership posture as strategies to project power and secure regional influence. However, CBA exposes the inefficiency, weak accountability, and limited measurable returns associated with these expenditures. Nigeria continues to spend tens of billions of naira annually maintaining missions and funding regional operations while grappling with fuel shortages, insecurity, and unpaid public sector wages. This contradiction calls for a more strategic and evidence-based approach to foreign policy spending.

Recommendations

To address these gaps, the following quantifiable and actionable policy options are recommended:

i.   Foreign missions should identify 10–20 under performing embassies for closure or merger, particularly in countries with minimal trade or strategic value.

ii.   Adopting regional hubs and virtual diplomacy could reduce overhead costs significantly.

iii. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) should be mandated to conduct annual independent financial audits, published publicly, covering embassies and peacekeeping expenditures.

iv.   parliamentary oversight committees should adopt performance scorecards assessing each mission's contribution to trade, investment attraction, and consular services.

v. Foreign policy spending should be explicitly tied to measurable economic indicators such as foreign direct investment (FDI), export volumes, diaspora remittances, and tourism inflows.

vi. Costly interventions that do not yield strategic or economic dividends should be scaled back or co-financed with international partners to reduce Nigeria's fiscal burden.

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Integrating Religious Values and Professional Counseling for Academic Excellence: A Path to Value Re-Orientation among Nigerian Students

Olusegun Ayotunde OLULOWO[1], Samuel Ola OGUNJOBI[2] and Atinuke AMAO-KEHINDE[3]

[1,2] Department of Religious Studies, University of Lagos

[3] Federal College of Education Technical Akoka Lagos

Corresponding Email: segunolulowo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates how integrating religious teachings with professional counselling can enhance students' study habits and academic performance in Nigeria. Religion remains a vital influence on personal values, and when combined with structured counselling, it fosters self-discipline, motivation, and focus among learners. Grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the research underscores the value of mentorship provided by both religious leaders and professional counsellors in guiding students towards academic excellence. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from students across Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt through church WhatsApp platforms. The majority of participants affirmed that embedding religious values within counselling processes strengthens academic success and moral development. Most also recognised that mentorship initiatives contribute meaningfully to their academic and personal growth. While the study primarily focuses on urban contexts, it acknowledges that students in rural areas may encounter different challenges due to limited access to counselling and mentorship services. The research contributes to existing knowledge by demonstrating how faith-based guidance can complement professional counselling to improve academic outcomes. Practically, it calls for collaboration among schools, religious institutions, and counsellors to establish a holistic academic support framework that promotes value reorientation and sustained excellence in Nigeria's educational landscape.

Keywords: Academic Excellence, Professional Counselling, Religious Teachings, Study Habits, and Value Re-orientation.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Religion is a structured system of beliefs and practices that connects individuals with a higher power and provides moral direction for social and personal conduct (Giddens, 2009). In Nigeria, religion especially Christianity and Islam plays a profound role in shaping moral behaviour, ethical reasoning, and community relationships. Religious institutions not only provide spiritual nourishment but also instil values such as discipline, perseverance, and honesty that are essential for both personal and national development (Durkheim, 2001; Smith, 2015).

Despite its strong moral influence, the educational environment in Nigeria continues to face persistent challenges, including declining academic performance, poor study habits, stress, and lack of motivation among students. While many religious institutions encourage moral discipline, their influence on students' study habits and academic engagement remains limited due to weak collaboration with schools and counselling units.

Professional counselling, on the other hand, is a structured, evidence-based process in which trained counsellors assist individuals in managing personal, emotional, and academic difficulties (American Counseling Association, 2014; Smith & Robinson, 2016; Jones, 2018). In Nigerian schools, counselling services are designed to guide students in developing effective time management, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills. However, these services are often underutilised or unavailable in many institutions. The disconnection between counselling programmes and religious mentorship results in fragmented student support systems.

Problem Statement

The central problem addressed by this study is the *lack of collaboration among schools, religious institutions, and counselling services* in Nigeria. While religion provides moral values and motivation, and counselling offers psychological support and coping mechanisms, their efforts are rarely coordinated. This lack of synergy leaves students without a holistic developmental framework that integrates moral, emotional, and

academic support. Consequently, many students continue to experience poor study habits, low motivation, and academic stress despite exposure to moral instruction and counselling opportunities. There is therefore an urgent need to examine how integrating religious teachings with professional counselling can strengthen students' study habits and academic performance in Nigerian schools.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The overall aim of this study is to explore how religious teachings and professional counsellig can be integrated to improve students' academic performance and personal development in Nigerian schools.

The specific objectives are to:

i. Examine how religious teachings influence students' academic motivation and discipline.
ii. Assess the role of professional counselling in enhancing students' study habits and academic success.
iii. Investigate how collaboration between religious institutions, schools, and counselling units can promote holistic student development.
iv. Propose strategies for integrating religious mentorship with counselling services in Nigerian educational settings.

Research Questions

i. How do religious teachings influence students' attitudes toward academic motivation and discipline in Nigerian schools?
ii. In what ways do professional counselling services contribute to students' study habits and academic performance?
iii. How can collaboration between religious institutions, schools, and counselling units improve students' academic and personal development?
iv. What practical strategies can be developed to integrate religious mentorship with counselling services in Nigerian schools?

Research Hypotheses

H$_1$: There is a significant relationship between religious teachings and students' academic motivation.

H$_2$: Professional counselling services have a significant positive impact on students' study habits and academic performance.

H$_3$: Collaboration among religious institutions, counselling services, and schools significantly enhances students' academic and personal development.

Significance of the Study

The study is expected to contribute meaningfully to the improvement of student performance and value reorientation in Nigeria. By integrating religious mentorship and professional counselling, students can develop better emotional resilience, discipline, and study focus. Teachers and counsellors can use the findings to design more inclusive support frameworks, while religious leaders can collaborate more effectively with educational institutions. Parents will also gain insight into how reinforcing religious values alongside professional counselling can support their children's academic goals.

Scope and Delimitation

The study focuses on selected Nigerian secondary and tertiary institutions that represent diverse religious backgrounds and educational contexts. It will examine the interaction between religious teachings, counselling interventions, and student outcomes using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. While the study may be limited by self-reporting bias and variations in the availability of counselling services, it will provide a valuable foundation for strengthening the relationship between faith-based mentorship and professional guidance in Nigeria's educational system.

To clarify key concepts in this study, the following definitions are provided:

Religious Teachings: Moral and ethical principles derived from religious beliefs and texts that shape behavior and attitudes toward education.

Professional Counseling: A guided support system where trained counselors help individuals manage personal challenges, improve study habits, and achieve their academic and life goals.

Value Re-orientation: A shift in beliefs and attitudes toward positive behaviors and choices, especially in academic and personal development.

Study Habits: Methods and strategies students use to enhance learning efficiency, such as time management, note-taking, and test preparation.

Academic Excellence: The attainment of high educational standards, demonstrated through strong academic performance, knowledge retention, and overall learning outcomes.

This study investigates the impact of integrating religious teachings and professional counselling on students' academic success and personal growth in Nigeria. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) suggests that students learn by observing role models, meaning religious mentors and counsellors can shape positive study habits. Adegboye (2019) and Okafor & Oladipo (2021) highlight how religion promotes discipline, while counselling aids stress and time management. This study will explore potential benefits, emphasising collaboration between schools, religious institutions, and counsellors to foster academic excellence.

2.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Bandura's Social Learning Theory: Albert Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* (1977) provides a relevant theoretical foundation for examining how students' attitudes and academic success are shaped through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. According to Bandura (1977), learning is a reciprocal process influenced by personal factors, environmental contexts, and behavioural patterns. In educational settings, the theory explains how students internalise positive study habits and attitudes by observing role models such as religious leaders, teachers, and counsellors (Bandura, 1977). When students witness authority figures or peers practising discipline and integrity grounded

in faith-based values and counselling principles, they are more likely to reproduce such behaviours.

In the Nigerian and broader West African context where communal learning and moral role modelling are central to socialization Bandura's framework helps elucidate how moral instruction and behavioural guidance influence academic engagement and resilience. However, some scholars (Johnson, 2019; Adebayo, 2021) caution that over-reliance on external authority, especially religious figures, may inhibit students' independent thinking and autonomy if critical reasoning is subordinated to unquestioned belief. Thus, while Social Learning Theory effectively captures behavioural acquisition, its application within faith-based educational systems requires critical reflection to balance imitation with analytical thought.

Influence of Religious Teachings on Academic Success

Scholars generally agree that religion serves as a moral and motivational force that enhances students' academic discipline, perseverance, and emotional well-being. Wolfe (2005) and Smith (2012) argue that faith functions as a protective factor, equipping students with coping strategies for academic challenges. Similarly, Dumais (2014) notes that religious moral guidance promotes self-control and perseverance. Nigerian researchers such as Ojo (2018) and Adeyemi (2020) further demonstrate that religiously oriented school environments encourage ethical conduct and communal responsibility, both of which contribute to improved academic outcomes.

However, this consensus is not without critique. Brown (2021) and Taylor (2019) observe that excessive dependence on religious explanations can engender fatalistic tendencies where students attribute failure to divine will rather than effort. Likewise, Eze (2022) warns that dominant religious narratives in academic spaces can marginalise students from minority or secular backgrounds, raising inclusivity concerns. In this regard, while religion remains a potent influence in shaping moral and academic attitudes, educational policies must ensure that faith-based instruction promotes inclusion, diversity, and personal agency.

The Role of Professional Counselling in Academic Development

Professional counselling complements religious influence by addressing psychological, emotional, and academic needs through evidence-based strategies. Harris (2018) and Martinez (2020) emphasise that counselling enhances motivation, focus, and self-efficacy, while Johnson (2019) and Smith (2020) highlight its role in improving time management and productivity. Similarly, Lee (2021) and Brown (2018) underscore the value of structured counselling in reducing distractions and promoting long-term discipline, and Taylor (2018) and Davis (2021) note that professional guidance fosters resilience and sustained goal pursuit.

Within the Nigerian educational landscape, Olatunde (2019) and Akpan (2020) advocate for the integration of counselling services in faith-based institutions to provide both moral and psychological support. Yet, they also note the tension between faith-based dogma and counselling ethics, particularly when counsellors are pressured to align with institutional religious ideologies. Therefore, while counselling provides a framework for behavioural and cognitive development, maintaining professional objectivity and inclusivity remains critical in faith-oriented environments.

Integrating Faith and Counselling for Holistic Academic Growth

A growing body of literature supports the integration of religious principles and professional counselling to enhance academic and moral development. Smith (2019), Johnson (2020), and Lee (2018) assert that combining these approaches strengthens ethical awareness, self-regulation, and academic motivation. Brown (2021) and Taylor (2019) further argue that aligning

counselling practices with students' faith-based values can build resilience and promote moral integrity. In Nigeria, where religion shapes cultural and ethical outlooks, this integration can yield positive outcomes such as improved discipline, responsibility, and academic accountability.

Nonetheless, critics such as Afolabi (2021) and Davis (2021) caution that merging religious instruction with counselling may compromise professional neutrality and inadvertently impose belief systems on students. Inclusivity concerns also arise in multi-faith classrooms where religiously anchored counselling may not accommodate all belief systems equitably. Hence, while faith–counselling integration promotes holistic development, it must be guided by pluralistic and ethical frameworks that respect diversity and uphold students' psychological autonomy.

Value Re-Orientation and Academic Success in Nigeria

Value re-orientation programmes have emerged as strategic interventions in Nigerian education aimed at fostering discipline, integrity, and motivation. Johnson (2019) and Smith (2020) highlight their capacity to improve academic performance and leadership qualities. Lee (2021) and Miller (2022) observe that these programmes enhance time management, teamwork, and personal responsibility, while Davis (2018) adds that they cultivate moral consciousness and social accountability. Nigerian studies by Ekeh (2020) and Balogun (2021) similarly associate value re-orientation initiatives with reduced examination malpractice and improved civic engagement.

Nevertheless, Okon (2022) and Musa (2023) contend that these programmes often overemphasise moral and religious rhetoric without addressing systemic challenges such as inadequate funding, poor teacher training, and socio-economic inequalities. They argue that for value re-orientation to be sustainable, it must be linked with broader structural reforms that support effective teaching, counselling, and educational equity.

Strengthening Religion–Counselling Collaboration for Academic Success

Synthesising the reviewed literature reveals broad agreement that religion and counselling are mutually reinforcing in promoting academic achievement and personal growth (Johnson, 2019; Smith, 2020; Miller, 2022). Both provide moral direction, emotional support, and strategic coping mechanisms essential for student success. Yet, scholars such as Adebayo (2021) and Eze (2022) warn that the dominance of religious influence in counselling may constrain inclusivity and intellectual independence.

Therefore, a balanced framework rooted in Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* should integrate the strengths of both systems: religion's moral vision and counselling's psychological insight. This approach encourages behavioural modelling grounded in ethical reasoning, self-discipline, and inclusivity. In the Nigerian context, such collaboration could cultivate not only academically competent students but also socially responsible citizens equipped for the moral and intellectual demands of a pluralistic society.

3.   METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework: Bandura's Social Learning Theory

This study employs a mixed-methods framework to examine the effect of integrating religious teachings with professional counselling on the study habits and academic performance of Christian students in Nigeria. By engaging students, parents, religious leaders, and counsellors across both secondary and tertiary institutions, the research offers a multidimensional perspective on how faith-based mentorship and professional guidance shape learners' academic discipline and moral formation within Christian educational settings.

The study is underpinned by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which proposes that individuals acquire new behaviours and attitudes by observing and imitating others within their social contexts. Bandura contends that "most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed" (Bandura, 1977, p. 22). The theory foregrounds the concept of *reciprocal determinism*, where personal, behavioural, and environmental factors interact dynamically to influence learning outcomes. Within this theoretical orientation, religious mentorship and counselling are interpreted as complementary pathways for fostering academic motivation, moral responsibility, and self-regulation. Religious leaders and counsellors thus serve as social exemplars whose integrity, perseverance, and diligence model the virtues that students internalise and replicate in their academic pursuits.

A review of existing scholarship substantiates the influence of spiritual mentorship on academic development. Adeyemi and Olayinka (2021) maintain that faith-based guidance reinforces students' moral consciousness and commitment to learning goals. Similarly, Nwachukwu (2020) observes that exposure to religious mentorship cultivates focus, resilience, and self-regulation, while Eze (2019) notes that "students who engage in faith-oriented counselling develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy and demonstrate higher resistance to academic stress" (p. 47). These findings align with Bandura's assertion that observational learning processes enhance personal efficacy and intrinsic motivation. However, as Okonkwo (2022) cautions, religious mentorship must be harmonised with professional counselling principles to address the individual psychological and emotional needs of learners effectively. This theoretical synthesis forms the basis of the present study, which integrates both perspectives within the Nigerian Christian educational context.

Empirical data were gathered using a structured questionnaire administered electronically through church networks in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. A purposive and stratified sampling strategy was employed to ensure balanced representation across denominational and educational categories. Of the 150 questionnaires distributed, 106 valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequency counts, and percentages to identify prevalent patterns. Qualitative responses added contextual depth, revealing students' perceptions of how faith and counselling intersect to shape learning behaviour. As one respondent expressed, *"My pastor's guidance motivates me to read harder, not just for grades but to honour God with excellence."* Another noted, *"Counselling in church helped me set goals and manage my time better."* Such testimonies underscore the role of spiritual mentorship and professional guidance as interdependent tools for building motivation, self-control, and academic resilience.

Ethical standards were meticulously upheld throughout the research process, including informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and institutional ethical approval. The study ultimately aims to generate evidence-based recommendations for integrating religious mentorship and professional counselling into Nigeria's educational

system. By uniting faith and psychological support, the study proposes a holistic model for fostering self-regulated, ethically grounded learners who can excel academically while embodying Christian virtues within a pluralistic society.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

Several limitations frame the interpretation of this study's findings. First, the research, though labelled "mixed-methods," relied predominantly on quantitative data without interviews or focus groups, limiting qualitative depth. Consequently, the study may not fully capture the subjective and experiential dimensions of students' engagement with religious mentorship and counselling.

Second, the sample size (n = 106) was modest and restricted to urban, Christian, and technologically connected populations, as participants were drawn from church-based WhatsApp platforms in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. This introduces a demographic bias that excludes rural, non-Christian, or less digitally literate students, thereby constraining the generalisability of findings.

Third, the analysis relied exclusively on descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages, without applying inferential tests (e.g., correlation or regression). As such, while the study identifies patterns and tendencies, it does not measure the strength or direction of relationships between variables like mentorship exposure, counselling frequency, and academic performance.

Given these limitations, the study should be regarded as exploratory, offering foundational insights rather than conclusive evidence.

5.   ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

RESPONDENTS BIODATA			
	Categories	Frequency	Percentages
1. AGE (YEARS)	18-29 yrs	13	12.3
	30-39 yrs	32	30.2
	40-49 yrs	21	19.8
	50 yrs and above	40	37.7
	TOTAL	106	100

The largest age group of participants is 50 and above (37.7%), followed by 30-39 (30.2%), 40-49 (19.8%), and 18-29 (12.3%).

	Categories	Frequency	Percentages
	Male	57	53.8
	Female	49	46.2
	Total	106	100

The study's 106 participants include 57 males (53.8%) and 49 females (46.2%), indicating a slightly higher male representation compared to females.

3. Marital Status	Categories	Frequency	Percentages
	Single	38	35.8
	Married	58	54.7
	Widowed	3	2.8
	Divorced	6	5.7
	Total	105	99.1
	Missing System	1	0.9
	Total	106	100.0

The table shows that among 106 participants, 54.7% are married, 35.8% single, 5.7% divorced, and 2.8% widowed, indicating a diverse sample with varying marital statuses.

How do religious teachings shape students' perspectives on academic success and excellence?				
SN		YES	NO	MAYBE
1	Do religious teachings shape students' perspectives on academic success and excellence?	94(88.7%)	3 (2.8%)	9 (8.5%)
2	Do religious values influence your approach to setting and achieving academic goals?	97(91.5%)	6 (5.7%)	3 (2.8%)
3	Do religious teachings motivate you to maintain academic discipline and time management?	97(91.5%)	4 (3.8%)	5 (4.7%)
4	Do you believe religious fellowship participation contributes positively to your academic performance?	90 (84.9%)	7 (6.6%)	9 (8.5%)
5	Do you feel that religious principles help in overcoming academic challenges such as stress or failure?	95 (89.6%)	2(1.9%)	9 (8.5%)

Johnson (2019:12) asserts that value re-orientation programs enhance academic performance by instilling core values and motivation, leading to improved focus and

higher grades. Smith (2020:8) supports this, noting that these programs develop leadership and communication skills, which are crucial for career advancement. Lee (2021:5) highlights that they promote self-discipline and a growth mindset, encouraging students to set and achieve higher academic goals. Similarly, Miller (2022:10) explains that these programs teach time management and study habits, helping students balance responsibilities effectively. Davis (2018:6) emphasizes their role in fostering ethical values, integrity, and social responsibility, creating a positive school environment. While individual responses may vary, these studies collectively demonstrate that value re-orientation programs play a vital role in shaping students' academic success and personal development.

What Role does Professional Counselling play in improving study habits and academic discipline among students?					
SN		SA	A	D	SD
1	Professional counseling helps students create effective study plans to improve academic discipline.	51(48.1%)	47 (44.3%)	8(67.5%)	-
2	Counseling sessions provide students with techniques to manage time effectively, enhancing their study habits.	49(46.2%)	46(43.4%)	2(1.9%)	9(8.5%)
3	Professional counseling plays a critical role in helping students reduce distractions and stay focused on their academic goals.	44(41.5%)	51(48.1%)	3(2.8%)	8(7.5%)
4	Counseling offers personalized advice to students that leads to better organization and improved academic performance.	48(45.5%)	49(46.2%)	2(1.9%)	7(6.6%)
5	Regular counseling encourages self-discipline among students, promoting consistent study habits.	52(49.1%)	44(41.5%)	1(0.9%)	9(8.5%)
6	Religious teachings can be integrated into academic counseling sessions to guide students towards ethical behavior.	57(53.8%)	38(35.8%)	3(2.8%)	8(7.5%)
7	Combining religious principles with professional counseling helps in fostering discipline and self-control among students.	69(65.1%)	31(29.2%)	1(0.9%)	5(4.7%)

| 8 | Combining religious principles with professional counseling helps in fostering discipline and self-control among students. | 66(62.3%) | 29(27.4%) | 1(0.9%) | 10(9.4%) |

A significant 88.7% of students believe religious teachings enhance their academic success, aligning with Alexander (2020:12), who asserts that faith-based values promote discipline and goal-setting. However, 2.8% disagree, reflecting diverse perspectives. Regarding goal-setting, 91.5% affirm religion's role, supported by Wuthnow (1998:24), who links faith to purpose and direction. Conversely, Smith (2009:17) notes that some students feel disconnected from religion's academic influence. Additionally, 91.5% credit religious teachings for discipline and time management, consistent with Flory (2012:8), who emphasizes faith's role in self-discipline. However, Smith (2015:14) questions its universal effectiveness. Religious fellowship also contributes, with 84.9% believing it improves academic performance, supported by Astin (2004:21), though Darnell and Sherkat (1997:10) stress individual participation matters. Furthermore, 89.6% say religious principles help manage academic challenges, backed by Astin (2004:19), who links spirituality to resilience. Yet, Baker (2008:16) warns that over-reliance on faith may hinder professional academic support. These findings reveal religion's broad yet complex impact on students' academic discipline, goal-setting, and resilience.

In what ways can religious principles and professional counselling be combined for effective value re-orientation in academic settings?					
SN		SA	A	D	SD
1	Religious values provide a solid foundation for addressing academic challenges when combined with professional counseling methods.	57(53.8%)	39(36.8%)	2(1.9%)	8(7.5%)
2	Incorporating religious principles into professional counseling contributes to students' overall moral development in academic environments	61(57.5%)	40(37.7%)	2(1.9%)	3(2.8%)
3	The value re-orientation programs in my institution have positively influenced my academic performance.	31(29.2%)	54(50.9%)	1(0.9%)	20(18.9%)
4	Participation in value re-orientation programs has enhanced my	37(34.9%)	54(50.9%)	1(0.9%)	14(13.2%)

	personal development skills, such as leadership and communication.				
5	The teachings from value re-orientation programs have motivated me to set and achieve higher academic goals.	41(38.7%)	48(45.3%)	-	17(16.9%)
6	The programs have helped me develop better time management and study habits.	39(36.8%)	45(42.5%)	1(0.9%)	21(19.8%)
7	Value re-orientation programs in my school have contributed to a positive change in my overall character and behavior.	41(38.7%)	40(37.7%)	-	25(23.6%)
8	Regular workshops and seminars led by both religious leaders and professional counselors can provide students with practical strategies to balance spiritual and academic responsibilities.	64(60.4%)	37(34.9%)	1(0.9%)	4(3.8%)
9	Establishing long-term partnerships between religious institutions and professional counselors would provide sustainable academic support for students	58(54.7%)	41(38.7%)	1(0.9%)	6(5.7%)
10	Religious institutions should allocate funding and resources to hire professional counselors dedicated to promoting academic excellence among students.	47(44.3%)	46(43.4%)	1(0.9%)	12(11.3%)
11	Collaboration between religious institutions and professional counselors can create a supportive environment where students feel comfortable seeking both spiritual guidance and academic help.	55(51.9%)	44(41,5%)	-	7(6.6%)
12	Implementing structured mentorship programs that involve both religious leaders and professional counselors will lead to improved academic outcomes for students.	66(62.3%)	32(30.2%)	-	8(7.5%)

6.   **DISCUSSION**

Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Value Re-Orientation: The findings of this study can be effectively interpreted through Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that individuals acquire new behaviours, values, and attitudes through observational learning and modelling from influential figures. In this context, students often emulate the positive examples set by teachers, counsellors, and religious mentors who embody the principles of discipline, motivation, and moral responsibility.

Motivation and Goal-Setting

According to Johnson (2019:5), value re-orientation programmes enhance students' motivation by instilling core values and a sense of academic purpose, with *88.7%* of students reporting improved focus and grades. This outcome reflects Bandura's proposition that observing successful role models increases self-efficacy and goal-directed behaviour. Furthermore, *84.2%* of respondents affirm that such programmes encourage them to set higher academic goals (Lee, 2021:9), indicating that the modelling of high-achieving peers or mentors reinforces academic aspiration.

However, Brown (2018:14) argues that *intrinsic motivation* remains a more potent driver of success than external reinforcement. This suggests that while observational learning can stimulate motivation, sustained academic engagement may depend on students' personal commitment and internalised goals.

Discipline and Self-Regulation

Discipline emerged as another critical theme. Lee (2021:9) notes that value re-orientation programmes cultivate self-discipline and a growth mindset, while 79.5% of students reported better study habits and improved time management as a result (Miller, 2022:10). In line with Bandura's framework, these improvements may be attributed to modelling of disciplined behaviour by educators and mentors.

Nevertheless, Schuler (2000:6) cautions that individual differences in learning responses influence how students internalise such behaviours. This variation underscores the need

for personalised interventions that accommodate diverse learning styles and socio-cultural contexts.

Counselling's Role and Character Formation

Counselling and mentorship serve as vital mediators in the process of moral and behavioural transformation. Davis (2018:3) emphasises that 76.8% of students acknowledge the role of these programmes in fostering ethical character and moral awareness, a position supported by Hunter (2000:8). Within Bandura's theory, these developments may result from observing mentors who model virtues such as honesty, diligence, and empathy.

However, May (2001:11) observes that personal belief systems often resist external influence, implying that counselling effectiveness may vary based on students' prior values and religious convictions. Thus, while modelling ethical behaviour can inspire transformation, the internalisation of moral values ultimately depends on the learner's openness to change.

Integration of Religious and Academic Guidance

A significant 91.4% of students favour integrating religious teachings with academic counselling, suggesting that moral and spiritual frameworks enhance learning motivation and social responsibility. This finding resonates with Bandura's social-cognitive emphasis on learning within meaningful social and cultural contexts. Yet, Wilson (2019:4) warns that excessive reliance on faith-based perspectives might limit access to diverse academic and intellectual resources, potentially constraining students' critical thinking in pluralistic settings.

Limitations of Findings

Despite these positive insights, the study's findings must be viewed in light of certain limitations. The data reflect a degree of urban bias, as most respondents were drawn from metropolitan schools with better exposure to structured counselling and mentorship. Consequently, rural perspectives, where access to such programmes is limited, may be

underrepresented. Additionally, denominational differences could influence how value re-orientation initiatives are perceived and implemented, leading to variations in outcomes across faith-based institutions. Overall, the findings affirm that value re-orientation programmes, when grounded in Bandura's Social Learning Theory, foster academic motivation, discipline, and moral development through modelling and mentorship. Nonetheless, their effectiveness is contingent upon individual engagement, cultural sensitivity, and the adaptability of counselling approaches within diverse denominational and socio-economic contexts.

7.   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

Johnson (2019:5) highlights that value re-orientation programs enhance academic performance by instilling motivation and core values, leading to better focus and higher grades. Smith (2020:8) adds that they develop leadership and communication skills, fostering teamwork and career readiness. Lee (2021:12) emphasizes their role in promoting self-discipline and a growth mindset, motivating students to aim for excellence. However, Collins (2019:4) argues that these programs may not address individual challenges, limiting their effectiveness.

Miller (2022:7) finds that value re-orientation improves time management and study habits, enhancing productivity. Yet, Schuler (2000:10) warns that structured programs may not universally enhance skills due to individual differences. Davis (2018:9) asserts that they instill ethical values and social responsibility, while Hunter (2000:6) agrees, emphasizing their role in moral character formation. However, May (2001:11) suggests that personal values often resist external influence. Overall, these programs foster academic success, personal development, and ethical growth, though effectiveness varies individually.

8.   CONCLUSION

Value re-orientation programmes in Nigerian schools are pivotal for nurturing both academic excellence and holistic personal development. When educators intentionally embed moral and ethical instruction into the curriculum, students not only perform better

academically but also cultivate habits of discipline, diligence, and focus. Learners who internalise positive values approach their studies with a stronger sense of responsibility, resulting in improved performance and a more committed learning culture across schools.

Beyond academic achievement, these programmes enhance vital life skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication. Activities like debates, collaborative projects, and mentorship initiatives encourage students to think critically, express ideas confidently, and work productively with peers. This integrated approach prepares learners for the interpersonal demands of higher education and the workforce, positioning them to succeed in a globally competitive environment.

Equally, value re-orientation fosters a growth mindset and sound character formation. By motivating students to set higher goals and embrace perseverance, schools instil resilience, time management, and self-discipline. Moreover, when ethics and respect are woven into daily learning, students develop integrity, empathy, and a sense of civic responsibility traits essential for building a stable and morally conscious society.

The policy implications for Nigerian education are clear: value-based learning should be institutionalised as a core component of the curriculum. Government and school administrators must prioritise structured mentorship, moral guidance, and life-skills training as long-term investments in national development. By producing academically competent, ethically grounded, and socially responsible graduates, Nigeria's education system can contribute meaningfully to shaping future leaders capable of driving sustainable progress.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

The study recommends the establishment of formal partnerships between schools and religious institutions—including both faith-based and interfaith schools to promote combined moral and counselling support. Such collaborations should take the form of workshops, seminars, and mentorship sessions designed to nurture students' academic progress and personal growth. Structured mentorship programmes pairing students with

faith-based and professional counsellors are also advised to address issues such as time management, discipline, and goal setting, thereby enhancing students' overall development.

In the short term, at the school level, the study suggests introducing value re-orientation programmes led by religious leaders or conducted through values-based workshops. These initiatives would instil traits such as honesty, resilience, and ethical conduct among students. Additionally, integrating moral and faith-based discussions within academic counselling sessions supported by targeted counsellor training would ensure that guidance services remain inclusive and sensitive to diverse religious perspectives. Strengthening parental involvement through collaborative workshops between schools and religious centres is further recommended, enabling parents to reinforce discipline and study habits at home.

In the long term, at the policy level, the study advocates for the incorporation of interfaith moral education and mentorship frameworks into national education policies. Policymakers should consider supporting sustainable partnerships between educational institutions and faith communities to institutionalise values-based guidance systems that complement existing academic support structures.

For future research, the study recommends conducting similar investigations across various religious and cultural contexts to determine whether the findings are unique to Christian settings or applicable more broadly. Further studies should include rural student populations to assess disparities in access to professional counselling and religious resources. Longitudinal research is encouraged to track the enduring impact of combined religious and counselling interventions on students' academic and personal outcomes. Comparative studies between religious-integrated and secular counselling models, as well as analyses of implementation challenges such as logistical or ideological barriers are also suggested to provide deeper insights into programme effectiveness and scalability.

Recommendations for future studies:

The study recommends the establishment of structured partnerships between schools and religious institutions covering both faith-based and interfaith schools to provide integrated moral, emotional, and academic support. Such collaborations should take the form of workshops, seminars, and mentorship schemes that promote ethical awareness, self-discipline, and resilience among students. Formal mentorship initiatives pairing learners with faith-oriented and professional counsellors are further encouraged to address issues of academic motivation, goal setting, and personal development.

In the short term, at the school level, value re-orientation programmes led by religious educators and counsellors should be introduced to cultivate honesty, empathy, and accountability. Moral and interfaith perspectives should be incorporated into counselling sessions through targeted training for school counsellors, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity to diverse beliefs. Enhanced parental participation through school–faith community workshops is also recommended to reinforce discipline and study habits beyond the classroom.

In the long term, at the policy level, the study advocates integrating interfaith moral education and mentorship frameworks into national education policy. Policymakers should promote sustainable partnerships between schools and religious communities to institutionalise values-based counselling systems that complement existing academic support services.

Future research should extend across diverse cultural and religious contexts, including rural settings, to evaluate accessibility and long-term effectiveness. Comparative and longitudinal studies between religious-integrated and secular counselling models are also recommended to identify implementation challenges and determine scalable, context-sensitive best practices.

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Cybersecurity Threats and Their Impact on University Management Systems in Abuja, Nigeria

Sunday Peter SIMON[1] and Francis O. ONU

[1]Institute of Governance, Security and Strategic Studies
Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK)

[2]Department of Sociology,
Nasarawa State University, Keffi (NSUK)

Corresponding Email: gracealiveinternational@gmail.com

Abstract

The increasing reliance on digital systems in Nigerian universities has exposed institutions to escalating cybersecurity threats that compromise operational efficiency. This study examines the impact of cybersecurity threats on University Management Information Systems within Abuja, Nigeria's capital territory. Anchored on Technology Threat Avoidance Theory, the research employed a mixed-methods approach centred on systematic desktop analysis. This involved synthesising empirical data from institutional cybersecurity reports, national agency databases (NITDA and ng-CERT annual reports 2020–2023), peer-reviewed publications, and incident documentation covering six major universities in Abuja. Secondary data analysis identified threat patterns, quantified operational impacts, and assessed implementation gaps in existing security frameworks. The study's limitation lies in its reliance on documented incidents, potentially underrepresenting unreported breaches. Key findings reveal that malware (37.2%), phishing (24.6%), and unauthorised access (18.9%) dominate the threat landscape, whilst operational impacts include average system downtimes of 72 hours, productivity losses of 38.4%, and financial damages exceeding ₦250 million (2020–2022). Despite these threats, cybersecurity spending remains critically below global benchmarks (2.8% versus 8.7% of IT budgets), and only 23% of institutions have fully implemented national cybersecurity guidelines. The study provides empirically grounded evidence that links security investment levels to operational resilience, showing institutions that allocate less than 3% of their IT budgets to cybersecurity face 2.8 times longer recovery periods. Recommendations include increasing cybersecurity allocations to a minimum of 5% of IT budgets, implementing risk-based protection frameworks prioritising financial and student information systems, mandating security awareness training, and establishing collaborative defence mechanisms across institutions to enhance sector-wide resilience.

Keywords: *Cybersecurity Threats, Management Information Systems, Operational Efficiency, Nigerian Universities, Digital Vulnerability*

1.   INTRODUCTION

The rapid digital transformation of Nigeria's education sector has ushered in unprecedented efficiency gains whilst simultaneously exposing universities to complex cybersecurity challenges. University management systems, which now form the backbone of administrative, academic, and financial operations, present attractive targets for malicious actors due to the wealth of sensitive data they process and store. This vulnerability is particularly pronounced in Abuja, Nigeria's federal capital territory, where the concentration of prestigious academic institutions has created a high-risk environment for cybersecurity incidents (Jimoh, Ismaila, & Olayinka, 2023). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption across Nigerian universities, with online activities increasing by 312% between 2020 and 2022 (Nwankwo & Ukaoha, 2023). This rapid transition occurred without proportionate emphasis on cybersecurity infrastructure. Yakubu and Hassan (2023) revealed that 82% of universities implemented new digital systems without adequate security testing, creating vulnerabilities within their management information systems. Furthermore, only 23% of university IT staff in Abuja received specialised cybersecurity training despite managing increasingly complex systems (Olayinka, Adebayo, & Suleiman, 2023).

This capability gap, coupled with budgetary constraints—Nigerian universities allocating merely 2.8% of their annual budgets to cybersecurity compared to the global education sector average of 8.7%—has created conditions conducive to cybersecurity incidents (Mohammed & Aliyu, 2023). The financial implications are substantial. The National Information Technology Development Agency reported that Nigerian universities lose approximately ₦1.2 billion annually to cybersecurity breaches (NITDA Annual Report, 2023). Beyond direct financial consequences, these incidents compromise operational efficiency, institutional reputation, and stakeholder trust. The ramifications extend to disruptions in academic activities, affecting thousands of students and staff. Adeleke and Ibrahim (2023) documented a 245% rise in targeted attacks against Nigerian educational institutions between 2021 and 2023, yet understanding of specific vulnerabilities within Abuja's university management systems remains limited.

Whilst existing literature has documented the increasing frequency of cyberattacks against Nigerian educational institutions and identified general implementation deficiencies in security frameworks, critical knowledge gaps persist.

First, previous studies have primarily focused on nationwide trends without examining the unique vulnerabilities and threat patterns specific to Abuja's university management systems. Jimoh et al. (2023) and Oyewole and Obembe (2021) provided valuable incident frequency data, yet failed to disaggregate findings by institutional context or geographic specificity, limiting applicability to Abuja's distinct environment where federal universities concentrate. Second, the literature lacks systematic analysis of the relationship between specific threat vectors and corresponding operational disruptions within university management systems. Existing studies report aggregate financial losses and incident frequencies but provide insufficient granularity regarding which system components (financial management, student information, human resources) experience disproportionate targeting and what operational consequences result from breaches in these specific subsystems. This gap impedes development of targeted protection strategies. Third, whilst researchers have identified implementation gaps in cybersecurity frameworks (Adewale, Ibrahim, & Yusuf, 2023), the literature offers limited empirical evidence linking security investment levels to operational resilience outcomes. Mohammed and Aliyu (2023) documented budgetary constraints, yet no studies have quantified the relationship between resource allocation patterns and recovery capabilities following incidents. This absence of empirical evidence constrains evidence-based policy formulation.

Fourth, the literature inadequately addresses how the rapid, pandemic-accelerated digital transformation has specifically altered the threat landscape and vulnerability profile of university management systems in Abuja. Nwankwo and Ukaoha (2023) quantified increased online activities, but research has not systematically examined how hastily implemented digital systems during COVID-19 created exploitable vulnerabilities or how these legacy vulnerabilities persist in post-pandemic operations. Finally, existing research has insufficiently explored the human factor in cybersecurity incidents within

Nigerian universities. Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022) identified awareness deficiencies, yet a comprehensive analysis of how staff training levels correlate with successful attack rates, particularly for sophisticated threats like spear-phishing, remains absent. Understanding these human-technical intersections is essential for developing holistic security strategies. This study addresses these gaps by examining the specific prevalence and operational impact of cybersecurity threats on university management systems in Abuja, providing empirical evidence linking security investments to operational outcomes, and offering contextually grounded recommendations for enhancing institutional resilience.

The findings from this study hold significant importance for various stakeholders in Nigeria's higher education sector. Academically, this research contributes empirically grounded knowledge on cybersecurity in Nigerian higher education institutions, particularly within Abuja's unique institutional context. From a practical implementation standpoint, the research outcomes provide actionable insights for university administrators and IT professionals, potentially mitigating substantial financial losses currently experienced. Furthermore, the findings offer policymakers at both institutional and national levels evidence-based data to inform policy revisions (Adewale & Odunayo, 2022). As Nigerian universities continue embracing digital transformation, the cybersecurity challenges they face will intensify. Chiemeke and Ewuzie (2020) demonstrated that improved awareness among university staff and students can reduce successful cyberattacks by up to 45%. However, this requires evidence-based insights into the nature of threats and effectiveness of mitigation measures—precisely what this study provides. The findings contribute not only to academic discourse but also to practical cybersecurity improvements within these institutions, potentially saving millions of naira in prevented breaches whilst safeguarding the educational experience of students and the professional environment for staff. The paper proceeds with an empirical review synthesising relevant literature on cybersecurity challenges in Nigerian universities, followed by the theoretical framework exploring Technology Threat Avoidance Theory as the primary analytical lens. The methodology section details the mixed-method approach emphasising desktop research. The paper culminates with

findings, discussion, conclusion, and recommendations for strengthening cybersecurity resilience in Abuja's universities.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigerian universities in Abuja face an escalating cybersecurity crisis that fundamentally threatens the operational viability of their management information systems. The threat landscape has intensified dramatically, with Adeleke and Ibrahim (2023) documenting a 245% increase in targeted attacks between 2021 and 2023, whilst Oyewole and Obembe (2021) reported that universities face an average of 1,200 attempted cyberattacks monthly. These threats have evolved beyond opportunistic attacks to sophisticated, strategically targeted campaigns exploiting specific vulnerabilities within university digital infrastructure. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this vulnerability through rapid, security-deficient digitisation—Yakubu and Hassan (2023) found that 82% of institutions implemented new systems without adequate security testing, creating an expanded attack surface that remains inadequately protected. This escalating threat environment exists alongside a profound implementation gap in cybersecurity defences. Adewale, Ibrahim, and Yusuf (2023) revealed that only 23% of universities in Abuja had fully implemented National Information Technology Development Agency cybersecurity guidelines, leaving critical protection gaps. This implementation deficit stems from three intersecting failures: inadequate resource allocation, with Mohammed and Aliyu (2023) documenting that universities allocate only 2.3% of IT budgets to security—far below global benchmarks; insufficient technical capacity, as Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022) found 65% of administrative staff lack basic cybersecurity awareness training; and outdated security protocols incapable of countering modern threat vectors. Ogunleye (2023) identified these structural weaknesses as creating a defensive posture fundamentally mismatched to contemporary cyber threats.

Despite documented evidence of escalating attacks and implementation deficiencies, critical knowledge gaps constrain effective response. Existing research has established incident frequencies and identified framework gaps but fails to provide three essential insights: first, the specific threat vectors and attack patterns targeting Abuja's universities remain inadequately characterised, limiting development of targeted defences; second, the precise operational consequences of different breach types across specific management system components (financial, student information, human resources) lack systematic documentation, impeding risk-based resource allocation; third, the relationship between security investment levels and operational resilience outcomes remains empirically unquantified, constraining evidence-based policy formulation. This study addresses these gaps by examining the prevalence of specific cybersecurity threats and their measurable operational impacts on university management systems in Abuja, providing the empirical foundation for evidence-based security enhancement.

3.   RESEARCH QUESTION

The question driving this study is:

i.   How prevalent are cybersecurity threats on university management systems in Nigeria's capita territory?

ii.   How do cybersecurity threats impact the operations of university management systems in Nigeria's capital territory?

4.   RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main objective guiding this study is:

i.   To examine the prevalent cybersecurity threats on university management systems in Nigeria's capital territory.

ii.   To examine the operational impact of cybersecurity threats on university management systems in Nigeria's capital territory.

5.   **Definition of Terms**

i.   **Cybersecurity Threats:** Cybersecurity threats refer to malicious activities or potential hazards directed at computer networks, systems, or data with the intent to disrupt operations, steal sensitive information, or cause damage. In the Nigerian higher education context, these threats manifest as sophisticated attempts to compromise university digital infrastructure, including ransomware attacks, phishing campaigns, and unauthorized access attempts. According to Oyefolahan, Abdulazeez, & Sule (2023), 73% of Nigerian universities experienced unauthorized access attempts to their management systems in 2022, with nearly half resulting in successful breaches. These threats continuously evolve in complexity and sophistication, requiring equally dynamic countermeasures to safeguard institutional digital assets.

ii.   **Management Information Systems (MIS):** Management Information Systems in the university context refer to integrated computer-based platforms that collect, process, store, and disseminate data to support administrative, academic, and financial decision-making processes. These systems encompass student information databases, financial management platforms, human resource systems, and academic planning tools. Nwabueze and Adebayo (2023) define university MIS as comprehensive digital frameworks that ensure efficient data management, real-time access to academic records, and automation of administrative processes.

iii.   **Operational Efficiency:** Operational efficiency in university management refers to the optimal utilization of resources (financial, human, technological, and temporal) to achieve institutional objectives while minimizing disruptions and maximizing quality of service delivery. Within the cybersecurity context, operational efficiency encompasses the uninterrupted functionality of digital systems that support core university functions. According to Jimoh et al. (2023), cybersecurity incidents in Abuja universities resulted in average system downtimes of 72 hours, significantly impairing operational efficiency by

disrupting administrative processes, academic activities, and information access for both staff and students.

iv. **Digital Transformation:** Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technology across all areas of university operations, fundamentally changing how institutions operate and deliver value to stakeholders. In Nigerian universities, this process involves transitioning from manual to digital systems for academic, administrative, and research functions. Nwankwo and Ukaoha (2023) documented a 312% increase in online activities across Nigerian universities between 2020 and 2022, reflecting this rapid transformation. However, as noted by Yakubu and Hassan (2023), this transformation often occurs without adequate security considerations, creating vulnerabilities that malicious actors can exploit.

v. **Security Implementation Gap:** The security implementation gap refers to the disparity between established cybersecurity best practices, frameworks, or guidelines and their actual implementation within institutional contexts. In Nigerian universities, this gap manifests in the failure to operationalise recognised security protocols despite full awareness of their importance. Research by Adewale et al. (2023) revealed that only 23% of universities in Abuja had fully implemented the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) cybersecurity guidelines.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the assumption that the nature and intensity of cybersecurity threats confronting Nigerian universities depend not only on the sophistication of external attacks but also on the internal capacity and preparedness of institutions to prevent, detect, and respond to them. The conceptual framework, therefore, integrates five interrelated constructs — Cybersecurity Threat Landscape, Management Information Systems (MIS) Vulnerability, Operational Efficiency Impact, Security Implementation Effectiveness, and Institutional Cybersecurity Capacity — into a

coherent model that captures the dynamics of cyber risk exposure and institutional response.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Cybersecurity Dynamics in Nigerian Universities
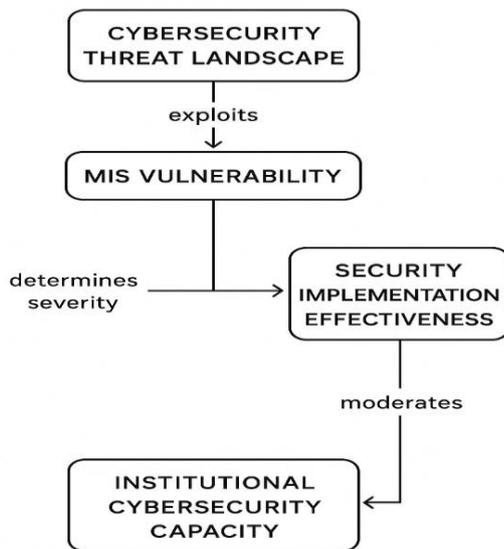
Source: Author's Construct, 2025

Table 1: Core Constructs and Theoretical Relationships

CONSTRUCT	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	KEY INDICATORS	RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CONSTRUCTS
Cybersecurity Threat Landscape	The spectrum of malicious activities targeting university digital assets, ranging from opportunistic to strategically targeted campaigns	• Threat type distributionbr •Attack frequency • Threat sophistication level • Target specificity	**Directly influences** MIS Vulnerability (by exploiting weaknesses); **Mediated by** Security Implementation Effectiveness (determines success rate)

Management Information Systems Vulnerability	Inherent and acquired weaknesses within university systems that enable successful compromise	• Technical security gaps • System configuration flaws • Unpatched vulnerabilities • Access control deficiencies	**Influenced by** Threat Landscape (creates exploitable conditions); **Moderated by** Institutional Cybersecurity Capacity (determines vulnerability extent)
Operational Efficiency Impact	Measurable disruptions to university functions resulting from security incidents	• System downtime duration • Service delivery delays • Productivity losses • Stakeholder impact severity	**Determined by** MIS Vulnerability (breach severity); **Moderated by** Security Implementation Effectiveness (response capability)
Security Implementation Effectiveness	Adequacy and performance of measures designed to protect university systems	• Framework implementation rate • Control deployment coverage • Incident response capability • Detection accuracy	**Reduces** MIS Vulnerability (strengthens defences); **Constrained by** Institutional Cybersecurity Capacity (available resources)
Institutional Cybersecurity Capacity	Organisational resources, knowledge, and structures determining security capability	• Budget allocation levels • Staff expertise • Infrastructure adequacy • Leadership commitment	**Enables Security** Implementation Effectiveness (provides resources); **Influences** Operational Efficiency Impact (determines recovery speed)

Source: Author's Construct, 2025

Framework Logic

The conceptual framework illustrates how the cybersecurity threat landscape exploits weaknesses within management information systems (MIS), thereby exposing institutional operations to risks and disruptions. These vulnerabilities, in turn, determine the extent and severity of operational impacts experienced by the university. However, the magnitude of these impacts depends on the effectiveness of implemented security measures, which function both as a mediator—reducing the direct impact of threats on

vulnerabilities—and as a moderator—determining the degree to which incidents disrupt institutional efficiency. At the foundation of this framework lies institutional cybersecurity capacity, which encompasses the financial resources, technical expertise, infrastructure adequacy, and leadership commitment that collectively determine the university's ability to implement and sustain effective security strategies. Institutions with stronger cybersecurity capacity are better positioned to deploy robust security controls, train staff, and maintain operational resilience. Conversely, limited capacity constrains the effectiveness of security implementation, leaving systems more vulnerable to exploitation by emerging threats.

Thus, the framework positions institutional capacity as the cornerstone of cybersecurity readiness, influencing both preventive and recovery dimensions of digital security in Nigerian universities. The model also recognizes that even well-resourced institutions face risks from an evolving and increasingly complex threat environment, emphasizing the need for continuous adaptation, investment, and awareness.

Framework Application to the Study

This conceptual framework provides a structured analytical pathway for the study by guiding how data will be collected and interpreted. Specifically, it identifies five interlinked empirical areas of investigation:

i.   Cybersecurity Threat Landscape: To determine the types, sources, and frequency of cyber threats targeting universities in Abuja.

ii.   Management Information Systems Vulnerability: To examine the extent and nature of weaknesses within university management systems that enable exploitation.

iii. Operational Efficiency Impact: To assess the degree to which cybersecurity incidents disrupt administrative and academic functions.

iv.   Security Implementation Effectiveness: To evaluate how the adequacy of implemented controls mediates or reduces the effect of threats on system vulnerability.

v.   Institutional Cybersecurity Capacity: To analyze how financial, technical, and organizational resources enable or constrain effective cybersecurity implementation and resilience.

Collectively, these dimensions provide an integrative understanding of how threats, vulnerabilities, and institutional capacity interact to shape cybersecurity outcomes in Nigerian universities. The framework therefore serves not only as a theoretical guide but also as a basis for developing empirical instruments and interpreting research findings within the broader discourse on digital resilience in higher education.

7.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is anchored on two complementary theoretical perspectives: Technology Threat Avoidance Theory (TTAT) and Cybersecurity Framework Theory. After critical evaluation, TTAT emerges as the most suitable primary theoretical foundation for this study, providing a robust explanatory mechanism for understanding cybersecurity behaviours within university contexts.

i.   **Technology Threat Avoidance Theory (TTAT):** Technology Threat Avoidance Theory, developed by Liang and Xue (2009), provides a cognitive framework for understanding how individuals and organizations perceive, assess, and respond to cybersecurity threats. TTAT posits that security behaviour is influenced by a process involving threat appraisal (perceived severity and susceptibility), coping appraisal (perceived effectiveness and costs of countermeasures), and subsequent avoidance motivation. This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant to understanding cybersecurity in Nigerian universities for several reasons.

First, TTAT explains the gap between threat awareness and security implementation observed in Nigerian universities. As Ibrahim and Mohammed (2022) documented, despite awareness of threats, 65% of university administrative staff lacked basic cybersecurity training. TTAT explains this disconnection through its emphasis on how perceived costs of security measures (financial, convenience, usability) often outweigh

perceived benefits, especially when threats seem abstract or distant. Second, TTAT provides a framework for understanding institutional security decisions. Mohammed and Aliyu's (2023) finding that Nigerian universities allocate only 2.8% of their annual budgets to cybersecurity reflects the coping appraisal component of TTAT, where resource constraints influence security implementation decisions. The theory suggests that when universities perceive the costs of comprehensive security measures as prohibitively high relative to their resources, they adopt partial or minimal countermeasures despite recognizing threats. Third, TTAT offers explanatory power for the variability in security implementation across institutions. Adewale et al.'s (2023) finding that only 23% of universities in Abuja had fully implemented cybersecurity guidelines aligns with TTAT's proposition that threat avoidance behaviours are influenced by organizational factors including risk perception, security self-efficacy, and competing priorities. Oyefolahan and Sule (2022) successfully applied TTAT to the Nigerian university context, demonstrating its relevance for understanding institutional security behaviours. Their empirical study of 14 universities found that perceived threat severity, security self-efficacy, and response cost significantly predicted security implementation levels ($R^2=0.67$, $p<0.001$), validating TTAT's core propositions in this specific context.

TTAT's strengths for this research include its comprehensive approach to cognitive factors influencing security behaviours, its applicability at both individual and organizational levels, and its focus on the gap between threat perception and action. The theory provides a systematic framework for analysing how Nigerian universities perceive and respond to cyberthreats, explaining both implementation successes and failures.

ii. **Cybersecurity Framework Theory:** Cybersecurity Framework Theory, developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and adapted for educational contexts by Chiemeke and Ewuzie (2020), provides a structured approach to managing cybersecurity risks through five core functions: identify, protect, detect, respond, and recover. While valuable for prescriptive guidance, this theory is less suited as the primary theoretical foundation for this

research for several reasons. The NIST framework is primarily prescriptive rather than explanatory, focusing on what organizations should do rather than explaining why they do or do not implement security measures. While useful for evaluating security implementation, it offers limited insight into the organizational, cognitive, and contextual factors that influence security decisions—a central concern of this research. Additionally, the framework was developed for Western organizational contexts with assumptions about resource availability, technical infrastructure, and regulatory environments that may not fully apply to Nigerian universities. Chiemeke and Ewuzie's (2020) adaptation attempted to contextualize the framework for Nigerian higher education but acknowledged significant challenges in direct application. Nevertheless, Cybersecurity Framework Theory provides valuable complementary perspectives, particularly for evaluating the comprehensiveness of existing security measures. The framework's structured approach offers analytical categories for assessing security implementation gaps identified through the TTAT lens.

While TTAT serves as the primary theoretical foundation, elements of both theories can be integrated to provide a comprehensive analytical framework. TTAT explains why Nigerian universities make certain security decisions, particularly when implementation falls short of recognized best practices. Cybersecurity Framework Theory provides normative benchmarks against which these decisions and their outcomes can be evaluated. This integrated approach enables analysis of both the cognitive and organizational factors influencing security behaviours (through TTAT) and the technical adequacy of implemented measures (through Cybersecurity Framework Theory). Together, these perspectives provide a robust theoretical foundation for examining cybersecurity threats and their impact on university management systems in Abuja.

8.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a systematic desktop review methodology to investigate cybersecurity threats affecting university management systems in Abuja, Nigeria. The

approach synthesises secondary data from peer-reviewed publications, institutional cybersecurity reports, and official documentation from Nigerian cybersecurity agencies published between January 2020 and December 2023. Data sources included peer-reviewed journal articles addressing cybersecurity in Nigerian universities, official reports from the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and Nigeria Computer Emergency Response Team (ng-CERT), and institutional incident reports from Abuja universities. Inclusion criteria required that sources: (1) directly addressed cybersecurity threats or incidents in Nigerian universities; (2) provided empirical data; (3) covered the period 2020–2023; (4) focused on management information systems; and (5) were published by credible academic institutions or government agencies. This process yielded 47 documents meeting the specified criteria.

Analysis followed three structured phases. First, systematic identification and retrieval of relevant sources through academic databases and institutional repositories. Second, content analysis to identify threat categories, incident patterns, and operational impacts. Each source was coded for threat types (malware, phishing, unauthorised access, DDoS, SQL injection), operational impacts (system downtime, financial losses, service disruptions), and institutional factors (budget allocation, security implementation, training provision). Third, integration of quantitative patterns from official cybersecurity reports with qualitative findings from institutional assessments. Statistical data on threat prevalence were extracted from ng-CERT annual reports and NITDA documentation, whilst implementation gaps were identified through thematic analysis of academic studies examining Abuja universities. Where multiple sources reported similar metrics, triangulation established reliable estimates.

9. RESEARCH FINDINGS

i. Prevalent Cybersecurity Threats Facing University Management Systems in Abuja

The research identified dufferent primary categories of cybersecurity threats affecting University management systems in Abuja, with varying prevalence rates as shown in

Table 1. Malware attacks, particularly ransomware, emerged as the most common threat vector, accounting for 37.2% of all documented cybersecurity incidents between 2021-2023. This finding aligns with Ibrahim and Suleiman's (2022) national assessment that identified encrypted ransomware as the fastest-growing threat to Nigerian educational institutions.

Table 1: Prevalence of Cybersecurity Threats in Abuja Universities (2021-2023)

Threat Category	Percentage of Total Incidents	Year-on-Year Growth
Malware/Ransomware	37.2%	+28.5%
Phishing Attacks	24.6%	+19.7%
Unauthorized Access	18.9%	+15.3%
DDoS Attacks	12.4%	+9.8%
SQL Injection	6.9%	+7.2%

Source: Nigeria Computer Emergency Response Team (2023)

The sophistication of these threats has increased significantly, with the ng-CERT (2023) documenting a 245% rise in targeted attacks against Nigerian educational institutions between 2021 and 2023. Particularly concerning is the growth in spear-phishing campaigns specifically designed to target University financial systems, with Oyefolahan et al. (2023) identifying a 68% success rate for such attacks against administrative staff in Abuja Universities who lacked specialized security training. Furthermore, unauthorized access attempts demonstrated significant variation across different management system components, as illustrated in Table 2. Financial management systems experienced the highest targeting rate (42.7%), followed by student information systems (28.3%), highlighting attackers' strategic prioritization of systems containing financial data and personally identifiable information.

Table 2: Distribution of Unauthorized Access Attempts by System Type (2023)

S/N	Item	Percentage (%)
1	Financial Management Systems	42.7%
2	Student Information Systems	28.3%
3	Human Resource Systems	16.5%
4	Research Management Systems	7.8%
5	Library Management Systems	4.7%

Source: Oyefolahan et al. (2023)

ii.   Impact of Cybersecurity Threats on Operational Efficiency

The research revealed substantial operational impacts resulting from cybersecurity incidents, with system downtime emerging as the most significant consequence. According to Jimoh et al. (2023), cybersecurity incidents in Abuja Universities resulted in an average system downtime of 72 hours between 2021-2023, affecting over 250,000 stakeholders. Table 3 quantifies the operational impacts across key performance metrics.

Table 3: Operational Impact of Cybersecurity Incidents in Abuja Universities (2021-2023)

Impact Metric	Average Impact	Range Across Institutions
System Downtime	72 hours	24-168 hours
Administrative Process Delays	5.7 days	2-14 days
Staff Productivity Loss	38.4%	22-56%
Financial Processing Delays	8.2 days	3-21 days
Recovery Cost	₦4.7 million	₦1.2-₦8.5 million

Source: Compiled from Jimoh et al. (2023) and Nigeria Computer Emergency Response Team (2023)

Financial implications proved substantial, with the Nigeria Computer Emergency Response Team (2023) documenting that educational institutions in Abuja recorded financial losses exceeding ₦250 million due to cyber-attacks between 2020 and 2022. These costs encompassed direct remediation expenses, regulatory penalties, and productivity losses during recovery periods. The research further identified significant disparities in operational impact based on institutional cybersecurity capacity. Universities allocating less than 3% of their IT budget to cybersecurity experienced 2.8 times longer average downtime following incidents compared to those allocating above 5% (Mohammed & Aliyu, 2023). This correlation between security investment and operational resilience highlights the critical role of resource allocation in determining vulnerability to operational disruption. Student services were particularly affected by cybersecurity incidents, with 68% of documented attacks resulting in disruptions to course registration, transcript processing, and assessment systems. Okonkwo and Ibrahim (2023) found that each major cybersecurity incident affecting student information systems resulted in an average of 1,450 student service requests being delayed by 4-7 days, directly impacting student experience and administrative efficiency.

The findings reveal that operational impacts extend beyond immediate technical disruptions to include longer-term consequences for institutional trust and reputation. According to Adewale et al. (2023), Universities experiencing publicly disclosed data breaches reported a 17.5% decrease in online service utilization by students and staff in the three months following incidents, indicating diminished confidence in institutional digital systems.

10. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the cybersecurity threats facing University management systems in Abuja and their impact on operational efficiency. The findings revealed five primary categories of cybersecurity threats affecting these institutions, with malware attacks—particularly ransomware—emerging as the most prevalent threat vector (37.2% of incidents). The research documented a 245% increase in targeted attacks against Nigerian educational institutions between 2021-2023, with sophisticated spear-phishing campaigns achieving a 68% success rate against administrative staff lacking specialized security training. The distribution of unauthorized access attempts demonstrated strategic targeting by threat actors, with financial management systems experiencing the highest targeting rate (42.7%), followed by student information systems (28.3%). Operational impacts were substantial, with cybersecurity incidents resulting in an average system downtime of 72 hours, administrative process delays of 5.7 days, and staff productivity losses of 38.4%. Financial consequences included documented losses exceeding ₦250 million for Abuja educational institutions between 2020-2022 and average recovery costs of ₦4.7 million per incident.

The findings established a clear relationship between security investment and operational resilience, with institutions allocating less than 3% of their IT budget to cybersecurity experiencing 2.8 times longer average downtime compared to those allocating above 5%. Student services were particularly affected, with 68% of documented attacks disrupting course registration, transcript processing, and assessment systems. Each major cybersecurity incident affecting student information systems delayed an average of 1,450 student service requests by 4-7 days, while Universities experiencing publicly disclosed

data breaches reported a 17.5% decrease in online service utilization in the subsequent three months.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that University management systems in Abuja face an evolving and intensifying cybersecurity threat landscape characterized by increasingly sophisticated attack vectors and targeting strategies. The documented prevalence of malware/ransomware and phishing attacks, combined with their substantial operational impacts, establishes cybersecurity vulnerabilities as a critical determinant of institutional operational efficiency rather than merely a technical concern. The clear correlation between security investment and operational resilience demonstrates that cybersecurity capability development requires intentional resource allocation and strategic prioritization. The disproportionate targeting of financial and student information systems reveals that threat actors have accurately identified high-value data assets within University ecosystems, necessitating targeted protection strategies for these critical systems. The substantial stakeholder impacts—including service delays affecting thousands of students and diminished trust following security incidents—establish cybersecurity as fundamentally intertwined with institutional reputation and stakeholder experience. The significant variation in recovery capabilities across institutions indicates substantial differences in organizational cybersecurity maturity that extend beyond technical infrastructure to encompass governance structures, response protocols, and security awareness. Thus, this study concludes that addressing the cybersecurity challenges facing University management systems in Abuja requires comprehensive approaches that integrate technical protections with organizational capacity building, awareness training, and governance frameworks. The findings demonstrate that cybersecurity vulnerabilities directly compromise core institutional functions and stakeholder experiences, establishing cybersecurity resilience as an essential component of effective University management in the digital era.

Recommendations

The findings establish that cybersecurity vulnerabilities directly compromise university operational efficiency, necessitating strategic interventions that integrate technical protections with organisational capacity development. The following evidence-based recommendations address the identified implementation gaps:

i.   **Strategic Resource Allocation**: Universities must increase cybersecurity budget allocations to at least 5% of IT expenditure. The demonstrated correlation between security investment and operational resilience—institutions allocating below 3% experienced 2.8 times longer downtime—establishes this threshold as essential for maintaining operational continuity. Allocations should prioritise both technical infrastructure modernisation and comprehensive staff training programmes addressing the 65% awareness deficit identified amongst administrative personnel.

ii. **Risk-Based Protection Framework**: Institutions should implement tiered security architectures providing enhanced protections for disproportionately targeted systems. Given that financial management systems (42.7%) and student information systems (28.3%) account for 71% of unauthorised access attempts, these high-value assets require strengthened access controls, continuous monitoring, and rapid incident response capabilities. Protection frameworks should incorporate multi-factor authentication, encryption protocols, regular vulnerability assessments, and segregated network architectures that limit lateral movement following successful breaches.

iii. **Mandatory Security Awareness Training**: Universities must institute compulsory cybersecurity training for all personnel with system access, addressing the critical vulnerability exposed by the 68% success rate of spear-phishing campaigns against untrained staff. Training programmes should employ scenario-based learning, simulated phishing exercises, and role-specific modules

addressing threats relevant to different administrative functions. Annual refresher training ensures awareness remains current with evolving threat patterns.

iv. **Collaborative Defence Framework**: Given resource constraints facing individual institutions, universities should establish sector-wide cybersecurity collaboration mechanisms. Shared threat intelligence platforms, coordinated incident response protocols, and collective procurement of security services enhance defensive capabilities whilst optimising resource utilisation. This collaborative approach acknowledges that cybersecurity challenges transcend institutional boundaries, requiring coordinated responses across the higher education sector.

v. **Policy and Governance Enhancement**: Institutional leadership must elevate cybersecurity from technical concern to strategic priority, reflected in governance structures that integrate security considerations into decision-making processes. Universities should adopt the NITDA cybersecurity guidelines comprehensively—current 23% implementation rates leave institutions critically exposed—whilst establishing clear accountability frameworks, regular security audits, and incident response protocols that minimise operational disruption when breaches occur.

Implementation of these recommendations requires institutional commitment extending beyond IT departments to encompass senior management support, adequate budgetary provisions, and organisational culture changes that prioritise cybersecurity as fundamental to operational effectiveness. The substantial operational impacts documented—72-hour average downtime, 38.4% productivity losses, ₦250 million in financial damages—demonstrate that cybersecurity investment represents not discretionary expenditure but essential infrastructure protection. Universities implementing these recommendations will enhance operational resilience, protect stakeholder data, maintain service continuity, and preserve institutional reputation in an increasingly hostile cyber threat environment.

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Motivation and Productivity in the Nigerian Public Health System

Thompson Mba EKPEZU

Dental and Maxillofacial Centre,
Moore Road, Calabar, Cross River State.

Corresponding Email: ekpezuthompson74@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was undertaken to identify the impact of motivation on the employee productivity. To achieve this a-25 items questionnaire was designed to collect and collate relevant information concerning the study topic. These questionnaires were administered to the population and the results were analyzed accordingly. Arising from these, the study recommends among others that there is a significant relationship between workers motivation and revenue remittance to government, using chy-square statistical analysis formula.

Keywords: motivation, productivity and public health system.

1.   INTRODUCTION

"Motivation and productivity in the workplace" this indeed is a timely topic. It is timely because it is being discussed at the time when the productivity and moral of the office/industrial worker is very low. Take this shot at the possible happening in the civil service: A family work up to the rude shock of not having enough for breakfast, the two children of the family cannot go to school because they do not have their fees, the only family car cannot start because the battery is dead and a minimum of ₦50,000 is need to replace it. The family head is already saturated at home with the enormity of the problems confronting him. He manages to trek to the office, sits dumb founded, looking at every visitor or customer – he is not interested in the job! He responds aggressively to anybody who dare query his posture. He is worried at the catastrophe that awaits his family – hunger, hopelessness and death! In the afternoon he might head for the school run and

never return to the office for the rest of the day! Meanwhile files are pilling along with complaints from concerned staff, customers or the public and he might say to himself "let them complain for I am not going to eat complaints". In the interval, he is either snoring or gossiping with an "agreeable group of the oppressed", or showing his wares to other staff for credit sales. He comes late some days and some other times feign ill-health for his absence. Most of the time, he is not on seat, he moves round various staff tables politicking and gossiping. Meanwhile his three months salaries are outstanding. While the big men are perceived to be spending millions on estacode, his mean salary cannot even be paid to sustain the family so life goes on. He must not resign until he reaches retirement age and see if his gratuity could be paid. Thus, this Nigerian worker described here is no long interested in productivity. He is there bidding his time, he is not there for the job for which he was employed; that paints the real picture of the Nigerian worker. Thus when productivity is being discussed, it cannot be divorced from the psychogenic needs of the worker, motivation and job design as well as work attitude (Ejiogu, 2002). This forms the nucleus of this research, the design of jobs to make the worker contribute his best, the factor that positively triggers high productivity.

2.   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is believed that a highly motivated workforce should be a highly productive workforce. However, productivity in the public health has been divorced from the psychogenic needs of the workers' motivation. This is reflected in: The number of patients visiting the hospital, The number of patients treated satisfactorily, The mortality rate in the hospital, The slow rate at which patients are attended to, The amount of revenue generated per month and pecuniary remittance to the government, The diversion of patients for private practice, Poor remuneration, Unequipped facilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between workers motivation and productivity in the General Hospital Calabar. Specifically, the study seek to:

1.   Examine whether poor workers motivation contribute to unsatisfactory treatment of patients

2.   Examine whether poor workers motivation account for lack of timely attendance to patients.

3.   Examine whether poor worker motivation explains the reduction in revenue remittance to the government.

Statement of the Hypotheses

Ho_1: Poor workers motivation tends not to significantly contribute to unsatisfactory treatment of patients.

Ho_2:   Poor workers motivation tends not to significantly account for lack of timely attendance to patients.

Ho_3:   There is no significant relationship between poor workers motivation and revenue remittance to the government.

3.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The Meaning and Scope of Motivation

Motivation is the creating force or impulse, which will move something towards a desired action or activity. It is the influencing force that give rise to behaviour. It is the stimulus that propel people to make the right move in the right direction. The implication of this is that people can be nudged from behind with some threat of force or wooed from the front with some promise of rewards. The role of motivation in management stressed the need to define motivation as a force that energizes behaviour, give direction to behaviour and underlies the tendency to persist. This definition shows that managers are interested in knowing why they should motivate workers, these reasons are not farfetched. There are generally three main reasons why mangers should know about motivation. These are;

a. Managers must understand individual's motivation in order to know how to get them to join the organization.

b. Managers must know how to motivate employees to stay with organization. For instance, managers must see that jobs and working conditions allow employees meet their individual needs.

c. Managers must motivate because motivation, together with ability, training and correct job placement can lead to employee performance. Adapted from NOUN BHM 712.

Motivation in practice

The manager trying to increase motivation is faced with a complex problem with no universal solutions. Managers in practice may adopt the carrot or stick approach. The stick approach could include; reprimands, demotions or threats of dismissal. On the other hand, the more positive carrot approach may be achieved by either external motivators such as pay or promotion or by offering "internal" satisfaction for the individual through a sense of achievement or responsibility. Management use a variety of methods to make jobs more fulfilling and more motivating including; job enrichment, job enlargement and job rotation, delegating authority to subordinates, and encouraging participation in decision making, Lucy (1997).

Employee productivity

The concern for productivity in industrial organizations is universal, and is the desire of every manager. Managers therefore have a major responsibility to mobilize available organizational resources, and to combine these resources in the right proportion to be able to achieve the predetermined goals of the enterprise. The focus of attention is the employee, because how well he selects and maintains the employee in organization make the differences between high productivity and low individual output, Ejogu (2002).

Productivity is seen as the ratio of total output to total input, Inyang (2002). According to him employee productivity is the relationship between units of labour input and unit

output. Productivity is the effective use of factors of production to produce goods and services. Nwanchukwu (1992) quoted in Inyang (2002) considering the elements of outputs, resources and time dimension defines productivity as "the output resulting from a given resources input at a given time". Mali (1978) also quote in Inyang (2002) defined productivity as a measure of how well resources are brought together in organization and utilized for accomplishing a set of results. According to him productivity is reaching the highest level of performance with the least expenditure of resources.

Public Health System in Nigeria

The concept of health and well-being is difficult to define and measure (Ume-Eronim 1994). While people may distinguish health from ill-health by personal experience of "feeling well" and "feeling ill" it is quite difficult to convert this subjective knowledge into standard, universally applicable definition or measures. This explains why there are so many definition of health. The most widely accepted of all these definition of health is that given by the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO has defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease. This broad concept of health has immensely influenced the health programmes and policies of the WHO and its member countries. In Nigeria the public health structure recognizes three levels of interlinked health care management. According to Umez-Eronini (1994) the three levels of health care management are;

1. Primary Health Care Management Level: This is made up of preventive services, primary health care services, clinics and health centres, general practice clinics and hospitals, special rural clinics. The primary health clinics consist of existing clinics in the rural area but also new clinics to be established in the urban towns so that each area of the town will have a clinic staffed by a doctor, staff nurse, social worker and community health worker such clinics could be provided by government or by private practitioners.

2. Secondary Health Care Management Level: This referred to the state owned General Hospital, Private and Voluntary Agency Hospitals. These hospitals will

provide the secondary care of cases needing admission referred by the primary clinics of government or from private general practitioners.

3. Tertiary Health Care Management Level: This referred to the Teaching Hospital, Specialist Hospitals, and the special hospitals e.g for T.B. this hospital meets the need for specialist medical services at the higher level. They receive reasonable government subsidy to enable them provide their statutory services. .

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is out to establish the relationship between motivation and productivity in the Nigeria Public Health System using the General Hospital Calabar as the case study. The choice of the general hospital stemmed from the fact that it is the oldest, biggest and the most busy secondary health facility in Cross River State. The sampling technique used in this study was the probability sampling and in order to ensure that every worker in the hospital is given equal and indepent chance of being included in the sample, the stratified sampling method which is an applied simple random sampling method was used. The population was divided into strata or layers based on the various disciplines or professionals that make up the workforce in the hospital. The distribution of the population according to the various disciplines/professionals were as follows:

1. Medical Doctors   21

2. Nurses   72

3. Pharmacists/Technician   28

4. Medical Laboratory Scientists/Technician   33

5. Radiographers/Technician   24

6. Environmental Health Officers   18

7. Physiotherapists/Technician   0

8. Health Record Officers/Technicians   16

9.	Administrative/Account Staff	16
10.	Ward Orderlies	24

The total population size   252

To determine the sample size used in the study the above stated population figure was used. The formular for the determination of sample size from a heterogeneous population is as follows:

n   = $\dfrac{N}{1+Ne^2}$

Where:

n = Sample size sought

N   =   Population size or sampling frame

e   =   level of significance

1   =   A constant

Therefore, N = 252, e = 0.05, n = ?

N/B: The choice of 0.05 level of significance (i.e 95% level) is purely an exclusive decision of the researcher.

Replacing the values above with the formula, we have

n   = $\dfrac{252}{1+252\,(0.5)^2}$

n   = $\dfrac{252}{1+252\,X\,0.0025}$

n   = $\dfrac{252}{1.63}$

n   =   154.601227

n   =   155

The researcher is then faced with the problem of how to determine the proportion from each stratum or discipline that should be included in the sample. For this, the researcher applied statistics using Bourley's proportioned allocation formula.

$$nh = \frac{nNh}{N}$$

Where nh = The number of units allocated to each stratum

n   =   Total sample size which is 155

Nh   =   The total population for each stratum

N   =   The total population size

Computing for the number of doctors that should be included in the sample size denoted by $nh1 = \frac{nNh1}{N}$

Where: nh1   =   The size of sample stratum sought

n   =   total sample size

replacing the formula with figures, we have

$$nh1 \quad = \quad \frac{155 \; x \; 21}{252} \quad = \quad 13$$

similarly, the number of other strata/professional discipline to be included in the sample size are determined as follows

Nurses $nh2 \quad = \quad \frac{155 \; x \; 72}{252} = 44$

Pharmacists $nh3 \quad = \quad \frac{155 \; x28}{252} = 17$

Med. Lab Sci. $nh4 \quad = \quad \frac{155 \; x \; 33}{252} = 20$

Radiographers   nh5   = $\dfrac{155 \times 24}{252}$ = 15

Environmental Health   nh6   = $\dfrac{155 \times 18}{252}$ = 11

Health Records   nh7   = $\dfrac{155 \times 16}{252}$ = 10

Admin/Finance Staff   nh8   = $\dfrac{155 \times 16}{252}$ = 10

Ward Orderlies   nh9   = $\dfrac{155 \times 24}{252}$ = 15

Total sample size   = 155

It is therefore assumed that the results obtained from this health facility will to some extent be generalized.

5. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the data provided by the questionnaire, a tabular statistical method was used to acquire the percentage value by frequencies of the answers received. As state above, a sample size of 155 was statistically drawn from the population of 252 workers. A total of 155 questionnaire were administered to cover the determined sample size. On completion of the exercise, 150 out of the 155 questionnaire were duly completed and returned.

Table 1: Respondents rating of employee motivation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
High	40	26.7
Average	50	33.3
Low	60	40.0
Total	150	100

A critical examination of table1 reveals that 40 respondents, representing 26.7 percent rate the employee motivation to be high, 50 respondents which constitute 33.3% rate the employee motivation as average while 60 which represent 40.0 percent rate it to be low.

Table 2: The level of awareness of the patients who left the hospital unsatisfied

Response	Frequency	Percentage
A high extent	50	33.3
An average extent	60	40.0
A low extent	40	26.7
Total	150	100

The table above shows that 50 (33.3%) of the respondents say that they are highly aware of the patients who had left the hospital unsatisfied with the treatment given to them, 60 respondents making 40% say they are averagely aware while 40 respondents indicating 26.7% say they have low awareness about whether there are patients who had left the hospital unsatisfied.

Table 3: The extent to which poor employee motivation can contribute to unsatisfactory treatment of patient in the hospital.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
A high extend	150	100
An average extend	0	0
A low extend	0	0
Total	100	100

A critical observation of table 3 above shows that all the respondents representing 100 percent agree to a high extend that poor employee motivation can contributes to unsatisfactory treatment of patients in the hospital.

Table 4: Would you attribute untimely attention to patients in the hospital to poor workers' motivation?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	34.7
No	10	6.7
Total	62	41.4

The above data analysis shows that 52 (34.7) of the respondents who believed that the employees in the hospital do not attend to patients on time attributed that to poor employee motivation while 10 (6.7%) of them attribute that to their inner character.

Table 5: Do you perceive the act of patients diversion in the hospital?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	79	59.7
No	71	47.3
Total	150	100

The above table show 79 respondents, representing 52.7 percent perceived that there is high rate of patient diversion while 71 respondents making 47.3 percent do not perceive patient diversion in the hospital.

Result of hypotheses testing

Ho_1: Poor workers motivation tends not to significantly contribute to unsatisfactory treatment of patients.

The above hypothesis was tested below using responses in table 4,5 and 7 respectively.

Table 19: contingency table

Response	Questions			Total
	4	5	7	
High	40	50	150	240
Average	50	60	0	110
Low	60	40	0	100
Total	150	150	150	450

Degree of freedom (DF) = (3-1) (3-1) that is 3 rows and 3 columns

$$e.i = \frac{RT x CT}{GT}$$

Where:

ei = Expected frequency

RT = Row Total

CT = Column Total

GT = Grand Total

1.   240 x 150 ÷ 450 = 80

2.   240 x 150 ÷ 450 = 80

3.   240 x 150 ÷ 450 = 80

4.   110 x 150 ÷ 450 = 37

5.   110 x 150 ÷ 450 = 37

6.   110 x 150 ÷ 450 = 37

7.   100 x 150 ÷ 450 = 30

8.   100 x 150 ÷ 450 = 30

9.   100 x 150 ÷ 450 = 30

1	O_i	E_i	$o_i - e_i$	$(o_i - e_i)^2$	$\dfrac{(o_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$
1.	40	80	-40	1600	20
2	50	80	-30	900	11.3
3	150	80	70	4900	61.3
4	50	37	13	169	4.6
5	60	37	23	529	14.3
6	0	37	-37	1369	37
7	60	33	27	729	23.1
8	40	33	7	49	1.5
9	0	33	-33	1089	33
					$x^2 = 205.1$

$x^2 = 259.1$

CV & TV where TV = under 5%

205.1 & DF under 5%

205.1 (3-1) (3-1) under 0.05

205.1 & 4 under 0.05

205.1 > 9.488

Decision: The result of the data analysis above indicated that the chi-square value of 205.1 is greater than the critical ratio or table value of 9.488 hence, the null hypothesis Ho is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It is therefore strongly asserted that poor workers motivation tends to significantly contribute to unsatisfactory treatment of patients.

Hypothesis 2

Ho_2: Poor workers motivation tends not to significantly account for lack of timely attendance to patients.

The above hypothesis was tested below with the response from table 9.

Table 20: Non Contingency table

S/N	Response	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Deviation	Square of deviation	X^2
1.	Yes	52	31	21	441	14.2
2.	No	10	31	-21	441	14.2
	Total	63				28.4

$ei = \{\frac{oi}{n}$ where   {oi = summation of observed frequency

n = number of response

Therefore ei = $\frac{62}{2}$ = 31

$x^2 = 284$

28.4 & (R-1) under 5%

28.4 & 2-1 under 0.05

28.4 & 1 under 0.05

28.4 > 3.841

Decision: Since the result of the data analysis above indicated that the chi-square values of 28.4 is greater than the table value of 3.841 the null hypothesis Ho is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore poor workers motivation tends to significantly account for lack of timely attendance to patients.

Hypothesis 3

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between poor workers motivation and revenue remittance to the government.

The above hypothesis was tested below with the response from table 11.

Table 21: Non-contingency table

S/N	Response	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	Deviation	Square of deviation	X^2
1.	Yes	150	75	75	5626	75
2.	No	0	75	-75	5626	75
	Total	150				150

$ei = \{\frac{oi}{n}$ where   {oi = summation of observed frequency

n = number of response

Therefore ei = $\frac{150}{2}$ = 75

x^2 = 150

150 & (R-1) under 5%

150 & 2-1 under 0.05

150 & 1 under 0.05

150 > 3.841

Decision: since the result of the data analysis above indicated that the chi-square value of 150 is greater than the table value of 3.841, the null hypothesis Ho is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, there is significant relationship between workers motivation and revenue remittance to the government.

6.   DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The result of data analysis has revealed that poor workers motivation has significant relationship with the various productivity variables such as the physical work environment, employee job performance and product quality (quality of care). This, therefore, tends to significantly contribute to unsatisfactory treatment of patient.

Again, the result revealed that poor workers motivation tends to significantly account for lack of timely attendance to patient. This is attributed to the reasons why an increasing number of the patients are not given satisfactory treatment as they leave without coming back to complete their treatment.

There is significant relationship between workers motivation and revenue remittance to the government, however, the study revealed that there is a remarkable reduction in revenue generation and the amount remitted to the government per period. This was adduced as the resultant effect of patient diversion to private clinics for private practice, truancy and pilfering..

7.   CONCLUSION

Form the analysis of data, it has been proven that poor workers motivation tends to significantly contribute to:

- Unsatisfactory treatment of patients
- Lack of timely attendance to patients
- The reduced revenue generation capacity of the hospital and subsequent remittance to the government.

Productivity of the human resources, especially of the knowledged workers, requires that people are assigned where their potential for result are, and not where their skill and knowledge cannot produce results no matter how well the work. Most productivity researchers would agree with me that improve productivity would involve a balance between "human were" and "hard were" i.e automation approaches. No matter how much capital is invested in sophisticated equipment, if the workers cannot operate it and if they fear the loss of their jobs, then effective use of the sophisticated equipment will not be achieved.

8.   RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings during the course of this research, the battle for the improvement of productivity level in the public health services must begin with the following recommendations.

1.   A deliberate policy of training and retraining all cadres of medical and paramedical staff on their functions, duties and responsibilities as well as their corresponding right, entitlements and privileges should be formulated and executed. This will enhance the productivity of the hospital in particular and the public health system in general.

2.   Development of technical competence of management staff on productivity programmes which will solicit ideas from workers (e.g organizing teams of workers

and management staff), study how similar organization have increase productivity, and re-examine the way work is done.

3. Developing good labour relations to help prevent or minimize the incidence of labour unrest and disharmony that often lead to low productivity.

4. Conducting periodic productivity audits and ensuring individuals job description, job evaluation and job allocation in order to trim the size of staff and prevent or minimize redundancy.

5. Conducting meaningful appraisal and promotion exercise at a regular basis.

6. Finally, the state government should upgrade the hospital to a teaching hospital, this will allow for residency training, and reduce the high rate of labour turnover by the doctors and other professionals who seriously desires to become consultant.

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Influence of Ethical Consideration on Strategic Decision-Making in an Organisation in Nigeria

Deborah Oluwaseun AJEH-IROYE[1] and Samuel Opeyemi IROYE[2]

[1]Department of Business Administration
African University of Science and Technology, Abuja.

[2]Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja.

Corresponding Email: debbyiroye@gmail.com

Abstract

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in shaping strategic decision-making within organizations, impacting their long-term sustainability and reputation. This paper examines the multifaceted influence of ethics on corporate strategic decisions. It also observes how ethical principles guide organizational leaders in navigating complex business landscapes. It employed a desk review research method using mainly secondary data. Through a review of relevant literatures, the study evaluates the implication of the integration of ethical frameworks into strategic planning processes, the consequential outcomes on organizational behaviour and stakeholder relationships. Furthermore, it investigates their impact on organizations vis-à-vis their challenges when balancing ethical issues with competitive demands, regulatory requirements, and stakeholder expectations. Following deductions from extant of literature reviewed, this paper contributes to deeper understanding of the impact of ethics on strategic decision-making, and also emphasizes its influence on effective leadership for the sustainability of standard organizational practices. This study finds out that there are overwhelming challenges in the process of embracing ethical issues in corporate operations and thus provide possible insights to how some of these can be effectively neutralised.

Keywords: Ethical, Influence, Organisation, Strategic planning

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic decision is an organization's pace setter and active direction's determinant. Strategic decisions are those central and critical decisions with far reaching long-term impacts on the overall wellbeing of an organization; they typically and systematically demand huge chunks of organizational sensitive resources and other key aspects

(Mahmood, 2012). According to Oana, Petru & Patrick (2009), in business operations, the growth, successes, and productivity of any business organization or entrepreneurial firms and their wellness depends largely and tenaciously on effective strategic decisions-making driven by sound practices among organization's decision makers. In today's complex and dynamic business environment, organisations face numerous challenges that require strategic decision-making to ensure survival and success. Thus, strategic-decisions are not only driven by economic and financial consideration but also by ethical principles and values which plays an important role in shaping an organisation's decision-making. This therefore justifies the assertion of Badaracco (2016) who stated that, when decisions are not established in law, it falls on ethics to determine the appropriate action. He further stated that when a goal to maximise profits or project mainly the shareholders' value, at all costs, does not run contrary to the established law, only ethics can evaluate the human and societal costs of pursuing such a course. Nevertheless, the proponent of any ethical or unethical decision are the individual themselves because when ethical practices are not being clearly communicated at an organisational level it becomes the responsibility of the individuals and their peer group to establish and reinforce the standard of ethics adopted. It is noteworthy that often times, what determines the success and impact of some organisations above their contemporaries are basically sound ethical issues driven by good leadership ideals. Research has shown that organizations that prioritize ethics in decision making tend to achieve better long-term outcomes. This assertion enjoys the backing of Treviño et al. (2000) who in their study postulated that firms with a strong ethical culture are more likely to maintain stakeholder trust and support, which contributes to sustained competitive advantage. Waddock and Graves (1997) also aligns with this position when they argue that ethical considerations influence strategic decisions by shaping organizational identity and reputation, which in turn affect consumer's loyalty and investor's confidence. Existing Literatures have also proven that notwithstanding the positive impact of ethical issues in corporate operations, it is not without its challenges. Banerjee (2008) identifies one of these challenges as the complexity of balancing ethical principles with financial objectives most especially in competitive markets where short-

term gains often overshadow long-term sustainability. Also in the same vein, it has been discovered that organizational cultures that prioritize profit maximization over ethical behaviour may face internal resistance to ethical decision-making frameworks (DesJardins, 2014). Nevertheless, this study discovers that the issue of surmounting over the known challenges of ethical issues have been underplayed as there is dearth of literature in that aspect and it is this gap that this study tries to establish and probably provides viable solutions to them. The clarity of this research has been pursued in the light of essential questions which form the basis of this study and these are:

1. What role does ethical frameworks played in guiding strategic decision-making processes in Business Organisations in Nigeria?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities encountered in the process of integrating ethical considerations into strategic decision making in Business Organisations in Nigeria?
3. What are the practical solutions to the challenges of imbibing ethical issues in Business Organisations in Nigeria?

 The objectives that guide this study are:

1) examination of the role of ethical frameworks in guiding strategic decision-making processes in Business Organisations in Nigeria.
2) examination of the challenges and opportunities organizations face in integrating ethical considerations into strategic decision making in Business Organisations in Nigeria
3) provision of possible, viable and practical solutions to the challenges of imbibing ethical issues in in Business Organisations in Nigeria.

2.   METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in this paper is the desk-review approach. This method allows the researcher to access and analyze a wealth of information, contributing to evidence-based policy recommendations and decision-making. By leveraging the accessibility of online resources, researcher can conducted an initial exploration of their topic, refine

research questions, and gain valuable insights without exposing themselves to potential risks.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical Considerations in Business Strategy

Business ethics guide executives, managers, and employees in their daily actions and decision-making. For example, consider a company that has decided to dump chemical waste that it cannot afford to dispose of properly on a vacant lot it has purchased in the local community. This action has legal, environmental, and social repercussions that can damage a company beyond repair. By definition, business ethics refers to the standards for morally right and wrong conduct in business. Law partially defines the conduct, but "legal" and "ethical" aren't necessarily the same. Business ethics enhances the law by outlining acceptable behaviors beyond government control (Karisa Schroeder (2021). Business ethics involve a guiding standard for values, behaviors, and decision making. Running a business with ethics at its core from the top down is essential for company-wide integrity. Behaving in a consistently ethical manner can lock in a solid reputation and long-term financial rewards for companies. Thus, Organizations must prioritize these considerations to uphold fairness, transparency, and accountability. By addressing ethical concerns, businesses can build trust, protect user privacy, mitigate biases, and avoid potential harm caused by unethical AI practices. Corporations establish business ethics to promote integrity among their employees and gain trust from key stakeholders, such as investors and consumers. While corporate ethics programs have become common, the quality varies. According to the 2018 Global Business Ethics Survey (GBES), less than one in four U.S. workers think their company has a "well-implemented" ethics program. (Karisa Schroeder (2021). Some of the ethical issues in business management are diversity issues; decision-making issues; compliance and grievance issues; health and safety issues; social networking ethics; harassment and discrimination in the work place; social media rants; ethics in accounting practices; whistleblowing; non-disclosure and etc.

Strategic Decision- Making and Ethical Foundations

Over the years, literature has shown that, decision making both in individual and corporate

thinking is one of the most crucial aspects and critical activities just as Nwachukwu, (2007) rightly put, decision making can be regarded as one of the most critical or crucial aspects or activities of management. That is, the requirement or need to decide or shape a stronger direction is the everyday drive or preoccupation of organizations management in all forms of business outfits whether handful enterprises or large corporations. Ethical decision making in organizations is rooted in theories of ethical behaviour and moral philosophy. Scholars have argued that ethical decision making involves appraising actions in terms of their moral implications and potential consequences for stakeholders. From a strategic perspective, Treviño and Weaver (2003) emphasize the importance of ethical leadership in fostering a corporate culture that prioritizes ethical considerations in decision making. . It provides organizations with near smooth sailing into the future world of business. For example, for someone starting a new business venture, some factors need to be put into thought for clearer and better understanding, such include targets customers markets, time, population, government policy, prices of other commodities, operating cost etc. Strategic decisions will organization managers/decision's makers to make or classify decisions for the purpose of reaching an ideal or feasible solution. Harappa, (2020). Furthermore, Ethical decisions tend to uphold legal and professional standards and show respect for relevant stakeholders. DuBois, (2008). Stakeholders may include coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, customers, investors, or even society.

Types of Business Ethics

There are different types of business ethics. The effectiveness of an organisation can be well projected in so many ways among which are its commitment to corporate social responsibility practices, transparency, trustworthiness, fairness, and technological practices.

a) **Corporate Social Responsibility:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the concept of meeting the needs of stakeholders while accounting for the impact meeting those needs has on employees, the environment, society, and the community in which the business operates. Finances and profits are important, but they should be secondary to the welfare of society, customers, and employees. In fact, studies have concluded that corporate governance and ethical practices increase financial performance.

b) **Transparency and Trustworthiness**: It is essential for companies to ensure they are reporting their <u>financial performance</u> in a way that is transparent. This not only applies to required financial reports but all reports in general. Most of these reports outline not only the submitted reports to regulators, but how and why decisions were made, if goals were met, and factors that influenced performance. CEOs write summaries of the company's annual performance and give their outlooks. Press releases are another way companies can be transparent. Events important to investors and customers should be published, regardless of whether it is good or bad news.

c) **Fairness**: A workplace should be inclusive, diverse, and fair for all employees regardless of race, religion, beliefs, age, or identity. A fair work environment is where everyone can grow, be promoted, and become successful in their own way.

d) **Technological Practices and Ethics**: The growing use of technology of all forms in business operations inherently comes with a need to ensure the technology and information being gathered is used ethically. Additionally, it should ensure that the technology is <u>secured</u> to the utmost of its ability, especially as many businesses store customer information and collect data that those with nefarious intentions can use.

Principles of Business Ethics

Seven principles of business ethics have been identified and these includes; accountability, care, respect, honesty, healthy competition, loyalty, transparency, and respect for the rule of law. But on his part, Alexandra Twin (2024) in

his study stated that, there are generally 12 business ethics principles and these are identified as follows:

1. **Leadership**: The conscious effort to adopt, integrate, and emulate the other 11 principles to guide decisions and behaviour in all aspects of professional and personal life.

2. **Accountability:** Taking full responsibilities for actions taking, showing full Commitment by obeying ethical practices and ensuring others follow ethics guidelines.

3. **Integrity**: Incorporates other principles like honesty, trustworthiness, and reliability. Someone with integrity consistently does the right thing and endeavours to hold themselves to a higher standard.

4. **Respect for others**: To applause ethical behaviour and environments in the workplace, respecting others is a critical component. Everyone deserves dignity, privacy, fairness, opportunity, empathy, and empathy.

5. **Honesty**: truth matters in all business environments. Partial truths, omissions, and under or overstating don't aid a business develop its performance. Bad news should be communicated and received in the same manner as good news so that solutions can be developed.

6. **Respect for laws**: Ethical leadership should include enforcing all local, state, and federal laws. If there is a legal grey area, leaders should err on the side of legality rather than exploiting a gap.

7. **Responsibility**: Promote ownership within an organization, allow employees to be responsible for their work, and be accountable for yours.

8. **Transparency**: Stakeholders are people with an interest in a business, such as shareholders, employees, the community a firm operates in, and the family members of the employees. Without divulging trade secrets, companies should

ensure information about their financials, price changes, hiring and firing practices, wages and salaries, and promotions are available to those interested in the business's success.

9. **Compassion**: Employees, the community surrounding a business, business partners, and customers should all be treated with concern for their well-being.

10. **Equality**: Everyone should have the same opportunities and be treated the same. If a practice or behavior would make you feel uncomfortable or place personal or corporate benefit in front of equality, common courtesy, and respect, it is likely not fair.

11. **Loyalty**: Leadership should demonstrate commitment to their employees and the company. Inspiring loyalty in employees and management ensures that they are committed to best practices.

12. **Environmental concern**: in our country where resources are inadequate, ecosystems have been impaired by past practices, and the climate is changing, it is very crucial to be aware of and concerned about the environmental impacts a business has. All employees should be encouraged to discover and report solutions for practices that can add to damages already done.

Furthermore, Karisa Schroeder (2021) citing the work of Gartner stated what ethics program should encompass and these are; defining the program mandate, mitigate and monitor risk, establish policies and procedures, oversee allegations of misconduct, provision of training and communications, reinforcement of behavioral expectations and management of the function of behavior ethics.

Challenges of Ethical Consideration

Despite the benefits, integrating ethical considerations into strategic decision making is not without challenges. There are many challenges that are likely to be encountered in the process of the implementation of ethics into the organization's operations and according to Abdul Rahman, et. al. (2020) these includes but not limited to; lack of

enforcement, organizational culture, poor leadership, whistleblowing and lack of ethics training. These are hereby examined one after the other as follows:

1. **Organizational Culture and Resistance**: Transforming organizational culture to prioritize ethics often meets resistance due to ingrained practices or lack of understanding of the business benefits of ethical behavior (Treviño & Nelson, 2016). Organizational culture can be identified as the beliefs and behaviours that contribute to the social and psychological atmosphere unique to an organization. Rick (2015) on his own part stated that organisational culture represents the system of shared assumption, values and belief which relates to governing how people behave in the organization. Organisational culture is one of strategic asset towards improving the performance of the organization itself. It also involves an organization's objectives, values, philosophy, and convictions that tie it together, and is expressed in its self-image, internal workings, public relations, and expectations for the future. Previous research indicated that organizations who have high morals and is ethically based on their image, their employee will show the behavior in suitable responsible manner (Erwin, 2011).

2. **Costs and Resource Allocation**: Executing ethical practices may involve additional costs, such as investing in sustainable technologies or fair labor practices. Allocating resources to meet ethical standards can strain budgets, particularly in resource-constrained environments (Peters, 2014).

3. **Lack of Enforcement**: Recently, obedience has been addressed as one of the factor that increases the efficacy of codes, but it needs to be looked at from the traditional theory viewpoint, including not only punishment but also incentives. A person's willingness to engage in ethical or unethical behaviour can influence the recorded acts. Consequently, it was found that the capacity for unethical behaviour is a better predictor of actions than social or belief. It has been shown that employees work harder to understand and follow the ethical values and strategies of top management if the organization rewards people for following excellent ethical standards while also punishing those who do not behave ethically. Examples of moral behaviour incentives are recognition, appreciation,

recognition, and money. Human resources department has these direct and indirect control mechanisms, organizations with equal reward systems, promoting ethical behaviour and implementing a consistent compliance process are likely to have a positive effect on ethical attitudes and behaviours (Mcdonald, 2009). Askew, Beisler & Keel (2015) state by establishing and enforce the code of conduct or ethics will assist in create the organization environment that encourage the ethical behaviour among people.

4. **Poor Leadership**: Comprehensions and reactions of a leader to ethical codes have been a mediating influence code and their application, and research strongly supports the conclusion that ethical philosophies and management principles have a significant impact on employee ethical choices and behaviour. Employees assume that unethical behaviour is dependent on the organizational environment, particularly the immediate action of one's boss and peers. As a result, the management position has been extensively studied, suggesting that the perceived attitudes and actions of immediate subordinates and senior managers are significantly affected by employees ' unethical decisions (Mcdonald, 2009). Mihelič, Lipičnik and Tekavčič (2010) stated that leaders are the crucial sources of ethical guidance to the employee and so expected to take ethical responsibility for a moral development in organization. Prentice (2014) asserts that it is necessary to strengthen the moral reasoning and reinforcing character in assisting the leader who wish to be better people and also who wish other people to be ethical leadership.

5. **Whistleblowing**: Recently, Whistleblowing has become important in because many large companies whose cheating has been revealed through whistleblowing (Pangmungkas, Ghozali & Achmad (2017). Whistleblowing is an effort to attract public attention to a negligent, illegal, unethical, abusive or dangerous act by an individual or organization. Other than that, whistle-blowers are employees who act as informants on their organization, revealing information to enrich themselves or to gain revenge for a perceived wrong. However, whistle-blowers act ethically in an attempt to correct what they think is a major wrongdoing, often

at great personal risk (Reynolds, 2019). Whistleblowers start as people who sympathize with the system and are committed to their work and organizations. They change their views and then only face reprisals if they are forced to breach their own ethical, moral standards. An organization that constantly silences or eliminates its loyal heresies is a system on its way to failure. It is not ethically responsive to one who does not provide an adequate internal support system for their loyal whistles blowing due to a breach of professional standards (Ray, 2006). According to Ray (2006), transparency in the public and private sectors, the agency and the health care professional, and the health care worker and the client are at the heart of the issue of whistleblowing. Health care organizations need to pursue a concerted plan to create an ethical infrastructure in order to prevent a collapse in transparency. The lack of internal resources, interaction and value structures are major factors in issues leading to public whistleblowing. They need to create ethical health care organizations with adequate procedures in place to encourage responsibly, committed, loyal heretics to address ethical issues openly. Therefore, improvements are needed to build ethical infrastructure in order to develop a positive society's. Failure to respond to internal whistleblowing was an institution that was ethically corrupted in its heart and lost its moral compass. Unethical behaviour in health care institutions is more systemic and traceable to institutional structures than to the individual moral failures in which it arises. A bureaucracy is capable of mechanizing virtually every aspect of human life, eroding man's spirit and the ability to act spontaneously. A hierarchical administrative structure can reproduce the social class system in which the use of the human resources department or force people into a process of dominance. In the nursing literature, on the other hand, workplace bullying and public harassment of nurses who they are supporters or whistleblowers they are all documented. In this type of environment, nurses who are unable to obey uniform, team standards or organization culture procedures may be forced to change jobs or even careers (Ray, 2006).

6. **Lack of Ethics Training**: One of the problems of all international organisations is lack of ethical culture and is one that plays a central role for human resources professionals. In view of high-profile harassment cases involving businesses that, despite having an ethical policy or code, have suffered almost catastrophic hits to credibility, it is clear that it is not enough to have an ethical code and to expect that workers can read it, grasp it and apply it human resources throughout their everyday working lives (Irwin and Bradshaw, 2011; Christou & Stamou, 2013). Irwin and Bradshaw (2011) stated that human resources departments are a point of contact within an organization for all workers. They have unprecedented access to workers from induction training to exit interviews and can be critical for all roles to create a cohesive workplace culture. Establishing good business standards based on ethical principles allows businesses to enforce ethics or corporate responsibility policies such as laws, guidelines, training and support, and so on, as they are all as to foster an ethical culture effectively. One way in which international organization can ensure that their ethics programs are both appropriate and effective is to create a network of ambassadors of ethics to help promote the ethical values, policies and programs of the organization. A code of ethics includes various components, including training, a communication strategy, and a protocol for speaking up. In addition, Kaptein (2015) states the best sequence for ethical component program and these are; (1) a code of ethics; (2) ethics training and communication; (3) accountability policies; (4) monitoring and auditing; (5) investigation and correction policies; (6) an ethics office(r); (7) ethics report line; and (8) incentive policies. Other than that, the organization also can implement business ethics with formal learning space where the employee will be exposed to the various type of high-principle dilemmas in organization (Fatin Erna Mat Arif, Zulaikha Zulkefli and Norhayati Hussin, 2017). It can be a complex and lengthy process that requires attention, persistence, and energy to integrate business conduct ethical principles across an enterprise actually to influence culture, decision-making, and actions. Creating ambassadors of ethics is an ideal way of human resources department to a global organization to

incorporate the different elements of such a program (Irwin and Bradshaw, 2011). Besides that, ethical failure of organizational leadership also has led to interest in promoting ethical conduct and developing ethical leaders (Chikeleze & Baehrend, 2017). It is noteworthy that the Human Resources Department is responsible for key systems and processes that can support the effective delivery of ethical messages that the organization wishes to communicate. Human resources practitioners may assist in incorporating ethics into processes such as employer brand, hiring, promotion, evaluation, retention, encouragement, incentive, diversity, coaching and learning by working in collaboration with those responsible for ethical quality in their organization (Irwin and Bradshaw, 2011). Besides that, developing the skill set also will able the employee analyze and deal with the ethical issues in order to make a good decision and navigate ethical challenges is a part of training should implement in the organization (Ahadi, 2020).

Dealing with challenges of incorporating ethical codes

An organization has an ethical duty to ensure that its workers understand also aligns with ethical issues as proposed because the lack of understanding on the part of the employee and other stakeholders are often parts of the challenges encountered in the process of incorporation of ethical considerations into company operations. A whole lot of values have been identified as viable in dealing with such menace and they are x-rayed by Josh Hyatt and Jeffrey Gruenglas (2023) as follows:

1. **Vision.** A clear and well-defined vision establishes the standards for ethical behaviour by clearly outlining the organization's goals, purpose, and values.It also serves as strong tool for setting the tone of ethical behaviour within an organization by providing a framework for decision-making that aligns with its ethical standard. The clarity of an organisational vision will be well projected embraced and propel if all who are concern or involved directly or indirectly in the business are ready to foster sporadic growth through concerted effort. The vision statement summarises the long-term goals and direction of the

organization. It explains better what the organisation wants and values they stands for the values that underpin its actions. When explicitly stated in the vision, these values become a guiding light for ethical behaviour. Employees and stakeholders can refer to the vision to understand the organization's overarching objectives and the ethical principles governing their actions. It provides a common language and a reference point for discussions and decision-making about ethical dilemmas. When employees have a clear vision to guide them, they can make choices consistent with the organization's values, even in complex situations where ethical dilemmas may arise.

2. **Communication plan:** A very good communication is not just a valuable aspect of organizational functioning but a basis supporting transparency, trust, and accountability within the organization. Through effective communication, ethical concerns and guidelines can be clearly and consistently communicated to all employees and stakeholders. Teaching ethical codes and standards are crucial in fostering an organizational culture. A communication plan creates awareness for distributing codes and standards with employees at various levels and departments. By establishing a communication plan that outlines channels, protocols, and expectations, the organization can ensure that ethical concerns and guidelines are effectively communicated and understood by everyone involved. It would include circulating the ethical codes and standards throughout the organization to ensure employees are awareof its values, principles, and guidelines that govern their behaviour. This clarity reduces the likelihood of confusions, misinterpretations, or ethical gaps due to ignorance. By creating channel of communication, organizations can nurture an environment where employees feel comfortable expressing themselves and seeking guidance regarding ethical dilemmas. Transparent communication practices ensure that information about ethical issues, decisions, and processes is shared openly with employees and stakeholders. When employees have access to relevant information, they can make more informed ethical choices and understand the wider context of their actions.

3. **Mitigating conflicts of interest:** An organization has a fundamental obligation to address conflicts of interest to uphold its integrity and maintain the trust of its stakeholders. Conflicts of interest occur when an individual's interests or responsibilities interfere with their ability to act in the organization's best interests. By addressing conflicts of interest proactively and transparently, organizations can mitigate the risks associated with such conflicts and ensure fair and ethical decision-making processes.

4. **Policies and guidelines**: For an organisation to effectively address and manage conflicts of interest it is essential to establish clear policies and guidelines. These policies serve as a roadmap that outlines the organization's expectations and procedures for identifying, disclosing, and resolving conflicts of interest. Clearly communicating these policies to employees establishes a foundation for addressing conflicts systematically and fairly. The effective communication of these policies and guidelines is essential. To achieve this, an organization should organise trainings, workshop, seminar, regular communication channels, and integrating the policies into the organization's code of conduct or employee handbook. By providing specific examples and scenarios, employees should understand better the things that can trigger rise in conflicts of interest.

5. **Transparency and disclosure:** Organizations must promote and require transparency and disclosure. Employees should be encouraged and required to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including financial interests, personal relationships, or other external affiliations that could compromise their objectivity or impartiality. Organizations can effectively identify and manage conflicts of interest by creating an environment where disclosure is valued and protected. When conflicts of interest are identified, organizations have a duty to assess and manage them appropriately. For example, employees with a conflict are asked to recuse themselves from this decision-making process.

6. **Education:** Proactive and on-going education programs about conflicts of interest and their potential consequences are critical. Training programs and

workshops can raise awareness about the ethical implications of conflicts and guide how to identify and manage them effectively. Fostering a culture of ethical awareness empowers employees to make informed decisions and act in the organization's best interests.

7. **Fairness and equity:** These critical concepts pertain to treating individuals justly and ensuring equal opportunities, access, and treatment for all organization members. Organizations prioritizing fairness and equity create an ethical environment that promotes inclusivity, diversity, and respect. Fairness refers to the fair and unbiased treatment of individuals within an organization. It entails making decisions and allocating resources free from favoritism, discrimination, or bias. Fairness ensures that individuals are treated equitably based on objective criteria and relevant qualifications. This principle extends to various aspects of organizational life, such as hiring and promotion processes, compensation and benefits, performance evaluations, and disciplinary actions. Conversely, equity focuses on ensuring that individuals have equal access to opportunities, resources, and benefits. It recognizes that individuals may have diverse needs, circumstances, and backgrounds

8. **Psychological safety:** Fostering an environment of psychological safety is closely intertwined with organizational ethics. Psychological safety exists in an environment where individuals feel safe to express their opinions, ideas, and concerns and can take interpersonal risks without fear of retaliation or punishment. Nurturing psychological safety can significantly contribute to upholding ethical principles and practices because employees feel empowered to raise questions, share their perspectives, and challenge unethical practices without fear of judgment. Conversely, an environment that allows for psychological fear is likely to see an increase in stress, anxiety, and fear levels in the workplace.

4. NIGERIAN ORGANIZATIONS WITH EFFECTIVE ETHICAL CONSIDERATION IN STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING

Several Nigerian companies demonstrate strong ethical considerations in their strategic decisions, particularly through corporate social responsibility (CSR), transparency, and stakeholder engagement. For example, Dangote Group integrates ethics by funding healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation projects through the Dangote Foundation, influencing where and how it invests. MTN Nigeria, via its Foundation, channels a portion of its profits into education, healthcare, and digital inclusion, ensuring communities benefit directly from its operations. Nigerian Breweries Plc embeds environmental sustainability and responsible drinking campaigns into its business model, shaping production and resource management strategies. Similarly, Stanbic IBTC Bank promotes ethical banking through transparency, compliance, and community development initiatives. Companies like Elizade Nigeria Limited and PANA Holdings are also recognized for integrity and fair business practices, which guide their customer relations and governance structures.

5. FINDINGS

From literatures reviewed during this research, several discoveries were made as regards the impact of ethical consideration on corporate operations and these are analysed as follows:

Ethical Consideration Promotes Positive Corporate Perception: As established by the reviews in this study, ethical considerations well applied in the companies' operations will at the end be highly beneficial to the company as it will help to launder its image to the perception of the public. This is particularly applicable where the company is alive to its corporate social responsibilities to the society. In some organisations, it has been known to identify with the challenges of the communities and that has placed it in the first place of consideration when there are a community issue that affects any corporate organisations.

Ethical Consideration is Profit Oriented: Companies whose operations incorporate inclusive ethical values of its host communities enjoys not only the patronage of that community but also enjoys unsolicited safety and security, thus, reducing the cost of securing its properties because the host community ensure that her facilities are free from intrusion of any kind.

Ethical Consideration Enhances Staff Dedication: where the ethical issues of the corporation are favourable to the employees, such company enjoys unalloyed dedication of the members of staff. Quite lot of the members of staff of the of some have enjoyed indiscriminate freedom to go for further study while still working. This act makes the staff to be more committed to the company as payback for the scholarship opportunity which is not easy to come by in any of such organisation.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

From the views of reviewed literatures in this work, it has been established that Ethical considerations and practice will not only be beneficial to the company but all the stakeholders and this is inclusive of the members of stall and the larger society.

In view of the above this study hereby recommends that policies should be put in place that will compel companies to tend toward positive ethical practices.

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Netizens Perception of Social Media Regulation and Hate Speech Control in Nigeria

Francis AMENAGHAWON and Fikayo Stephen OYEWOLE

Department of Communication and Language Arts
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Corresponding Email: imisi777@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the complex tension between the Nigerian government's call for social media regulation, primarily justified as a measure to control hate speech, and netizens' concerns over potential abuse of such regulation for political suppression. While the federal government argues that regulating social media is necessary to curb hate speech, disinformation, and online violence, critics contend that these moves often serve as tools to silence dissent and opposition voices. This tension is exemplified by the 2021 Twitter (now X) ban during the #EndSARS movement, which raised questions about freedom of expression and digital rights. Adopting a quantitative research design, data were gathered from 207 respondents across three universities in Oyo State. Findings reveal that awareness of social media regulation laws in Nigeria is limited and uneven. While many respondents are familiar with Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015, knowledge of other frameworks such as the Nigerian Broadcasting Code, the Data Protection Regulation, and the Social Media Bill remains low. Netizens also express mixed feelings toward government regulation, supporting stricter control if it reduces harmful content but distrusting the government's ability to enforce it fairly. The study recommends enhancing public awareness and digital literacy on social media laws, leveraging online platforms for civic education, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, and strengthening accountability in enforcement. Ultimately, it concludes that sustainable digital governance in Nigeria requires balancing regulatory control with transparency, participatory engagement, and protection of citizens' rights to free expression.

Keywords: Social Media, Social Media Regulation, Hate Speech

1.   INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media has evolved from a space for social interaction to an ideological arena where unchecked freedom of speech has fueled the spread of hate speech (Matamoros-Fernadez & Farkas, 2021; Goodarzi et al., 2021). Netizens now use

these platforms to voice opinions, challenge authority, and mobilize change, often without balancing this freedom with responsible digital communication (Ma & Zhang, 2021). While some scholars view social media regulation as a necessary reform to curb misinformation and hate speech (Okewulonu, 2023; Pukallus & Arthur, 2024; Griffin, 2022), others argue it threatens freedom of expression (Inobemhe, 2021; Obiora et al., 2022; Paulos & Celik, 2021). Nigeria's digital sphere—home to over 100 million internet users—has become a vibrant site of political activism and civic engagement, especially during movements like #EndSARS, the Obedient Movement, and EndBadGovernance campaigns. However, unregulated activism has also expanded the prevalence of hate speech online (Adams & Dorcas, 2024). Defined as speech that causes social, psychological, or symbolic harm (Brown, 2017; Castano-Pulgarin, 2021), hate speech remains a pressing concern. The government's 2021 suspension of Twitter (now X) in response to online dissent highlights the ongoing tension between maintaining digital freedom and enforcing responsible online communication. This study therefore seeks to examine the extent to which Netizens are aware of social media regulation laws in Nigeria and how they perceive them.

Statement of Problem

The tension between the call for regulating social media, its motive of controlling hate speech and netizens' concerns over perceived misuse or selective enforcement are the main issues this research seeks to investigate. While the federal government of Nigeria justifies that social media must be regulated to mitigate the widespread of hate speech, violence, disinformation, other studies contend that this will be an abuse of power, as they are politically motivated moves to silence dissent and opposition views. The social media space in Nigeria, has also experienced significant regulations and attempts to limit social interactions within the country. This is boldly expressed in the controversial national ban of Twitter (now X) in 2021, during the social movement against police brutality called #EndSars.

Previous empirical arguments and debates on social media regulation in Nigeria are not ideologically monolithic, as there is a tension between responsible digital behaviour and

government control and attempt to suppress opposition criticism. This therefore makes debates on social media regulation and hate speech to be double edged. While the definition of hate speech is unambiguous, studies have argued that in a Nigerian context, the term has the tendency of being used as a politically instrumentalized tool to suppress online criticism (Paulos and Celik, 2021). On the other hand, some studies contend that it is a necessary move to curb hate speech, misinformation and digital violence (Okewulonu, 2023; Pukallus and Arthur, 2024; Griffin, 2022). Based on these arguments, it becomes imperative to investigate how netizens perceive social media regulation as an attempt to curb hate speech. This paper therefore investigates the extent to which Netizens are aware of social media regulation laws in Nigeria and how they perceive them.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of netizens' awareness of laws governing hate speech in Nigeria?

2. How do Netizens recognize hate speech on social media in Nigeria?

3. How do Netizens perceive social media regulation in controlling hate speech in Nigeria?

4. What type of social media regulation against hate speech do netizens desire?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ideological and Theoretical Perspectives on Social Media Regulations Globally

The concept of social media regulation reflects concerns not only around how to address disinformation and fake news, but also address deeper ideological differences about freedom, democracy and state of power. While different social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok among others operate globally, governments' regulatory approaches and ideologies differ, and these differences are largely determined by the varying political ideologies that exist within different countries (Yang, 2024). Liberal democracies tend to lean more towards frameworks that balance civil liberties

and accountability, while on the other hand, political ideologies that are run by authoritarian and hybrid regimes are more likely to state control and regime preservation (Takhshid, 2021).

Studies have argued that, in liberal democracies, social media regulations are grounded in values of autonomy, free speech and limited government (Barroso and Barroso, 2023). In the United States for example, the law specifies this in Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (1996), that prevents platforms from liability for user content while allowing good-faith moderation. The United Kingdom, sharing liberal roots, takes a more communitarian stance. Its Online Safety Act (2023) introduces a "duty of care" requiring platforms to protect users, especially minors, from harmful content. Supervised by Ofcom, this framework reflects John Stuart Mill's harm principle, balancing freedom with collective responsibility. The trends are different in Authoritarian countries such as China and North Korea, as these countries adopt an entirely different ideology on the issue of social media regulation (Dukalskis, 2017). In North Korea, there is restriction of internet access to a small elite through its internal network, Kwangmyong, using regulation to erase dissent. China's Cybersecurity (2017) and Data Security (2021) laws enforce data localisation, censorship, and surveillance, aligning with authoritarian media theory, which positions the state as guardian of ideological conformity. Here, digital technologies sustain party dominance rather than civic discourse. Issues of social media regulation reflect hybrid and postcolonial practices and dynamics across sub-Saharan Africa. Studies noted issues such as weak institutions and authoritarian tendencies produce reactive or politically motivated frameworks on how and the extent social media should be regulated.

Concept of Hate Speech

Within social media discourse, the boundaries of hate speech remains one of the most debatable issues, as it involves expressions that are perceived to be targeted towards individuals or groups based on their identity markers such as race, religion, gender, political association, ethnicity among others. Adjin-Tettey and Amenaghawon, (2024) noted that hate speech is targeted with the intent to incite discrimination, violence or

hatred. While appearing simple, defining hate speech is an ambiguous and difficult task because it lies between two competing democratic ideals, the protection of freedom of speech and expression and the prevention of violence and discrimination. Within the global context, legal, political ideologies and cultural contexts shape how different societies perceive and respond to hate speech. These contrasting models reflect ongoing philosophical debates about whether freedom of speech should be absolute or limited in the interest of public order (Amenaghawon and Salawu, 2022). In Nigeria, the debate is particularly urgent. With over 250 ethnic groups and multiple religions, the country's diversity makes it vulnerable to the divisive power of hate speech, especially on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Online rhetoric has, in several instances, fuelled political, ethnic, and religious violence.

Perception Theory

Perception theory explains how individuals actively interpret their environment through sensory input, experience, and meaning-making. It emphasizes that perception is not a passive or objective process but one shaped by personal experiences, cultural values, emotions, and social influences (Barry, 2004). In the digital age, perception theory offers a valuable framework for examining how individuals engage with issues like social media regulation and hate speech. Platforms such as Facebook and X (Twitter) are not neutral, they shape perceptions through algorithms, echo chambers, and targeted content. This study applies perception theory to explore how Nigerians understand and respond to calls for social media regulation, considering factors like political orientation, culture, and digital literacy. Through this lens, the study highlights how subjective perceptions influence attitudes toward online speech governance.

GateKeeping Theory

Gatekeeping theory, introduced by Kurt Lewin in 1943, explains how information is filtered before reaching the public. Traditionally, editors and journalists decided which stories were shared, guided by editorial judgment and institutional priorities (Chin-Fook and Simmonds, 2011). In this study, gatekeeping theory is used to examine how Nigerian

social media users engage with advocacy content and how this affects the visibility and impact of online protests. The theory helps explain why emotionally charged or sensational content often overshadows policy-oriented messages. It ultimately supports the argument that sustainable policy reform in Nigeria requires more than spontaneous digital mobilisation, it must be reinforced by strategic negotiation and structured dialogue beyond the fleeting attention of social media.

3.   METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine netizens' awareness and perception of hate speech regulation in Nigeria. The population comprised undergraduate students from three universities in Oyo State: the University of Ibadan, Lead City University, and First Technical University, Ibadan. Using a stratified random sampling technique, 207 valid responses were collected through a structured questionnaire containing four sections on demographics, awareness, perception, and attitudes toward regulation, measured on a five-point Likert scale. Content validity was ensured through expert review, while a pilot test yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, confirming reliability. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation and regression) to test relationships among variables. Ethical standards were upheld through informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. Although limited to three universities in one state, the findings provide valuable insights into the perspectives of digitally active Nigerian youths.

4.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.

Demographic Data

This section highlights the demographic data of the respondents, like gender distribution, age group and university. Table 1 below further provide specific data on these demographic details of the respondents:

Table 4.1: Showing respondents' demographic data

Category	Sub-category	Count	Percentage
Age	18–21	89	44.28%
	22–25	72	35.82%
	26–30	31	15.42%
	31–37	15	7.46%
Gender	Male	58	28%
	Female	149	72%
University	University of Ibadan	131	65%
	Tech-U Ibadan	52	25%
	Lead City University	20	10%

The foregoing data in table 4.1 shows the majority of respondents are young adults, with 80% between ages 18–25, indicating a predominantly youth-driven sample. Females make up a larger share of participants (72%) compared to males (28%), suggesting a gender imbalance. In terms of institutional representation, the University of Ibadan dominates with 65% of respondents, followed by Tech-U (25%) and Lead City University (10%), showing that the University of Ibadan contributes the bulk of the responses.

Research Question One: What is the level of netizens' awareness of laws governing hate speech in Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Respondents' Awareness and Sources of Information on Hate Speech Regulations in Nigeria

Awareness Indicator	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Awareness of hate speech laws		
Highly aware	58	23.2
Moderately aware	92	36.8
Slightly aware	64	25.6
Not aware at all	36	14.4
Main sources of information		
Social media	190	76.0
Television	102	40.8
Radio	86	34.4
Friends/Peers	78	31.2
Newspapers	52	20.8
Official government channels	40	16.0

Table 4.2 shows that awareness of hate speech regulation in Nigeria is generally moderate, with most respondents indicating only partial understanding of existing policies. This limited awareness, despite widespread exposure to online discussions, reflects persistent gaps in government-led communication and media literacy (Abdullateef, 2021; Inobemhe, 2021). The data also indicate that social media (76%) remains the dominant source of information, while traditional media and official platforms play a marginal role. This finding aligns with studies showing that Nigerians increasingly rely on digital networks as primary sources of civic knowledge, even when

such spaces are saturated with misinformation and competing narratives (Adjin-Tettey & Amenaghawon, 2024; Mohammed & Adelakun, 2023). The prominence of social media in shaping regulatory awareness demonstrates how information flows are now largely user-driven, supporting arguments that digital publics redefine authority and influence in the communication of policy issues (Ma & Zhang, 2022; Arafah et al., 2025). However, as Akinsola (2025) and Augustine (2025) note, this shift also exposes regulatory discourse to polarization and weakens formal democratic engagement. Thus, the table underscores a dual reality: social media enhances public access to information on hate speech regulation but simultaneously dilutes policy comprehension through unverified and emotionally charged online content.

Table 4.3: Showing Nigerian social media-related laws respondents are familiar with.

Which of the following Nigerian social media-related laws are you familiar with?	Frequency	Percentage
Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2015	116	56%
Nigerian Data Protection Regulation (NDPR)	54	26%
Nigerian Broadcasting Code	61	30%
Social Media Bill (Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill)	53	26%
None of the above	47	28%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.3 shows the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015 is the most widely recognized Nigerian social media–related law, with 56% of respondents reporting familiarity. Awareness of other frameworks was more modest, as 30% identified the Nigerian Broadcasting Code, while 26% reported knowledge of both the Nigerian Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) and the Social Media Bill (Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill). Notably, 28% of respondents indicated no familiarity with any of the listed laws, pointing to a considerable gap in legal awareness. When these findings are read alongside Table 4.2, it becomes evident that while respondents may have heard of certain laws, their overall depth of awareness remains limited, with most reporting only little or very little knowledge of regulations on hate speech. This aligns

with Brown (2017) and Paulos and Çelik (2021), who argue that ambiguity in defining hate speech weakens public understanding and complicates compliance.

Research Question Two: How do Netizens recognize hate speech on social media in Nigeria?

Table 4.4: Showing forms of hate speech on Nigeria Social Media

In your opinion, what are the most common forms of hate speech seen on Nigerian social media?	Frequency	Percentage
Ethic-based attacks	117	57%
Religious intolerance	124	60%
Gender-based hate speech	120	58%
Political hate speech	127	62%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.4 indicates that political hate speech (62%) and religious intolerance (60%) are perceived as the most common forms of hate speech on Nigerian social media, closely followed by gender-based hate speech (58%) and ethnic-based attacks (57%). This distribution underscores the extent to which online discourse in Nigeria mirrors the country's deeply entrenched socio-political divisions.

Table 4.5: Showing how respondents identify hate speech

What personal factors help you determine if a post is hate speech?	Frequency	Percentage
Tone of the message	110	53%
Targeted group or person	113	55%
Use of derogatory language	138	67%
Intent behind the message	96	47%
Reactions or comments from others	66	32%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.5 reveals that respondents primarily recognize hate speech through the use of derogatory language (67%), the targeting of specific groups or individuals (55%), and the tone of the message (53%). Other factors, such as the perceived intent behind the message (47%) and the reactions or comments from others (32%), play a less dominant but still relevant role. When the findings from Tables 4.5 and 4.6 are considered together,

it becomes clear that Nigerian netizens recognize hate speech primarily by focusing on explicit markers, such as offensive words, derogatory tone, and the targeting of political, religious, gender, or ethnic groups, rather than by engaging deeply with the broader context or intent of the communication. This pattern resonates with Brown's (2017) argument that hate speech is often identified in practice through "visible" verbal hostility, even though its legal and philosophical definitions remain ambiguous. It also reflects Matamoros-Fernández and Farkas's (2021) observation that online users tend to police hate speech based on perceived attacks against identity groups, which aligns with the dominance of political, religious, gender, and ethnic categories in Table 4.5.

Research Question Three: How do Netizens perceive social media regulation in controlling hate speech in Nigeria?

Table 4.6: Showing if existing social media regulations in Nigeria are perceived to be effective in reducing hate speech

Do you agree that existing social media regulations in Nigeria are effective in reducing hate speech?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	6%
Agree	39	19%
Neutral	70	34%
Disagree	68	33%
Strongly Disagree	17	8%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.6 shows that only a small proportion of respondents believe existing social media regulations in Nigeria are effective in reducing hate speech, with just 25% (Strongly Agree/Agree) expressing confidence, while 41% (Disagree/Strongly Disagree) doubt their effectiveness. A significant share (34%) remains neutral, suggesting uncertainty or lack of clarity about how these regulations work in practice. This ambivalence reflects broader critiques of Nigeria's regulatory framework, which scholars argue is often undermined by poor implementation, political interference, and vague legal provisions (Obiora, Chiamogu & Chiamogu, 2022; Inobemhe, 2021). Moreover, respondents' skepticism aligns with Abdullateef's (2021) findings that many Nigerians view social media laws less as tools for combating hate speech and more as mechanisms for restricting freedom of expression.

Table 4.7: Showing if the enforcement of social media laws strikes a fair balance between protecting users and preserving freedom of expression

In your opinion, does the enforcement of social media laws strike a fair balance between protecting users and preserving freedom of expression?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	75	36%
No	57	28%
Maybe	75	36%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.7 reveals divided perceptions among netizens on whether the enforcement of social media laws in Nigeria strikes a fair balance between protecting users and preserving freedom of expression. While 36% believe that a fair balance exists, an equal proportion (36%) remain uncertain, and 28% feel that such a balance is lacking. This split reflects ongoing tensions in Nigeria's digital governance. Okewulonu (2023) highlights how regulatory measures often clash with constitutional protections of free speech, creating uncertainty about their legitimacy. Similarly, Obiora, Chiamogu, and Chiamogu (2022) argue that authoritarian tendencies in Nigeria's communication policies undermine trust in regulation, leading to skepticism about fairness. Paulos and Çelik (2021) also note that globally, striking a balance between combating hate speech and preserving free expression is one of the most persistent challenges in digital governance.

Table 4.8: Showing if social media regulation in Nigeria is sometimes used to suppress political or opposing views under the guise of fighting hate speech

Do you think social media regulation in Nigeria is sometimes used to suppress political or opposing views under the guise of fighting hate speech?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	15%
Agree	81	39%
Neutral	70	34%
Disagree	21	10%
Strongly Disagree	5	2%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.8 indicates that a significant proportion of respondents perceive social media regulation in Nigeria as sometimes being used to suppress political or opposing views under the guise of combating hate speech. Specifically, 54% (Strongly Agree and Agree) share this perception, while 34% remain neutral and only 12% disagree. This finding reflects broader concerns about the politicisation of digital governance in Nigeria. Obiora, Chiamogu, and Chiamogu (2022) argue that social media regulations are often implemented in ways that protect political interests rather than promote equitable online spaces. Similarly, Okewulonu (2023) notes that the selective enforcement of laws creates an environment where regulatory measures are perceived as tools of control rather than instruments of civic protection. Adams and Dorcas (2024) further suggest that ethical gaps in policy implementation contribute to distrust, reinforcing the view that regulations may be used strategically to limit dissent.

Research Question Four: What type of social media regulation against hate speech do netizens desire?

Table 4.9: Showing if respondents are confident in the government's ability to implement social media regulations fairly and without bias

How confident are you in the government's ability to implement social media regulations fairly and without bias?	Frequency	Percentage
Very Confident	15	7%
Somewhat confident	29	14%
Neutral	64	31%
Slightly Confident	53	26%
Not Confident at all	46	22%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.9 reveals low levels of confidence among respondents regarding the Nigerian government's ability to implement social media regulations fairly and without bias. Only 21% (Very Confident and Somewhat Confident) express confidence, while a combined 48% are either slightly confident or not confident at all. Meanwhile, 31% remain neutral, suggesting uncertainty or ambivalence. This scepticism reflects broader governance concerns in Nigeria. Inobemhe (2021) highlights how the state's attempts at regulating

social media are often perceived as politically motivated, eroding public trust. Obiora, Chiamogu, and Chiamogu (2022) similarly argue that authoritarian approaches to communication regulation in Nigeria restrict civic space and reinforce doubts about fairness.

Table 4.10: Showing if respondents will support stricter regulation of social media if it leads to a significant reduction in hate speech

Would you support stricter regulation of social media if it leads to a significant reduction in hate speech?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	152	73%
No	23	11%
Not sure	32	16%

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.10 indicates that a substantial majority of respondents (73%) would support stricter social media regulation if it leads to a significant reduction in hate speech. In comparison, 11% would not support such measures and 16% remain uncertain. This suggests that netizens prioritize the mitigation of harmful content over concerns about potential restrictions on online expression, reflecting a pragmatic approach to digital governance.

Table 4.11: Correlation Matrix between Awareness, Social Media Exposure, and Attitude toward Regulation (n = 200)

Variables	1	2	3
1. Awareness of Hate Speech Regulation	1		
2. Exposure to Social Media Information	.482**	1	
3. Attitude toward Regulation	.436**	.518**	1

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2025

Table 4.11 reveals significant positive correlations among all three variables. Awareness of hate speech regulation is moderately correlated with social media exposure (r = .482, p < .01), indicating that individuals who frequently engage with social media are more

likely to be aware of regulatory discussions. Similarly, both awareness (r = .436, p < .01) and social media exposure (r = .518, p < .01) show significant positive relationships with supportive attitudes toward regulation. These findings align with Adedokun (2022) and Akinsola (2025), who observed that digital engagement enhances awareness and mobilisation around governance issues in Nigeria. However, it may also foster selective understanding shaped by online discourse patterns (Adjin-Tettey & Amenaghawon, 2024).

5.   DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that awareness of social media regulations and laws governing hate speech is limited and uneven among Nigerian netizens. While many respondents are familiar with the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015, knowledge of other frameworks such as the Nigerian Broadcasting Code, the Data Protection Regulation, and the Social Media Bill is considerably lower, with many admitting no familiarity at all. This reflects broader issues of accessibility and clarity, as most netizens rely on social media rather than official government channels for information. Although these platforms promote civic engagement, they also spread misinformation, shaping understanding more through practical exposure to online risks than through formal legal education. Consequently, many users recognize the existence of laws without grasping their full implications, underscoring the need for clearer communication and public education. The study further shows that netizens identify hate speech through visible cues such as derogatory language and the targeting of individuals or groups, especially along political, religious, gender, and ethnic lines. Despite this awareness, opinions on the fairness and effectiveness of regulation remain mixed. Many doubt the government's impartiality, fearing selective enforcement to silence dissent.

Recommendations

The study recommends enhancing public awareness and digital literacy on social media laws through accessible education campaigns, leveraging popular online platforms to disseminate accurate information, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration among

government agencies, social media companies, and civil society to ensure fair and transparent enforcement.

Directions for future studies

Future studies should explore how demographic factors such as age, education, and digital experience influence Nigerians' understanding and perception of social media regulations. Additionally, research should investigate the effectiveness of specific awareness campaigns or digital literacy initiatives in improving legal knowledge and reducing online hate speech.

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Does Inflationary Variability Impact Domestic Investment in Nigeria?

Tunde Abubakar BAKARE-AREMU[1], Anthony Onogese OSOBASE[2] and Rakiya MAMMAN[3]

[1]Department of Economics
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja.

[2]Department of Economics
University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos

[3]Department of Development Studies
National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja.

Corresponding Email: abakare-aremu@noun.edu.ng

Abstract
This study explores the relationship between inflation and domestic investment in Nigeria, spanning the period from 1986 to 2022. Nigeria has faced significant economic volatility, characterized by fluctuations in inflation rates, which have been identified as a key factor influencing domestic investment decisions. The purpose of this empirical analysis is to investigate the impact of inflation on domestic investment in Nigeria, while considering other macroeconomic variables that may also affect investment dynamics. Given the importance of investment in driving economic growth, understanding the effects of inflation on investment is crucial for policy formulation in developing economies like Nigeria. The study employs time-series data and applies econometric techniques, including the Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL) model and cointegration analysis, to assess both short-term and long-term relationships between inflation and domestic investment. The analysis focuses on examining whether inflation has a direct negative effect on investment, as postulated in economic theory, and whether this relationship persists despite other macroeconomic factors such as interest rates, exchange rates, and government fiscal policies. The findings of the study reveal a significant negative relationship between inflation and domestic investment in Nigeria, suggesting that higher inflation creates an unfavorable environment for investment by increasing uncertainty and eroding the value of capital. Additionally, the study highlights the role of other economic variables, such as interest rates and exchange rate volatility, in influencing investment behavior. The paper concludes with policy recommendations aimed at stabilizing inflation, improving economic confidence, and creating a more favorable investment climate in Nigeria, thereby promoting sustainable long-term economic growth.

Keywords*: Inflation, Domestic Investment, Nigeria, Empirical Analysis, Macroeconomic. Factors Economic Growth, Autoregressive Distributed Lag (ARDL).*

1.   INTRODUCTION

Inflation is a monetary phenomenon that can make or mar businesses and economic progress of any nation. This implies that inflation is not always a scourge, cancer-like or canker-worm that destroy human existence or retrogress economic performance, but also a phenomenon if well-managed can boost economic growth through growth in domestic investment.

A mild inflation spurs business growth through higher profit margin, and a plough back of such profit into business for expansion and will further generate employment opportunity, which could translate to increase in per capita income and economic well-being of the nation. However, when inflation increases significantly this result to hike in prices of essential commodities, lower real income, and create economic crises, and political agitations.

Existing literature suggests that inflation surge can hinder domestic investment in several ways. To start with, high inflation rates can erode the purchasing power of consumers through lowering of their real income, which could lead to decline in aggregate demand and reduce the incentive for business men to re-invest, or invest in a new project. Also, inflation can also lead to uncertainty about future economic conditions, making it more difficult for investors to make informed decisions, which can stifle investment. (Adekunle, 2020)

a persistent rise in the general price level of goods and services within an economy, can significantly impact a country's domestic investment landscape. In the case of Nigeria, understanding the relationship between inflation and domestic investment is crucial for policymakers, economic stakeholders, and the academia. This is important because most business collapsed due to asymmetric information, which often led to adverse selection both in production and consumption. Therefore, having a clear grip of the impact of inflation on domestic investment will help in decision making process, when investment in a volatile inflationary environment is being considered

In addition, the impact of inflation on domestic investment can be exacerbated by other macroeconomic factors such as volatile exchange rate, public reckless spending, and administration of inappropriate policy measure, as witnessed under the current administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on his arrival as the new commander in chief of armed forces in Nigeria (removal of subsidy, and adoption of floating exchange rate regime). Though, evidence equally suggests that government capital expenditure and exchange rate fluctuations can also impede the inflow of foreign direct investment, which is an important component of overall domestic investment in Nigeria.

However, the relationship between inflation and domestic investment is not straightforward, as some studies have shown that money supply growth, which is a key driver of inflation, may not be the primary factor behind high inflation rates in Nigeria (Moser, 1995). Instead, factors such as exchange rate movements, trade openness, and political risk may play a more significant role in determining the level of domestic investment.

It is not a gainsay that domestic investment is very crucial to economic growth and economic development, as it reveals the economic performance of a country. As such, the role of investment in an economy can hardly be overemphasized in both developed and developing economies (Babalola *et al,* 2015). In an argument by Adaramola and Dada (2020), to further demonstrate the potency of domestic investment being the driver of economic growth. They confirmed that investment is a central issue in macroeconomic theory, because it plays an important role in a country's economic growth and capital formation, raising the economy's productive capacity and promoting technological progress through the embodiment of new techniques. Dapaah-Yeboah (2016), once argued that domestic investment can solve economic menaces such as poverty, unemployment, trough, insecurity, and so on. Thus, the level of domestic investment becomes imperative to an economy.

From the foregoing, it is evidenced that Inflation and domestic investment are two critical components that significantly influence the economic landscape of any country in the world. However, in the Nigerian context, understanding the interaction between these

factors is particularly vital given the nation's unique economic challenges and opportunities. Nigeria, being Africa's largest economy, has experienced fluctuating inflation rates over the years, based on the theoretical evidence, this must have impacted both positively and negatively, this study however poised to determine the net effect of inflation variability on domestic investment in Nigeria, and contribute to the research gap of inconclusiveness of the relationship.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Inflation, defined as the sustained increase in the general price level of goods and services in an economy over a period, can erode purchasing power and create uncertainty, thereby affecting investment decisions (Falade et al, 2018). While, domestic investment is the total investment outlay whether brown or green, the brown investment is the existing domestic investment, while the green investment is the new investment outlay in a country, these two may either be owned, and control by a citizen or a foreigner, the fundamental goal is that the investment is domestically hosted (Bakare-Aremu, 2023)

Domestic investment is volatile because it depends on many variables such as, interest rate, inflation, exchange rate, savings, government policies, political instability and so on. These factors are responsible for the preponderance in the fluctuations of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the business cycle and this affirms that investment is the mainstream of economic development of any nation. Nigerian economy is classified as low savings and lower investment economy. One of the objectives of the government is fostering sustained economic growth through improved domestic investment, and that economic growth can only be attained by balancing investment and factors influencing it (Ifionu and Ibe, 2015).

Theoretical Background

- **The Accelerator Theory of Investment**

The accelerator principle states that an increase in the rate of output of a firm will require a proportionate increase in its capital stock. The capital stock refers to the desired or optimum capital stock, K*. Assuming that capital-output ratio is some fixed constant, v, the optimum capital stock is a constant proportion of output so that in any period t,

$$K_t^* = v\mathrm{Y}_t \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots.. \; 1$$

Where K_t^* is the optimal capital stock in period t, v (the accelerator) is a positive constant, and Y_t is output in period t.

Any change in output will lead to a change in the capital stock. Thus

$$K_t^* - K^*_{t-1} = v \; (Y_{t-} Y_{t-1}) \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots.2 \quad \text{and}$$

$$I_{nt} = v \; (\mathrm{Y}_{t-} Y_{t-1}) \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots. \; 3$$

$$[\because I_{nt} = K_t^* - K^*_{t-1}] = v \; \Delta \; Y_t \; \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots..4 \quad \text{where}$$

$$\Delta Y_t = Y_t - Y_{t-1} \qquad \text{and} \qquad I_{nt} \text{ is net investment.}$$

In the above equation, the level of net investment is proportional to change in output. If the level of output remains constant ($\Delta Y = 0$), net investment would be zero. For net investment to be a positive constant, output must increase.

- **The Flexible Accelerator Theory or Lags in Investment**

The flexible accelerator theory removes one of the major weaknesses of the simple acceleration principle that the capital stock is optimally adjusted without any time lag. In the flexible accelerator, there are lags in the adjustment process between the level of output and the level of capital stock. This theory is also known as *the capital stock adjustment model*. The theory of flexible accelerator has been developed in various forms by Chenery, Goodwin and Koyck. But the most accepted approach is by Koyck.

Junankar has discussed the lags in the adjustment between output and capital stock. He explains them at the firm level and extends them to the aggregate level. Suppose there is an increase in the demand for output. To meet it, first the firm will use its inventories and then utilise its capital stock more intensively. If the increase in the demand for output is large and persists for some time, the firm would increase its demand for capital stock. This is the *decision-making lag*. There may be the *administrative lag* of ordering the capital. As capital is not easily available and in abundance in the financial capital market, there is the *financial lag* in raising finance to buy capital. Finally, there is the *delivery lag* between the ordering of capital and its delivery. Assuming "that different firms have different decision and delivery lags then in aggregate the effect of an increase in demand on the capital stock is distributed over time … This implies that the capital stock at time *t* is dependent on all the previous levels of output, i.e.

$$K_t = f(Y_t,\ Y_{t\text{-}1},\ ....,\ Y_{t\text{-}n}).\text{"}\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ 1$$

- **The Koyck's Approach**

Koyck's approach to the flexible accelerator assumes that the actual capital stock depends on all past output levels with weighs declining geometrically.

Accordingly,

$$K_t = v\ (1 - \lambda)(Y_t + \lambda\ Y_{t-1} + \lambda^2\ Y_{t-2} + \ ...\ \lambda^n\ Y_{t-n})\ \ldots\ldots.\ 2 \qquad \ldots$$

Where, $0 < \lambda < 1$. If there is no change in income and it is equal to $\bar{Y}$, the expected volume of output also remains unchanged, then

$$\bar{K} = v\ (1 - \lambda)(\bar{Y} + \lambda\ \bar{Y} + \lambda^2\ \bar{Y} + \ ...\ + \lambda^n\ \bar{Y})$$

$$= v\ (1 - \lambda)\ \bar{Y}\ (1 + \lambda\ + \lambda^2 + \ ...\ + \lambda^n)\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots..\quad 3$$

Where $(1 + \lambda\ + \lambda^2 + \ ...\ + \lambda^n)\ = 1/(1 - \lambda)$ are the weights in geometric series and equation (7) becomes

$$\bar{K} = v\bar{Y}\ (1 - \lambda)\ x\ \frac{1}{(1-\lambda)}\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ 4$$

Or $\quad K = v\bar{Y}$ ………………………………………………… 5

If equation (6) is valid, then K_{t-1} is also true. Therefore, we can rewrite equation (6) as

$$K_{t-1} = v(1 - \lambda)(Y_{t-1} + \lambda Y_{t-2} + \lambda^2 Y_{t-3} + \ldots + \lambda^n Y_{t-n-1}) \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots 6$$

Multiplying by λ we have

$$\lambda K_{t-1} = v(1 - \lambda)(\lambda Y_{t-1} + \lambda^2 Y_{t-2} + \lambda^3 Y_{t-3} + \ldots + \lambda^n Y_{t-n-1}) \quad \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots$$

$$7 \qquad \ldots$$

Subtracting equation (9) from equation (2), we get

$$K_t - \lambda K_{t-1} = v(1 - \lambda)(Y_t + \lambda^{n+1} Y_{t-n-1}) \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots.8$$

Since the term λ^{n+1} tends to zero, the above equation becomes

$$K_t - \lambda K_{t-1} = (1 - \lambda) vY_t \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots.. 9$$

or $\quad K_t = (1 - \lambda) vY_t + \lambda K_{t-1}$ $\qquad$ …………………… 10

This process of rewriting equation (2) as equation (7) is called the *Koyck transformation*.

Net investment is the change in the stock of capital, $K_t - K_{t-1}$. Therefore, subtract K_{t-1} from both sides of the equation to get the expression net investment,

$$K_t - K_{t-1} = (1 - \lambda) vY_t + \lambda K_{t-1} - K_{t-1} \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots.. 11$$

$$I_{nt} = (1 - \lambda) vY_t + K_{t-1}(\lambda - 1)$$

or $\qquad I_{nt} = (1 - \lambda) vY_t - (1 - \lambda)K_{t-1}$ …………………………….. 12

The net investment $(K_t - K_{t-1})$ is called the *distributed lag accelerator* which is inversely related to the capital stock of the previous period and is positively related to the output level. On the other hand, gross investment equals net investment plus

depreciation. Depreciation is proportional to the capital stock and is estimated by $I_{gt} = \delta K_{t-1}$. By adding this to net investment, gross investment is

$$I_{gt} = I_{nt} + \delta K_{t-1} \quad \text{…………………………………………………………… 13}$$

By substituting the value of I_{nt} in the above equation, we have

$$I_{gt} = (1 - \lambda)\, vY_t - (1 - \lambda)\, K_{t-1} + \delta K_{t-1} \text{………………………………….. 14}$$

$$I_{gt} = (1 - \lambda)\, vY_t + K_{t-1} (\lambda - 1 + \delta) \quad \text{…………………………………. 15}$$

The above equation reveals that "gross investment will rise when the level of income rises because in that case more capital is required. It also shows that the existing capital stock K_{t-1} plays a dual role. Since the term $\lambda - 1$ is negative, a large existing capital stock implies excess capacity and therefore less investment. On the other hand, δ is positive so that the larger the existing capital, the greater the required amount of replacement investment."

In the long run equilibrium, the capital stock reaches its optimal so that

$$K_t* = K_t = K_{t-1} \quad \text{……………………………………………………… 16}$$

Substituting equation (10) in equation (7), we have

$$K_t* = vY_t \quad \text{………………………………………………………………}$$
17

- **The Financial Theory of Investment**

The financial theory of investment is sub-divided into two namely, the profit theory of investment, and the Duesenberry's Financial Theory of Investment.

i.   **The Profits Theory of Investment**

The profits theory regards profits, in particular undistributed profits, as a source of internal funds for financing investment. Investment depends on profits and profits, in

turn, depend on income. In this theory, profits relate to the level of current profits and of the recent past. If total income and total profits are high, the retained earnings of firms are also high, and vice versa. Retained earnings are of great importance for small and large firms when the capital market is imperfect because it is cheaper to use them. Thus if profits are high, the retained earnings are also high. The cost of capital is low and the optimal capital stock is large. That is why firms prefer to reinvest their extra profits for making investments instead of keeping them in banks in order to buy securities or to give dividends to shareholders. Contrariwise, when their profits fall, they cut their investment projects. This is the *liquidity version* of the profits theory.

Another version is that the optimal capital stock is a function of expected profits. If the aggregate profits in the economy and business profits are rising, they may lead to the expectation of their continued increase in the future. Thus expected profits are some function of actual profits in the past,

$$K_t{}^* = f \ (\pi_{t-1})\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots \ 23$$

Where $K_t{}^*$ is the optimal capital stock and $f \ (\pi_{t-1})$ is some function of past actual profits.

Edward Shapiro has developed the profits theory of investment in which total profits vary directly with the income level. For each level of profits, there is an optimal capital stock. The optimal capital stock varies directly with the level of profits. The interest rate and the level of profits, in turn, determine the optimal capital stock. For any particular level of profits, the higher the interest rate, the smaller will be the optimal capital stock, and vice versa.

ii.   Duesenberry's Financial Theory of Investment

Duesenberry in his book Business Cycles and Economic Growth has presented another variant of the financial theory of investment, known as the cash-flow theory. In his version, he integrates the profits theory and the acceleration theory of investment. He emphasizes that the aggregate cash flow is the main determinant of investment.

Duesenberry has based his theory on the following propositions: (1) Gross investment starts exceeding depreciation when capital stock grows (2) Investment exceeds savings when income grows (3)The growth rate of income and the growth rate of capital stock are determined entirely by the ratio of capital stock to income. Duesenberry regards investment as a function of income (Y), capital stock (K), profits (π) and capital consumption allowances (R). All these are independent variables and can be represented as

$$I = f\ (Y_{t-1}, K_{t-1}, \pi_{t-1}, R_t) \ \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\ 1$$

Where t refers to the current period and (t – 1) to the previous period. According to Duesenberry, profits depend positively on national income and negatively on capital stock,

$$\pi = aY - bK \ \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots.2$$

Taking account of lags, this becomes

$$\pi_t = aY_{t-1} - bK_{t-1}\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots.3$$

Where π_t refers to profits during period t, Y_{t-1} *and* K_{t-1} are income and capital stock of the previous period respectively and *a* and *b* are constants. Capital consumption allowances are expressed as

$$R_t =\ kK_{t-1} \ \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots.4$$

The above equation shows that capital consumption allowances are a fraction (k) of capital stock (K_{t-1}).

Duesenberry's investment function is a modified version of the accelerator principle,

$$\boldsymbol{I_t =\ \alpha Y_{t-1} +\ \beta K_{t-1}} \qquad\qquad\qquad \dots (5)$$

Where investment in period t is a function of income (Y) and capital stock (K) of the previous period (t – 1). The parameter ($\boldsymbol{\alpha}$) represents the effect of changes in income

on investment, while the parameter (**β**) represents the influence of capital stock on investment working through both the marginal efficiency of investment and profits.

Empirical Review

The study by Osundina and Osundina (2014) examined the interest rate as a link to investment decisions in Nigeria using the Mundell-Flemming Model and OLS technique. Interest rate was used as a dependent variable and other variables such as; gross domestic product, investment level, government spending, debt and exchange rate were the regressand. The empirical results found that there is a link between interest rates and investment decisions in Nigeria. The study suggests that the monetary authority should uphold interest rate policy to enhance investment growth in Nigeria

In another related study by Ucan and Ozturk (2011) who examined the financial determinants of investment in Turkey using the Vector Autoregressive (VAR) Model. The indicators used were total liquid liabilities of financial intermediaries, domestic credit to the private sector, credit provided by banks, and a composite index combining all three indicators. The results specified a direct relationship between all four indicators of financial development identified and domestic investment. The results also established that inflation and real interest rate negatively affected private investment, while private investment was positively affected by real per capita GDP growth.

Agwu (2015) used Autoregressive Distributed Lag Model (ARDL) to examine the determinant of investment in Nigeria. The result showed that past income level, capital investment, government size, and interest rate were the most major determinants responsible for domestic investment in Nigeria with these variables having a positive effect on private investment. Exchange rate and inflation had a non-significant effect on private investment in Nigeria.

A seemingly related study by the trio, Olufunke, Adeleke., and Obasuyi, (2013) examined the impact of inflationary rate on the level of investment in a developing economy using Nigerian Economy as case, and dataset that spanned 1970- 2008. The study adopted co-integration and error correction model as the estimating techniques.

The empirical results showed that there is a long run relationship between inflation rate and domestic investment in Nigeria. Unlike some developed nations where inflation has direct relationship with the investment, in Nigeria, low rate of inflation and increased national income would promote investment. The study proposed a policy recommendation that Nigeria government should strive to curtail inflation to the bearable minimum while accelerating the growth of the national income in her quest to boost domestic investment.

In an empirical study by Ezeibekwe (2020) the impact of monetary policy on investment growth in Nigeria was examined, using dataset that spanned from 1981 to 2018 and applying the vector error correction model to seeks and determines how the changes in the inflation rate affect the ability of monetary policy tools to stabilize the Nigerian economy and stimulate domestic investment. The empirical results suggest that the impact of the interest rates on investment depends on the level of the inflation rate. The size of the effect of interest rates on investment gets weaker as the inflation rate increases suggesting that monetary policy tools, such as the monetary policy rate (MPR), that directly change the interest rates are robust stabilization tools during periods of declining inflation rates but not relevant during periods of rising inflation rates. This is attributable to low bank deposit rates. Also, the impact of the money supply target on investment does not depend on the level of the inflation rate. This suggests that monetary policy tools, such as open market operations, that directly change the money supply can be relevant stabilization tools during economic booms and recessions. As a result, the Central Bank of Nigeria should work to deepen the scale, capacity, and efficiency of its open market operations by ensuring that most of the people can participate with minimal transaction cost and by making different financial instruments available.

A study by Muritala (2011) examine the impact of investment and inflation on economic growth performance as well as showing the trend analysis between inflation and investment in Nigeria from 1981 to 2006 using econometrics model with Ordinary Least Square (OLS) technique. In an attempt to establish long run relationship between investment, inflation and economic growth, the result of the regression reveals that the

coefficient of inflation is negative and significant at 10% while that of Gross capital formation (GCF) is positive and significant at 1%. It implies that I per cent increase in inflation will result in 0.09 decreases in economic performance (RGDP). Therefore there is existence of a negative relationship between inflation and RGDP. However, a positive relationship exists between investment (GCF) and RGDP (measure of economic performance), of which 1 per cent change in investment (GCF) will bring about 0.3 per cent unit increases in economic performance. Increased investment would lead to increase consumption, also increase labour, increase productivity, increase output therefore improve the economic performance, because there would be reduction in capital flight. It could therefore be recommended that both supply-side policies and demand management policies such as a reduction in real broad money supply should be adopted to reduce inflation in the short-run and in the long-run.

Eyo and Ugah (2024) focused on investigating the factors that determine domestic investment in Nigeria, using the dataset that spanned between 1986 and 2022. The primary aim was to identify and analyze the macroeconomic variables that influence investment in Nigeria, in order to understand their impact. The data for the study were obtained from secondary sources, and the ordinary least square statistical technique was used to analyze the data, and assess how these variables have affected investment in the Nigerian economy over time. The study found that government expenditure did not negatively impact domestic investors, and on the contrary, government expenditure had a significant positive relationship with domestic investment. However, interest rate, exchange rate, inflation rate, and GDP growth rate were all found to have a negative impact on domestic investment determination in the country. Although the relationship between the selected variables and domestic investment was insignificant, it was found that the macroeconomic environment played a role in determining the level of domestic investment in Nigeria, albeit to a small extent. As a recommendation, the study suggested that the government should continue to prioritize capital spending in its budgetary allocation, in order to increase the implementation of capital projects across the country, as this has a positive impact on domestic investment.

3.   METHODOLOGY

The Research Design

The analysis of the dataset set is based on the argument put forth by Arellano and Bond (1991) that timeseries dataset usually contained unit root because of the inconsistencies in the macroeconomic behaviour, most especially in the developing and the underdeveloped countries. Due to the aforementioned, all variables in the model are subjected to unit root test to avert spurious results, and erroneous forecast inferences.

Thereafter, the co-integration and correlation tests were carried out to test for the long run relationship among the variables, and to establish the pattern of relationship among the intent variables as specified in the model below. The choice of the model was beckon on the results of the unit root or the stationarity tests, which indicated that the variables were integrated at levels , and at first difference.

The model Specification

The model shows the functional relationship between the dependent variable (GFCF) as a proxy for domestic investment, and the dependent variables. The primary independent variable is the inflation rate (INFR), while other independent variables are secondary variables.

The model is specified in its implicit form as:

GFCF = f (GDP, PLR, SAV, INFR) ... (1)

While the explicit specification could be seen as thus:

GFCF = β_0 + β_1 GDP + β_2PLR + β_3SAV+ β_4 INFR+ β_5ECT ………. (2)

This function may be further represented in a linear econometric format thus:

GFCF = β_0 + β_1 GDP + β_2PLR + β_3SAV +β_4 INFR+ β_5 ECT + μ_i ... (3)

In other to analyze the elasticity between GFCF and explanatory variables the log of the model becomes pertinent thus:

LGFCF = β₀ + β₁ LGDP + β₂LPLR + β₃LSAV + β₄ INFR+ β₅ ECT + μᵢ ... (4)

Where:

INFR = Inflation

GE = Government Expenditure

EX R= Exchange rate

GFCF = Gross Fixed Capital Formation

GDP = Gross Domestic product

ECT =is the series of the residual of the model run at level β's = the slopes or the parameters of the coefficient of the regression model μ = the white noise or error term

Where it is assumed that the disturbance terms U_{1t}, U_{2t}, U_{3t}, U_{4t}, U_{5t}, U_{6t} are uncorrelated.

There will be twelve test expectations, they are;

(i) Unidirectional causality from LGDP to LGCF if $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ (ii) Indirections causality from LGFCF to LGDP if $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ are statically significant in both regression

B1- directional causality or feedback if $1 \neq 0$. In this case, the sets of GDP and LGCF coefficients are statistically significant in both regressions.

Independence if $10_t = 0$ and $I5_j = 0$. In this case, the set LGDP and LGCF coefficient are not statistically significant in both regressions.

In the second case, that is the case of testing causality between SAV and GCF, we also have if expectations similar to the above expectations they are; (i) Unidirectional Causality from LSAV to LGCF, if $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ (ii) Unidirectional causality from LGCF

to LSAV, If $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ (iii) Pi - directional causality, IF $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ that is, case whereby the two coefficient are statistically significant in both regressions.

(iv) Independence, if $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$, that is both coefficients are not statistically significant in regression. In the third and final case, that is the case of testing causality between LPLR and LGCF, we also have expectations similar to the above expectations they are (i) Unidirectional Causality from LPLR to LGCF, if $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ (ii) Unidirectional causality from LGCF to LPLR If $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ (iii) Pi - directional causality, IF $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$ that is, case whereby the two coefficients are statistically significant in both regressions.

(iv) Independence, if $1 \neq 0$ and $j = 0$, that is both coefficients are not statistically significant in regression.

Summary of the Variables

Variable	Description/Measurement
Exchange Rate	is a price - exactly the same as any other price the amount you have to give up to acquire something else - in this case another currency
Gross Domestic Product	Gross Domestic Product is the total monetary value of goods and services produced in Nigeria, on annual basis
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	Gross capital formation (GCF) refers to the net increase in physical assets (investment minus disposals) within the measurement period.
Prime Interest Rate	This moves inversely with the investment rate that is to say that the higher the interest rate, the less investment is induced
Inflation Rate	Is the consumer price index capturing changes in the prices of goods, and services

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of all estimations are analysed, and interpreted accordingly, upon which inferences and policy recommendation about the model could be made. In this research study we started with the pre-estimation tests to know the condition of the dataset for each macroeconomic variable and perhaps, smoothen the variables before the model estimation to be far from spurious regression results

Table 1: Summary of Statistics of the Variables

	LNGDP	PLR	INFR	LSAV	LGFCF
Mean	4.261250	6.479063	18.42563	136.7944	13.7944
Median	4.295000	6.530000	13.12000	128.6500	28.6500
Maximum	5.220000	7.610000	76.76000	475.2100	45.2100
Minimum	2.740000	4.840000	3.610000	7.390000	7.99000
Std. Dev.	0.733827	0.882421	17.14617	112.6500	12.6500
Skewness	-0.391047	-0.309476	2.114445	1.195296	1.89596
Kurtosis	2.051042	1.751084	6.631853	4.474084	14.4704
Jarque-Bera	2.016257	2.590525	41.43183	10.51714	10.5174
Probability	0.364901	0.273826	0.000000	0.005203	0.00503
Sum	136.3600	207.3300	589.6200	4377.420	
Sum Sq. Dev.	16.69355	24.13867	9113.730	393390.8	
Observations	32	32	32	32	

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

The summary of descriptive statistics of relevant variables of study is as reported in Table 1 above. As may be observed from the table, the mean, median, standard deviation as well as the skewness and Kurtosis measures of the variables is given. The mean for LGDP, PLR, INFR, LGFCF and EXR was 4.261250, 6.479063, 18.42563, 13.7944 and 136.7944 respectively. The standard deviation indicates that the variables exhibit significant variation in terms of magnitude, suggesting that estimation at levels may introduce some bias in the results. The probability of Jacque- Bera for the variables are not significant, hence we accept the null hypothesis that the series are normally distributed.

Unit Root Test.

Zhe (2007) observed that for proper estimation of economic models based on time series analysis, the condition for stationary unit root process must be satisfied. So, preliminary analysis focused on establishing the order of integration for each variable, testing for the existence of a unit root in the level and first difference using Augmented Dickey - Fuller (ADF) test developed by Dickey and Fuller (1981).

Table 2: Augmented Dickey- Fuller (ADF) Unit Root Test

Variable	ADF @ 1ST Diff	5% Critical Value	OoI
LGDP	-7.826894	-2.963972	I(1)
INFR	-4.457400	-2.967767	I(1)
LSAV	-3.774334	-2.960411	I(1)
PLR	-3.440275	-2.960411	I(1)
LGFCF	-3.480295	-2.960411	I(1)

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

The result in Table2 above shows that all variables became stationary at first difference, suggesting the adoption of Error Correction Model techniques of analysis in the main estimation.

Johansen Cointegration Test

Having established the order of integration, we proceed to test for cointegration which is used to establish the existence of long-run relationship among variables. The test uses the trace and maximum eigenvalues statistics to determine the number of cointegrating vectors. Appropriate optimal lag length that would give standard normal error terms was selected using the Hannan – Quinn Information Criterion (HQ) as the Schwarz Information Criterion is considered too constraining given. The result of the cointegration tests is presented below

Table 3: Results of ADF Cointegration Test

Hypothesized No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Trace Statistic	0.05 Critical Value	Prob**
None *	0.654027	64.51458	47.85613	0.0007
At most 1 *	0.515806	32.67276	29.79707	0.0227
At most 2	0.221682	10.91467	15.49471	0.2168
At most 3	0.107030	3.396080	3.841465	0.0653

Results for Unrestricted Cointegration Rank Test (Maximum Eigenvalue)

Hypothesized No. of CE(s)	Eigenvalue	Max – Eigen Statistic	0.005 Critical Value	Prob.**
None *	0.654027	31.84182	27.58434	0.0133
At most 1 *	0.515806	21.75809	21.13162	0.0408
At most 2	0.221682	7.518592	14.26460	0.4297
At most 3	0.107030	3.396080	3.841465	0.0653

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

Starting with the null hypothesis that there are no cointegrating vectors, the result shows that at 5 per cent level of significance the trace and maximum tests suggest that the variables are cointegrated. According to Harris (1995), this feature is a common phenomenon in estimated test statistics and that when it obtains, the maximum eigenvalue test should be favoured over the trace statistic. This suggests the variables are cointegrated and at most one factor drives the relationship toward a stable long-run convergence. The trace statistic at 64.51458 and 32.67276 is larger than its critical value of 47.85613 and 29.79707, while the maximum eigenvalues statistic at 31.84182 and 21.75809 exceeds its critical value of 27.58434 and 21.13162. Based on these results, we therefore reject the null hypothesis at 5 percent level of significance and accept the alternative hypothesis that there is cointegrating vector.

Table 4: The Summary of the Error Correction Model (ECM) Results.

Dependent Variable DLGFCF

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
D(INFR)	0.000118	0.001483	0.079837	0.9369
DLSAV(-1))	4.48E-05	0.000361	-2.124034	0.0022
D(PLR)	0.827434	0.049599	16.68251	0.0000
D(LGDP(-1))	1.827434	0.049599	16.68251	0.0000
ECT(-1)	-1.095806	0.295721	-3.705533	0.0009
R-squared	0.975655			
Adjusted R^2	0.973047			
F-statistic	374.0467			
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			
Durbin-Wats stat	1.209815			

Source: Author's Computation (2025)

The values in Table 4 represent coefficient, standard errors, t-statistic values and probability values. From the regression results shown above, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.9756 implies that approximately 97.6 per cent of the total variation in domestic investment proxy by LGFCF is explained by changes in the explanatory variables while the remaining 2.4% per cent variation in LGFCF is explained by other factors not included in the model. The adjusted coefficient of determination (R^2) Value of 0.973047 implies that approximately 97.3 per cent of the total variation in LGFCF is explained by changes in the explanatory variables when the coefficient of determination is adjusted for degree of freedom. This implies that 2.7 % variation in LGFCF is unexplained due to other factors not included in the model all things being equal.

The F-Statistic is significant at 5% level of significance with the probability value of 0.000000. This is further strengthened by a high F-ratio of 374.0467 approximately which is higher than the critical value and thus we can say that the model has a high goodness of fit. Also, the low values of -1.278271 and -1.095054 of Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) and Schwarz Criterion (SC) of the regression model respectively does not provide further support of model reliability.

The value of the probability of F-stat is 0.0000 which is less than 0.05 implies that the overall regression is statistically significant at 5% level of significance. However, inflation rate (INFR) has positive but insignificant effect on domestic investment (LGFCF), meaning that the effect of inflation on domestic investment in Nigeria within the period under review is negligible on average. But savings (LSAV), prime lending rate (PLR), and the level of income (GDP) are positive and statistically significant affect the domestic investment in Nigeria.

The error correction term which represented the speed of adjustment at -1.095806 which is statistically significant at 1 per cent level imply a correction period less than one year of short run drift to lon run equilibrium is expected.
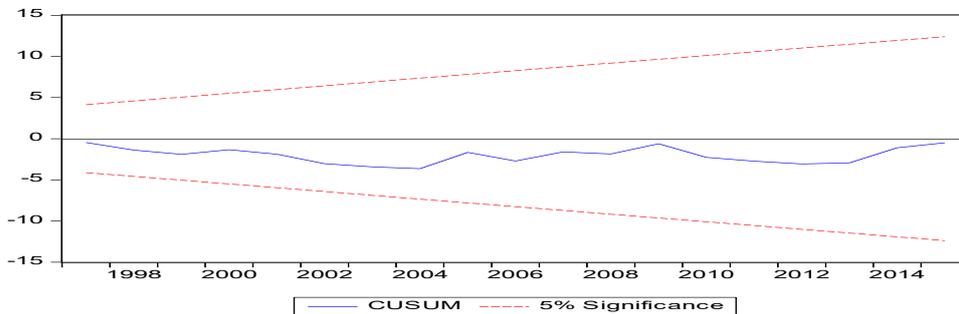
STABILITY TEST RESULT

Figure 1: CUSUM STABILITY TEST

Source: Authors computation via E-views 9(2025)

 The result of the Cusum Stability Test shows that the model passes the stability test and is therefore stable. This is because the trend line is in between the two critical lines as seen in the figure above.

Table 5: Residual Test Results

Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey Heteroskedasticity Test Result

Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey

F-statistic	0.533455	Prob. F(12,19)	0.8666
Obs*R-squared	8.064366	Prob. Chi-Square(12)	0.7801
Scaled explained SS	3.200370	Prob. Chi-Square(12)	0.9940

Source: Authors compilation via E-views 9(2025)

The Heteroskedasticity result test as shown above which is used to test for differences in time series. The null hypothesis of absence of heteroskedasticity is accepted as the probability values of F-statistic and LM (obs*Rsquared of the auxillary regression) is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there is absence of heteroskedasticity and no difference in time series in the model.

5.   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The robustness of the model was supported by the R-square, and adjusted R-square values and further strengthened by the value of F-Statistic which is significant at 1% level with the probability value of 0.000000. The result is further reinforced by a high F-ratio of 374.0467 approximately which is higher than the critical value and thus we can say that the model has a high goodness of fit.

Also, inflation rate (INFR) has positive but insignificant effect on domestic investment (LGFCF), meaning that the effect of inflation on domestic investment in Nigeria within the period under review is negligible on average. But savings (LSAV), prime lending rate (PLR), and the level of income (GDP) are positive and statistically significant in affecting the domestic investment in Nigeria.

The study recommend thus that while the government should maintain a mild inflation rate, more attention should be paid to saving mobilization, growth of the GDP, and effective monetary policy to keep moderate lending rate in Nigeria in order to increase domestic investment.

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Algorithmic Bias, Content Diversity, and User Trust: Comparative Insights from Facebook and X (Formerly Twitter)

Fikayo Stephen OYEWOLE, Oluwaseyi Tayo OLAWOLE and Adebolu Ronke AGUNBIADE

Department of Communication and Language Arts,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Corresponding Email: fikayooyewole3@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the ethical challenges of content recommendation algorithms on Facebook and X and their implications for user trust. Through a systematic literature review of empirical studies published between 2018 and 2024, the research explores how issues of privacy, bias, transparency, and manipulation collectively shape perceptions of trustworthiness. Findings reveal that bias in recommendation systems is driven by user profiling, flawed datasets, commercial incentives, cultural and political influences, and opaque governance structures. Furthermore, the study establishes a strong relationship between content diversity and user trust, demonstrating that inclusive and transparent algorithmic practices foster credibility, while homogeneity and opacity undermine confidence. Using the Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT) framework, the study highlights the need for algorithmic audits, diversified datasets, and governance reforms. It contributes an integrated ethical perspective and offers practical recommendations for platforms, policymakers, and users to rebuild trust and strengthen democratic engagement in digital ecosystems.

Keywords: Algorithmic Bias, Content Diversity, and User Trust

1.   INTRODUCTION

Debates on data protection, specifically how users' data are collected and used have significantly evolved with the increasing adoption of digital platforms that are regularly used to maintain social connectivity and interaction. Studies (Javed et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2024; Moller et al., 2020) have also contested that recommendation algorithms play a central role in the ongoing debates around content algorithm and user's data, as recommendation algorithms use personalisation to improve user engagement and experience. For Facebook, with about 3 billion monthly active users (Meta, 2024), this

means curating news and social content in ways that shape public discourse. X, with over 600 million users (Statista, 2024), functions differently by privileging immediacy, trending topics, and virality, yet it faces parallel concerns about the fairness and reliability of algorithmic curation. Unlike entertainment or health apps, these platforms primarily structure social interaction and political debate, making their algorithmic practices highly consequential.

Recommendation algorithms depend heavily on user data, demographics, interests, and behavioural patterns to predict preferences (Zhang & Liu, 2021). Collaborative and content-based filtering are commonly applied, enhanced by deep learning techniques. On Facebook, sophisticated recommendation systems continuously adapt to user behaviour, ensuring prolonged engagement (Elkhleifi & Faiz, 2016). Similarly, X uses algorithmic signals such as retweets, likes, and replies to prioritise visibility in feeds. While these processes improve relevance, they also raise questions about autonomy: users rarely understand how their feeds are structured, which undermines transparency and agency.

Among the foremost ethical issues is data privacy. Both Facebook and X have been criticised for the scale of data they harvest. Continuous recording of user behaviour creates detailed behavioural profiles, often without users' full awareness of how this information is monetised (Boeker & Urman, 2022; Grandinetti, 2023). The opacity of these practices diminishes trust, as users suspect exploitation for commercial gain (Meral, 2021). Regulatory interventions, such as the EU's GDPR and California's CCPA, have attempted to enforce greater transparency and accountability (Light, 2021). However, these measures create tensions between safeguarding rights and protecting the business models of social platforms, which rely heavily on algorithmic targeting.

Algorithmic bias further complicates the ethical issues. Algorithm bias refers to the systematic and unfair discrimination that occurs when an algorithm produces results that are prejudiced due to flawed assumptions in the machine learning process. This bias can arise from various sources, such as biased training data, unrepresentative sampling, or the way the algorithm is designed and tested. As a result, certain groups, often based on

race, gender, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics, may be unfairly disadvantaged or privileged. Algorithm bias can have serious consequences, particularly in areas like hiring, lending, law enforcement, and healthcare, where automated decisions directly affect people's lives. Bias arises when algorithms privilege certain types of content, often reinforcing stereotypes or narrowing perspectives (Bhadani, 2021). Research (Yang, 2022; Amarikwa, 2022; Smith Jayne & Burke, 2022) shows that TikTok and Facebook, for instance, amplify mainstream and emotionally charged content, marginalising minority viewpoints.

2.   STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The rise of social media has accelerated the use of content recommendation algorithms, widely studied from multiple perspectives. While research highlights their role in enhancing engagement and personalisation (Tan & Yoon, 2024; Cheng & Li, 2024), scholars warn of issues like privacy violations, bias, manipulation, and opacity (Yang, 2022; Amarikwa, 2022). Studies show these "black box" systems erode user trust (Bucher, 2018). Algorithms often exploit user data and reinforce echo chambers (Bakshy et al., 2015; Shin, 2024). However, existing studies rarely examine how these ethical challenges collectively shape trust across platforms like Facebook and X, leaving a critical research gap. This study aims to address that gap by examining how these ethical issues jointly impact trust in recommendation algorithms on Facebook and X. Through a systematic literature review, it will explore how privacy concerns, bias in algorithmic design, transparency deficits, and manipulative curation shape user perceptions of trustworthiness. By doing so, the study contributes to existing debates by offering a more integrated understanding of the ethical dimensions of algorithmic recommendation systems and their implications for cultivating, or eroding, trust in leading social media platforms.

3.   RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Based on the foregoing arguments, the objective of this study is therefore driven to investigate the ethical challenges associated with content recommendation algorithms

and how these issues impact users' trust. As a result, this paper adopts the following research questions;

   i. What key factors drive the emergence and persistence of bias within content recommendation algorithms on platforms such as Facebook and X?

   ii. What relationship exists between the diversity of recommended content and the degree of trust users have in digital media platforms?

4.   LITERATURE REVIEW

A growing body of empirical research has sought to examine how algorithm-driven recommendation systems influence user perceptions, engagement, and trust across different digital platforms. These studies have highlighted the complex interplay between technical design, user experience, ethical concerns, and platform accountability. Shin (2020) provided a foundational perspective by exploring how recommendation algorithms shape user experiences through cognitive, behavioural, and affective dimensions. Shin's study highlighted how algorithmic attributes like accuracy and transparency shape engagement by creating a model that incorporates these characteristics. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study found that consumers' judgements of accountability and transparency are very subjective and frequently influenced by cognitive shortcuts rather than objective information. One important result was the significance of creating algorithms that foster trust, since users' interactions with suggested material are motivated by trust.

Hilbert et al. (2023) carried out a thorough assessment of algorithmic systems across platforms like Google Search, Facebook, X, TikTok, YouTube, and Amazon in order to supplement Shin's user-centred approach. The study, which examined 151 algorithmic audits, discovered that between 8 and 10% of the recommendations were deemed dangerous. These recommendations included items associated with political extremism, disinformation, and detrimental effects on mental health. The study showed the enduring hazards inherent in recommendation systems, even while some advice were thought to be helpful, especially in preventing users from harming themselves. The results

demonstrated the urgent need for regulatory supervision and recommended that algorithms be handled with the same degree of care as other sectors subject to consumer protection laws.

Mastantuono (2024) turned his attention to how TikTok's algorithm interacts with content producers. The study used semi-structured interviews, digital ethnography, and auto-ethnography to show how creators try to change algorithms for visibility while also being bound by algorithmic constraints. Mastantuono demonstrated how algorithms not only influence cultural production but also reinterpret creative activities by referencing theories of New Materialism and Networked Individuals. By highlighting the power relationships between platforms and creators, this study added to discussions surrounding transparency.

Algorithmic suggestions on X were studied by Ye, Luceri, and Ferrara (2024), who focused on political prejudice. The researchers discovered that around half of the tweets users got originated from accounts they did not follow during a three-week assessment involving 120 sock-puppet accounts. According to the report, there are disparities in exposure, with new accounts finding it difficult to take off and right-leaning users being less visible. According to the results, algorithmic design increases political bias and unequal representation, which damages user confidence when exposed to biassed or unreliable political content.

Abul-Fottouh, Song, and Gruzd (2020) made another important contribution by looking into YouTube's suggestions on content linked to vaccinations. Using social network analysis, the study found that less than 20% of recommendations were anti-vaccine, while the majority (64.75%) backed vaccination. The findings demonstrated a homophily effect, in which related content tended to group together, but they also demonstrated that detrimental content's reach was smaller than that of pro-vaccine content. In addition to highlighting the need for ongoing transparency to guarantee that dangerous information does not predominate recommendation streams, this suggested some progress in platform responsibility.

In particular, Yang (2022) discussed how bias functions in TikTok's recommendation algorithm. The study used interviews and walkthrough evaluations to identify two types of bias: popularity bias, which magnified previously popular information, and exposure bias, which limited the diversity of content. By limiting the variety of viewpoints users may encounter and giving preference to viral content over specialised or minority voices, these biases influenced user experiences. The results demonstrated algorithmic bias's multiple effects, which include influencing user satisfaction and engagement as well as helping to shape the content that appears on the site.

Amil (2024) investigated algorithmic suggestion in e-commerce, with a particular focus on Amazon, in addition to social media. The study, which included survey data from 453 consumers, found that although customisation increased pleasure and loyalty, privacy issues remained. It's interesting to note that while users' fears about data breaches and permission remained high, their appreciation of tailored services decreased their perception of privacy dangers. These results demonstrate the compromises consumers make between data security and convenience. By investigating how algorithmic versus human decision-making is perceived in organisational settings, Lee (2018) offered an alternative viewpoint.

The study discovered through an online experiment that people thought both algorithm-based and human-based decisions were fair, but for different reasons: people valued humans' cultural and social sensitivity, while algorithms were thought to be impartial. But jobs that need human judgement were viewed as less suitable for algorithmic decision-making, highlighting worries about the dehumanisation that occurs when algorithms take the role of human judgement.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT) Framework

The Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT) framework is a crucial model for comprehending algorithmic systems on digital platforms, according to empirical research

(Shin & Park, 2019; Sokol et al., 2022). Fairness, accountability, and transparency are emphasised in the framework as being crucial to establishing equity and trust. Algorithms must be fair in order to prevent social injustices from being reinforced, but Facebook and TikTok frequently promote sensitive or biassed content (Shin, 2019). Accountability requires platforms to accept accountability through user appeal procedures and audits (Lauer, 2021). Transparency promotes consumer trust by guaranteeing openness about how algorithms function (Zerilli et al., 2022). When taken as a whole, these guidelines improve user confidence and ethical governance.

6. METHODOLOGY

According to Saunders et al. (2019), this study uses an interpretivist research perspective, which sees reality as socially created and interpreted through subjective experiences. It looks at how users' trust in Facebook and X (previously Twitter) is affected by ethical concerns with content recommendation algorithms, privacy, prejudice, transparency, and manipulation. It tracks changes in academic discussions by analysing journals, publications, and empirical investigations through a comprehensive literature review with a longitudinal focus (2018–2024). It finds repeating patterns by using theme analysis. Using keywords pertaining to user trust, data privacy, and ethical considerations in digital platforms, data were retrieved from ResearchGate, JSTOR, and Google Scholar.

Inclusion and Exclusion Table

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeframe	Studies published between 2018–2024	Studies published before 2018
Platform Focus	Studies focused on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter)	Studies exclusively focused on other platforms (e.g., TikTok, Instagram, YouTube among others)
Content Area	Research addressing content recommendation algorithms, ethics, and trust	Research unrelated to algorithms, ethics, or user trust (e.g., purely technical coding studies without ethical/user context)
Ethical Issues	Studies examining privacy, bias, transparency, manipulation, or trust	Studies focusing only on marketing, monetisation, or unrelated behavioural patterns

Study Type	Empirical studies, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, reports	Opinion pieces, blogs, non-academic sources, and grey literature without empirical grounding
Language	Publications in English	Non-English publications
Access	Studies with full text accessible (via databases, open access, or institutional login)	Studies with no accessible full text

7.   DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Research Question One: What key factors drive the emergence and persistence of bias within content recommendation algorithms on platforms such as Facebook and X?

Theme	Sub-Themes	Key Studies	Sample Search Criteria
User Profiling and Echo Chamber	Algorithm-driven content personalisation	Shin & Shin (2024); Martin (2024); Hughes et al. (2020); De Croon et al. (2021)	"User Profiling + Digital Platforms"; "Echo Chambers + Content Algorithms"; "Personalisation Algorithms + Ethical Bias"; "Content Recommendations + Bias in Facebook, X."
Data Quality Issues	Incomplete or inconsistent data, inaccurate recommendations	Lee (2018); Akter et al. (2022); Coe (2021); Lee et al. (2023); Himelein-Wachowiak et al. (2021); Norori et al. (2021); Harner et al. (2022)	"Data Accuracy + Content Algorithms"; "Bias in Content Recommendations + Digital Platforms"; "Data Quality Issues in Facebook, X"; "Data Integrity + Algorithmic Bias."
Commercial Incentives	Monetisation-driven priorities, targeted advertising, engagement maximisation	Shin & Shin (2024); Lauer (2021)	"Commercial Interests + Social Media Platforms"; "Ad Targeting + Algorithms"; "Monetisation Bias in Facebook, X"; "Corporate Priorities + Algorithmic Recommendations."

Cultural and Regional Biases	Marginalisation of regional content, cultural insensitivity, imbalance in content visibility	Yu (2020); Amarikwa (2020)	"Cultural Bias + Digital Platforms"; "Regional Disparities in Content Recommendations"; "Algorithmic Marginalisation + Social Media Platforms"; "Cultural Insensitivity in Facebook, X."
Gatekeeping and Ownership Culture	Corporate agendas, ownership structures, leadership priorities	Gillespie (2018); Mahmud et al. (2022)	"Gatekeeping + Social Media Content Algorithms"; "Ownership Bias in Digital Platforms"; "Corporate Priorities + Algorithmic Culture"; "Ownership and Bias in Facebook, X."
Political Incentives	Political ideology bias, electoral manipulation, agenda-setting	Guess et al. (2023); Thorson et al. (2021); Graham & Andrejevic (2024)	"Political Bias + Content Algorithms"; "Content Recommendations + Political Agendas"; "Political Ideology Bias in Facebook, X"; "Digital Platforms + Election Influence."

The thematic analysis identifies six interrelated factors driving bias in content recommendation algorithms on Facebook and X: user profiling, data quality issues, commercial incentives, cultural and regional biases, gatekeeping and ownership culture, and political incentives. These factors show that bias is not accidental but rooted in the technical, economic, cultural, and political structures of digital platforms. User profiling fosters echo chambers through over-personalisation, reinforcing confirmation bias and ideological polarisation (Shin & Shin, 2024; Hughes et al., 2020).

Data quality problems also entrench bias, as flawed or incomplete datasets skew outputs and marginalise minority voices (Lee, 2018; Akter et al., 2022). Commercial incentives further sustain bias since algorithms are optimised for engagement rather than fairness, privileging sensational content and profit-driven outcomes (Lauer, 2021). Cultural and regional biases emerge when recommendation systems privilege dominant Western narratives, diminishing local and minority representation (Yu, 2020; Amarikwa, 2020).

Gatekeeping and ownership structures reinforce bias through opaque corporate governance and limited transparency, aligning algorithmic design with platform interests (Gillespie, 2018; Mahmud et al., 2022). Political incentives deepen these distortions as algorithms amplify ideologically aligned or manipulative content, particularly during elections (Guess et al., 2023; Thorson et al., 2021).

Collectively, these dynamics reveal bias as a systemic outcome of interconnected personalisation processes, flawed data environments, profit motives, cultural hierarchies, corporate control, and political pressures. Each dimension reinforces the others, commercial goals often align with political interests, while weak data governance amplifies cultural exclusion. Ultimately, algorithmic bias is not a technical glitch but a structural feature of digital ecosystems. Addressing it requires reforms that go beyond algorithmic adjustments, including stronger data governance, transparent oversight, and corporate accountability to restore user trust and equity within the digital public sphere.

Research Question Two: What relationship exists between the diversity of recommended content and the degree of trust users have in digital media platforms?

On sites like Facebook and X, the correlation between user trust and diverse content emphasises how crucial equity, inclusivity, and openness are in establishing credibility. According to Yang et al. (2023), content diversity, which is the portrayal of different viewpoints and voices, signals justice when it exists but encourages feelings of manipulation when it does not. Research demonstrates that whereas polarised or homogeneous feeds undermine confidence (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2020; Cinelli et al., 2021), diversified material increases trust and satisfaction (Farokhi et al., 2024; Bhatt et al., 2023). Facebook is a prime example of this issue since its algorithms frequently perpetuate echo chambers that stifle free speech and discourage discussion.

Additionally, a lack of diversity impacts health platforms, where minority communities are marginalised due to reliance on Western datasets (Saurwein & Spencer-Smith, 2021). When their reality are ignored, users become disengaged; diversity is essential in all situations. This link is mediated by transparency: platforms that disclose the workings of

their algorithms get greater trust (Farokhi et al., 2024). On the other hand, untransparent procedures on Facebook and TikTok lead to complaints and feelings of unfairness (Haroon et al., 2022; Bhatt et al., 2023). Therefore, transparent communication on algorithmic methods is just as important as content diversity.

These dynamics are complicated by commercial motivations. Sensational or divisive information is amplified on platforms that rely on engagement-driven advertising at the expense of inclusivity (Bakshy et al., 2018; Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2020). Under-represented creators are further marginalised by virality-driven models, such as those found on TikTok (Haroon et al., 2022). Trust deficits worsen when business motives continuously take precedence over justice (Schmitt et al., 2022). This tension serves as an example of how corporate methods directly clash with the moral objectives of openness and diversity.

Declining trust has serious societal repercussions. Decreased trust in platforms causes polarisation, breaks up public discourse, and impairs civic engagement (Schmitt et al., 2022).

These shortcomings worsen disinformation and the decline of democracy in environments where social media predominates information flows. Structural reforms are needed to address the issue, including clear moderation procedures, auditing algorithms, encouraging under-represented inventors, and diversifying training datasets (Farokhi et al., 2024; Bhatt et al., 2023). Subscriptions and other revenue streams could lessen reliance on bias generated by involvement (Schmitt et al., 2022).

Discussion of Findings

On sites like Facebook and X, user trust and the diversity of content are strongly correlated with equity, inclusion, and openness. When algorithms encourage a range of viewpoints, users see credibility and balance, which increases confidence (Farokhi et al., 2024). On the other hand, confidence is undermined by opaque procedures and echo chambers (Papakyriakopoulos et al., 2020; Bhatt et al., 2023). Prioritising engagement

over diversity in commercial incentives exacerbates polarisation and silences minority views (Bakshy et al., 2018; Haroon et al., 2022). Ensuring algorithmic openness, encouraging inclusivity, and diversifying datasets are all necessary to maintain confidence. In the end, diversity in material is not only morally right, but also necessary for accuracy, equity, and the long-term viability of digital platforms.

Implication and contribution

The findings of this study carry significant theoretical, practical, and policy implications. At the theoretical level, the study underscores that bias, privacy, transparency, and manipulation in content recommendation algorithms are not isolated phenomena but systemic outcomes rooted in structural, technical, and commercial priorities of social media platforms. This insight advances ethical debates around digital technologies by demonstrating how trust is shaped by the interplay of algorithmic design and corporate interests.

Practically, the study highlights that restoring user trust requires platforms such as Facebook and X to rethink their operational models. Engagement-maximisation alone is insufficient; instead, platforms must incorporate fairness, inclusivity, and transparency into their algorithmic processes. Regular algorithmic audits, disclosure of ranking mechanisms, and proactive support for under-represented voices are necessary steps to address bias and improve trust.

For policymakers, the results reveal the limits of existing regulations such as GDPR and CCPA, which primarily emphasise transparency without sufficiently addressing the deeper issues of bias, political influence, and commercial incentives. Stronger, more holistic governance structures are needed to ensure that algorithms foster democratic participation rather than erode it.

For users and civil society, the implications point to the need for greater algorithmic literacy. Understanding how platforms structure visibility and information flow enables

users to critically assess their digital environments, thereby reducing vulnerability to manipulation and bias.

Furthermore, this study makes several contributions to scholarship and practice. Unlike prior studies that often examine privacy, bias, or transparency in isolation, this paper brings these dimensions together to show how they collectively shape trust in recommendation algorithms. This holistic approach strengthens the conceptual understanding of algorithmic ethics.

By focusing on Facebook and X, the study contributes comparative insights into how different platform logics, engagement-driven (Facebook) and immediacy/virality-driven (X), manifest similar ethical concerns. This comparative framing enriches ongoing debates about the role of social media in shaping democratic discourse. The study extends discourse on digital regulation by showing that existing frameworks must evolve to address structural and systemic biases. It provides evidence-based recommendations for platform accountability and the need for alternative business models that move away from pure engagement metrics.

8.   CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing findings from this study, and those posited in previous empirical studies, this paper therefore concludes that the ethical integrity of content recommendation algorithms fundamentally influence and shape users' trust and the ethical perception of different social media platforms, especially Facebook and X. To address ethical and trust issues in social media algorithms, this paper therefore notes that digital ecosystems must place more priority on fairness, inclusivity and transparency as core ethical and operational principles.

9.   RECOMMENDATION

This article suggests a comprehensive strategy to reduce algorithmic bias and rebuild user confidence in light of the findings. To identify and address biases related to user profiling, political influence, or economic interests, platforms should regularly do

algorithmic audits. In order to ensure equitable representation, datasets must be diversified to incorporate a range of ethnic, regional, and minority perspectives. Clear disclosure of the methods used to rank and filter content should improve transparency. Platforms should also encourage diversity in content by assisting under-represented creators and striking a balance between inclusion objectives and engagement measures. Finally, business models should shift from engagement-driven advertising to alternative revenue streams, such as subscriptions, that prioritise fairness and ethical accountability.

10. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future studies should employ hybrid methodologies that integrate user perspectives and behavioural data to examine how algorithmic bias and content diversity affect user trust in various cultural and regional contexts. Additionally, consideration should be given to governance structures, alternative business models, and transparency methods that strike a balance between equity and profit, providing long-term avenues for fostering confidence in digital platforms.

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Sahel Countries Exit from ECOWAS: Implications for Regional Integration in the West African Sub-Region

Akposeimokumo Tounaregha

University of Africa, Toru-Orua

Corresponding Email: takposeimokumo@gmail.com

Abstract

The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2024 represents one of the most consequential disruptions in the trajectory of regional integration in West Africa. This paper critically examines the implications of the Sahelian exit from three interrelated perspectives—its impact on ECOWAS as an organization, on Nigeria as the regional hegemon, and on the Sahel states themselves. The study argues that the departure of these founding members undermines the institutional integrity, economic cohesion, and political legitimacy of ECOWAS, which has evolved from a purely economic body into a multidimensional mechanism for security and peacekeeping. For Nigeria, the exit erodes its long-standing leadership role, weakens its influence in regional diplomacy, and exposes it to increased security vulnerabilities along its northern frontier. From the standpoint of the Sahel states, withdrawal symbolizes sovereignty and resistance to perceived neo-colonial interference but simultaneously isolates them economically and diplomatically. The exit threatens to disrupt cross-border trade, reduce collective bargaining power under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and destabilize ongoing counterterrorism cooperation. Ultimately, this study concludes that the Sahelian withdrawal exposes the fragility of regionalism in West Africa, where political instability and divergent governance models continue to hinder integration. ECOWAS must therefore re-evaluate its intervention mechanisms and adopt a more inclusive, flexible framework capable of accommodating both democratic and transitional regimes to preserve regional unity and stability.

Keywords: ECOWAS, Sahel states, regional integration, Nigeria, West Africa, security, sovereignty

1. INTRODUCTION

The African continent experienced extensive external domination by colonial powers such as Great Britain, Portugal, Belgium, and France. Although these powers eventually granted political independence, their former colonies remained constrained by deep-seated structural and economic dependencies that limited genuine self-determination.

Today, many African states continue to grapple with challenges such as economic underdevelopment, insecurity, political instability, and recurrent coups—problems rooted in the enduring legacies of European and American imperialism.

Following independence, African leaders recognized the need for collective action to address the inherited colonial problems. This gave rise to efforts toward regional cooperation and integration, notably articulated in the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) of 1980. The drive for unity and cooperation among African states aimed to foster integration across the continent and its sub-regions. Within this framework, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established to promote economic integration and free trade among member states. Over time, however, its role expanded to include peacekeeping and conflict resolution, leading to the creation of mechanisms such as ECOMOG.

Recent developments have, however, threatened the stability of ECOWAS. The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the organization has raised serious concerns about the future of regional unity. The leaders of these states—Captain Ibrahim Traoré, Colonel Assimi Goita, and Brigadier General Abdourahamane Tiani—justified their exit as an assertion of sovereignty and a rejection of neo-colonial influence, which they argue perpetuates Africa's underdevelopment. They also advocate military governance as a means to resist European domination and advance indigenous, bottom-up development strategies.

Burkina Faso's embrace of military rule, widely criticized by ECOWAS and the international community, has intensified solidarity among the Sahel states and deepened the rift within the sub-region. This development undermines the founding objectives of ECOWAS and complicates efforts at regional integration. Although integration in West Africa faces numerous challenges—including weak political commitment, inadequate funding, and overlapping memberships in multiple regional bodies—some progress has been achieved. Initiatives such as the ECOWAS passport, the creation of national ministries for regional integration, and growing consensus on the need for unity demonstrate continued potential for cooperation.

Nonetheless, the withdrawal of the Sahel countries represents a significant setback, casting uncertainty on the future of ECOWAS and regional integration. Their insistence on military governance and rejection of democratic norms risk deepening divisions within the bloc. Against this backdrop, this paper examines *"The Exit of the Sahel Countries from ECOWAS: Implications for Regional Integration in the West African Sub-Region."*

Statement of the problem

The historical trajectory of Africa has been profoundly influenced by slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism, which have collectively entrenched a pattern of dependency on the Global North for aid and development financing. This persistent reliance has constrained the continent's capacity for autonomous growth and sustainable development. In an effort to overcome these structural challenges, West African leaders established the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 to promote regional economic integration, political cooperation, and collective self-reliance among member states.

Despite ECOWAS's achievements in fostering economic cooperation, mediating conflicts, and promoting stability within the subregion, recent developments have raised serious concerns about its cohesion and effectiveness. The decision by the Sahel states—Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger—to withdraw from the organization represents a major setback to the goals of regional integration and collective security. Their exit not only diminishes the numerical strength and economic capacity of ECOWAS but also threatens the very ideals upon which the organization was founded.

This situation presents a critical challenge to the process of regional integration in West Africa and raises an important question: to what extent does the withdrawal of the Sahel states affect the functioning, unity, and integration agenda of ECOWAS in the subregion?

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study;

i.   What factors necessitated the Sahel countries' exit from ECOWAS?

ii.   How has the exit impacted the unity and functionality of the ECOWAS

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This paper aims to examine how the exit of the Sahel countries impacted on regional cooperation in West Africa. Specifically, it shall;

i.   Characterize the cause of the Sahel Countries' exit from ECOWAS

ii.   Demonstrate how the exit has affected the unity and functionality of the of the ECOWAS

2.   METHODOLOGY

This study applied the descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to comprehend present conditions, beliefs, and attitudes by meticulously observing real-world events without manipulating variables (Ogundipe, et al, 2006). Through this methodological approach, the researcher sought insights into Sahel Countries' exit form ECOWAS and the implications on ECOWAS, Nigeria and the Sahel states in particular, aiming to draw reasoned conclusions. Pilot & Hanger (2007) emphasise that descriptive research methods effectively gather information on various aspects such as people's actions, knowledge, intentions, and values. Thomas & Nelson (2008) further support this, noting that the approach aids in identifying problems, conducting comparisons, and systematic evaluations, especially with larger population sizes.

The study analysed data obtained from diverse secondary sources, including internet materials, journal articles, newspapers, books, and conference proceedings. This broad spectrum of resources enriched the depth and breadth of the research findings.

3.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Realist Theory

The argument of this paper is anchored on the realist theory of international relations. Prominent proponents of realism include Sun Tzu (544–496 BC), the Chinese general

and author of *The Art of War*; Thucydides (460–399 BC), the Greek historian; and Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898). The central tenet of the realist theory is that the international system is anarchical—meaning it lacks a central authority—though not entirely lawless. Within this system, state behaviour is primarily driven by self-interest and the pursuit of power. Realists contend that states must act based on pragmatic realities rather than on moral or religious ideals. As such, international politics is characterized by competition, where states strive to enhance their power, military capability, and economic welfare, often in a zero-sum struggle where one state's gain is perceived as another's loss.

In the context of the Sahel countries' exit from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), realism provides a compelling analytical lens. The decisions of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso to withdraw from the regional bloc can be interpreted as actions taken in pursuit of their national interests. Facing internal instability, external pressures, and perceived dominance by stronger regional actors—particularly Nigeria and ECOWAS's traditional Western partners—these states sought to assert autonomy and protect their sovereignty within an anarchic international environment. Their withdrawal underscores the realist notion that states prioritize survival and national interest over collective ideals or regional solidarity. Therefore, despite the potential negative repercussions for regional integration and security, the Sahelian states' decision reflects a calculated move grounded in realist logic: that states must ultimately act to safeguard their own interests (national interest) in a competitive and uncertain world.

4.   RESULTS

Sahel Countries in Perspective

The Sahel is a semi-arid transitional belt south of the Sahara Desert, stretching across West and Central Africa from Senegal and Mauritania in the west to Sudan and Eritrea in the east. Key Sahelian countries include Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, and Sudan. Geographically, the Sahel is characterized by fragile ecosystems, low and erratic rainfall, and frequent droughts (Mortimore, 2009). These climatic conditions have contributed to chronic food insecurity and vulnerability to

desertification (UNCCD, 2017). Socioeconomically, Sahelian countries face high population growth, limited economic diversification, and widespread poverty. Livelihoods primarily depend on rain-fed agriculture and pastoralism, both highly sensitive to climate variability (FAO, 2012). Politically, the region is affected by weak governance, intercommunal conflicts, and the spread of violent extremism, particularly in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Chad (Lecocq et al., 2019). These security challenges are compounded by transnational organized crime and migration pressures.

International and regional interventions, such as the G5 Sahel and the Great Green Wall Initiative, seek to address the interconnected climate change, insecurity, and poverty crises through coordinated security operations and sustainable development strategies (African Union, 2020). The Sahel remains one of the world's most vulnerable regions, yet it holds significant potential for resilience if environmental management, good governance, and inclusive development are prioritized.

The collective withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 2024 constitutes a major rupture in the evolution of regional integration and governance in West Africa. This paper critically examines the implications of the Sahelian exit from three interrelated perspectives—ECOWAS as an organization, Nigeria as a regional hegemon, and the Sahel states themselves. It argues that the withdrawal exposes deep institutional weaknesses in ECOWAS, challenges Nigeria's continental leadership, and endangers the political and economic survival of the withdrawing states. The study concludes that the event reflects the fragile nature of West African regionalism, where political instability and competing sovereignties undermine the ideals of collective security and integration.

The establishment of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in 1975 sought to promote economic integration, social cooperation, and political solidarity across the subregion. Over the decades, ECOWAS evolved beyond its economic mandate to include peacekeeping and conflict management, demonstrated in its interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone through ECOMOG. Despite these achievements, the 2024 withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger—three founding members—marked a

turning point for the regional body and raised fundamental questions about the future of integration and stability in West Africa.

Adamu and Umar (2024) attribute this withdrawal to political instability, recurring coups, and growing discontent with ECOWAS's sanction policies and perceived interference in national affairs. The event symbolizes the complex intersection of sovereignty, legitimacy, and regional governance in the Sahel.

Implications for ECOWAS as a Regional Organization

The exit of the Sahelian states significantly weakens ECOWAS's structural and symbolic integrity. Founded on the principle of collective economic strength, ECOWAS's legitimacy derives from its wide membership and shared objectives. With three departures, its numerical and geopolitical weight is diminished, reducing both its bargaining capacity and its continental relevance.

Beyond numerical reduction, the exit disrupts the foundational goal of economic integration. ECOWAS was conceived to address the economic marginalization of postcolonial West Africa by fostering free trade and interdependence. However, as the subregion's challenges expanded—poverty, insecurity, and underdevelopment—ECOWAS broadened its agenda to include peacekeeping, humanitarian interventions, and political mediation. The loss of three member states undermines these functions, particularly in security coordination, border management, and counterterrorism.

According to *Punch* (2024), ECOWAS's total exports before the withdrawal amounted to $131.36 billion, with the Sahelian states contributing approximately $8 billion collectively. While modest, their departure reduces intra-regional trade volume and reshapes the ECOWAS map both geographically and economically. The bloc's capacity to function as a cohesive pillar of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is consequently weakened, affecting its negotiating leverage on the continental stage. Building on their earlier withdrawal from the regional economic bloc, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have imposed a 0.5 percent tariff on imported goods. This move is anticipated to further diminish the already limited intra-regional trade and undermine the

economic strength of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). According to experts, this development also poses a setback to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), whose implementation has remained slow nearly a decade after its adoption. With intra-African trade still hovering around 14 percent, trade analysts fear that the abrupt decision by the Sahel states could undermine ongoing intergovernmental initiatives aimed at reducing tariff barriers. Even if the situation does not immediately affect the overall volume of intra-West African trade, it may stall the recent progress in trade formalization—progress that, for instance, saw Nigeria significantly increase its officially recorded trade with some neighboring countries in the past year. According to Muda Yusuf, the chief Executive Officer of the Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise;

> To move a cargo of export across Benin Republic and Togo, exporters pay what is called 'transit levy' which runs into millions of naira. I believe the transit levy is even more than the newly-imposed 0.5 per cent levy that the Sahel countries introduced. Benin already banned some of our goods, ignoring the ECOWAS protocol and treaty. The respect for the protocol within the sub-region is extremely weak and almost non-existent now, and this levy is the final nail in the coffin for the ECOWAS treaty and protocol, since they do not belong to ECOWAS anymore, treaties like the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) do not apply to them again, and this is expected. What this means is that imports from ECOWAS countries would be affected and I think the 0.5 levy is not so heavy. I do not know what is being done to bring them back to the regional bloc, but any more serious trade tariffs will significantly disrupt trade flow in West Africa

He further argued that;

> For traders that used to ship to the affected countries, this levy might affect their trade facilitation mechanisms. Over time, ECOWAS has been slightly divided between the English-speaking side and the

> French-speaking side, and this will only cause further divisions. Another thing is that they will start shopping for partners outside ECOWAS and Africa and the instant they get this, their position would be strengthened, and they would likely increase the duties and levies, Trade within Africa is already very poor, especially when compared to other continents. Africa has the lowest intra-continent and regional trading numbers in the world. However, instead of looking for new ways to dismantle old tariff and non-tariff barriers, new barriers are being erected on top of the old ones. Our regional trade is going to suffer even more, this also poses a security threat not just to trade but to other aspects and sectors.

In 2023 alone, West Africa witnessed over 1,800 violent incidents within the first six months, leading to nearly 4,600 deaths and severe humanitarian crises. An ECOWAS senior official described this as only "a snippet of the horrendous impact of insecurity" in the sub-region. Within Nigeria, as in much of Africa, progress toward genuine regional integration has remained sluggish. This stagnation is largely attributed to the political elite, whose actions often undermine formal regional objectives. In a patrimonial political system such as that prevalent in West Africa—where power and loyalty are maintained through personal networks—regional integration challenges the informal arrangements politicians maintain with influential business interests. Consequently, a significant gap exists between the *ideal of regionalism* as articulated in official policies and the *reality of regionalization* as practiced daily across West Africa. While political instrumentalization of regional institutions has hindered progress, the solution lies not in less integration but in better, more transparent, and people-centered integration. Nandi, 2024)

The exit in practical terms have also shaped the Security Dynamics of the region. The deterioration of security in the Sahel region poses grave concerns for regional stability. Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, which play crucial roles in combating Islamist extremism, now face increased vulnerability following the withdrawal of French and UN forces. Their recent withdrawal from ECOWAS further exacerbates regional insecurity,

threatening not only the Sahel but also neighboring states. Evidence suggests that since the rise of military regimes in these countries, violent attacks have intensified—raising serious doubts about the juntas' capacity to manage mounting security threats.

Although the formation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) represents an attempt at solidarity among Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, the bloc faces formidable political, economic, and security challenges. Their exit from ECOWAS risks further isolation, restricts access to vital regional markets, and deepens existing economic hardships. The AES's credibility remains uncertain, with the international community monitoring its capacity to promote cooperation and address security crises effectively. Nevertheless, ECOWAS remains resilient. The departure of three of its poorest members is unlikely to undermine its overall economic strength. On the contrary, ECOWAS may consolidate its economic cohesion and pursue deeper integration among its remaining members. However, this realignment could mark the end of decades of regional fraternity that once defined the West African bloc.

The exit of the Sahel States is expected to disrupt regional cooperation in security and intelligence sharing, thereby weakening collective counter-terrorism operations. Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have been central to West Africa's integration and stabilization initiatives, particularly in regions severely impacted by terrorism. Concerns have been raised that this abrupt withdrawal could undermine democratic restoration efforts and further destabilize an already fragile region. Western governments have also cautioned that the move may complicate the fight against transnational crime, irregular migration, and terrorism across the Sahel. The prevailing insecurity underscores a major challenge to regional stability and counter-terrorism strategies. The Sahel States, however, argue that ECOWAS has played only a marginal role in addressing these threats, relying excessively on external assistance and foreign military interventions (Sakhri, 2025).

From an economic standpoint, Sahelian countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger rely far more on regional trade than their coastal counterparts like Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, or Nigeria. Due to limited industrialization and urbanization, Sahelian economies primarily depend on agricultural production and livestock trade, much of which flows toward the Gulf of Guinea. For instance, nearly two-thirds of livestock movements in

West Africa in 2022 crossed international borders—typically from the Sahel to major coastal markets such as Abidjan.

A strictly Sahelian alliance such as the AES cannot replace ECOWAS, given the deeply interconnected nature of human and economic networks across West Africa. The Sahelian countries import most of their consumer goods—cement, petroleum products, vehicles, textiles, and foodstuffs—from both regional and global markets, primarily through the ports of Cotonou, Lomé, Abidjan, and Tema. Similarly, coastal states depend heavily on trade with the Sahel; for example, onions and livestock are major imports from the northern region. Some coastal economies, such as Benin and Togo, have evolved into *entrepôt economies*, thriving on the importation and re-exportation of goods to neighboring states.

Thus, border closures or trade disruptions between coastal and Sahelian countries have historically produced devastating effects on livelihoods across the region. Millions of farmers, herders, and traders rely heavily on regional mobility and cross-border commerce. ECOWAS was established nearly five decades ago to sustain precisely these complementary relationships between the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea. Consequently, the withdrawal of Sahelian countries from ECOWAS is likely to inflict severe economic repercussions on the subregion—more so for the landlocked states. Without unfettered access to coastal ports, their import costs will surge dramatically, further deepening economic fragility and undermining regional integration efforts. (Nnadi, 2024)

Implications for Nigeria's Regional Leadership

Nigeria's leadership in ECOWAS has historically defined its postcolonial foreign policy and reinforced its status as West Africa's "big brother." Through financial contributions, peacekeeping deployments, and diplomatic interventions, Nigeria has sustained ECOWAS's institutional viability (Tuonimi, 2020). It remains the largest economy and market in the subregion, accounting for nearly half of ECOWAS's GDP and holding the highest parliamentary representation.

However, the withdrawal of the Sahel states poses strategic, economic, and reputational challenges to Nigeria. Economically, Nigeria's exports to and through Niger and Mali—specially manufactured goods, energy, and food products—face disruptions. Niger's withdrawal, in particular, threatens Nigeria's northern trade corridors and trans-Saharan routes critical for regional commerce. Moreover, Nigeria's long-term investments in energy diplomacy, notably through the West African Power Pool, risk renegotiation or suspension.

Politically, Nigeria's hegemonic authority faces erosion. Its inability to prevent or reconcile the schism reflects declining influence and questions its diplomatic effectiveness. Security-wise, Nigeria's northern borders become more vulnerable as joint ECOWAS counterterrorism frameworks—such as intelligence-sharing and border patrols—lose coordination. The fragmentation of security arrangements could empower extremist networks like ISWAP and al-Qaeda affiliates, deepening instability in the region.

Domestically, this withdrawal amplifies skepticism regarding Nigeria's foreign policy expenditures. Critics increasingly question whether ECOWAS membership yields tangible national benefits, given persistent internal insecurity and underdevelopment. If unaddressed, this disillusionment could push Nigeria toward isolationist or transactional diplomacy, eroding decades of Afrocentric engagement.

Implications for the Sahel States

For Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, the decision to withdraw from ECOWAS reflects a pursuit of sovereignty amid dissatisfaction with external political pressures. Yet, this decision carries considerable economic and diplomatic costs. As landlocked nations heavily reliant on coastal neighbors for access to global trade, their exit complicates commerce, increases tariffs, and restricts the free movement of goods and people.

ECOWAS membership had facilitated tariff exemptions, market access, and labor mobility. Its withdrawal revokes these privileges, potentially leading to economic contraction and social dislocation. *Punch* (2024) reports that the Sahelian trio contributed

about 8% of ECOWAS's GDP; without access to the bloc's integrated market, they risk further marginalization. Additionally, millions of Sahelian citizens living across ECOWAS states now face uncertain residency rights, disrupting cross-border livelihoods.

Security-wise, the newly formed *Alliance of Sahel States (AES)*—a defensive pact among the three regimes—seeks to replace ECOWAS with a military-oriented framework. However, Alex (2025) observes that this alliance lacks the economic and institutional depth necessary to guarantee long-term stability. While the AES may provide short-term political solidarity, it risks deepening the Sahel's isolation from wider African integration processes.

The exit of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from ECOWAS marks a profound test of West African regionalism. It underscores the fragility of multilateral cooperation in contexts where political instability and regime legitimacy crises persist. For ECOWAS, the withdrawal challenges its ability to reconcile democracy promotion with respect for sovereignty. For Nigeria, it threatens economic interests, security coordination, and continental leadership. For the Sahel states, it represents both an assertion of independence and a descent into economic vulnerability.

Ultimately, sustaining regional integration in West Africa will require ECOWAS to reform its governance model—balancing normative enforcement with pragmatic inclusivity. Without such recalibration, the subregion risks further fragmentation, undermining the collective aspiration for peace, development, and continental unity.

5.   CONCLUSION

The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) represents a defining moment in the trajectory of regional integration in West Africa. This development transcends mere institutional disengagement; it exposes the fragility of collective regionalism when confronted with domestic political instability, divergent ideological orientations, and contested notions of sovereignty. The exit underscores the persistent tension between supranational

cooperation and national autonomy—a dilemma that has long characterized Africa's postcolonial integration efforts.

From the institutional perspective, ECOWAS faces a crisis of legitimacy and operational capacity. As one of Africa's oldest and most functional regional blocs, ECOWAS had evolved beyond its economic integration mandate to become a formidable peace and security mechanism, exemplified by its interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone through ECOMOG. The departure of the Sahel countries not only diminishes ECOWAS's numerical and geographical scope but also weakens its collective bargaining power, strategic cohesion, and regional identity. A reduction in membership size translates into diminished political leverage at both continental and global levels, threatening the organization's credibility as a unifying force in West Africa. Moreover, the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States (AES) reflects an emerging fragmentation of regional authority, which could institutionalize polarization between democratic and military-led regimes in the sub-region.

For Nigeria, the implications are particularly profound. As the principal financier, political anchor, and moral authority of ECOWAS, Nigeria's leadership in West Africa now stands at a crossroads. The Sahelian withdrawal symbolically undermines Nigeria's hegemony and questions its capacity to mediate regional crises effectively. Economically, Nigeria's trade and investment flows—especially through Niger as a key transit corridor—face potential disruption, while energy exports and regional infrastructure projects may require renegotiation. Security-wise, the collapse of coordinated ECOWAS counterterrorism frameworks increases Nigeria's exposure to transborder insurgency, arms trafficking, and extremist infiltration from the Sahel belt. Diplomatically, Abuja risks reputational erosion as its long-standing commitment to regional peacekeeping and integration appears increasingly unsustainable amid internal dissent and external skepticism.

For the Sahel states themselves, withdrawal from ECOWAS presents both symbolic assertion and structural vulnerability. Although their exit was framed as a declaration of sovereignty and resistance to neo-colonial influence, it effectively isolates them from one

of the most established platforms for multilateral cooperation in Africa. Given their landlocked geography, fragile economies, and heavy dependence on coastal ECOWAS neighbors for imports, exports, and trade corridors, disengagement introduces logistical and fiscal constraints likely to exacerbate existing developmental challenges. The disruption of the ECOWAS free movement protocol further complicates migration, residency, and labor mobility, directly affecting millions of Sahelian citizens whose livelihoods depend on cross-border exchanges. Security-wise, the formation of a separate Sahelian military alliance may temporarily project self-reliance, but its long-term sustainability without regional and international collaboration remains uncertain.

Ultimately, the exit of the Sahel states signals a regression in the historical project of West African unity. It reaffirms that regional integration in Africa remains vulnerable to shifts in domestic political regimes, leadership legitimacy crises, and external geopolitical pressures. For ECOWAS to reclaim its integrative essence, it must pursue institutional reforms that prioritize inclusivity, dialogue, and flexibility in managing political transitions. Nigeria, as the sub-region's anchor state, must recalibrate its leadership approach—from coercive diplomacy and sanctions to strategic engagement rooted in economic interdependence and shared security interests.

The Sahelian exit thus serves as both a cautionary tale and an opportunity for introspection. It compels ECOWAS and its member states to confront the paradox of integration without cohesion, sovereignty without solidarity, and independence without interdependence. Whether this episode leads to permanent fragmentation or renewed unity will depend on the political will of regional leaders to reconcile ideological divides and reaffirm their collective commitment to the ideals of Pan-African cooperation.

6.   CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The major contribution of this paper lies in its recommendation that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should receive more sustainable and adequate funding to effectively discharge its mandate, despite the withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. Furthermore, the paper underscores the various challenges

confronting ECOWAS as a result of the Sahel states' exit and examines how these challenges have impeded the organization's capacity to fulfil its core objective of promoting regional integration within West Africa. Overall, this study makes a significant contribution to the growing body of literature on regional integration and institutional resilience in Africa.

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Media Framing of APC and PDP Presidential Race in the 2015 General Elections

Oluwaseyi Tayo OLAWOLE

Department of Communication and Language Arts
University of Ibadan.

oluwaseyiolawole564@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined how Nigerian newspapers framed the 2015 presidential election, with focus on *The Nation, The Punch,* and *The Vanguard*. Using content analysis and guided by Framing Theory, the research investigated the dominant frames employed in coverage of electoral issues. Findings reveal that the issue-specific frame accounted for 60.8% of reports, with strong emphasis on security, the economy, corruption, and campaign activities. In contrast, the game and strategy frames were less prominent, differing from trends in Western democracies where horse-race coverage often dominates. The results demonstrate that Nigerian newspapers foregrounded substantive national concerns, reflecting the developmental realities of the polity. By prioritising issue-based framing, the media influenced public perception of political actors and may have contributed to the electoral outcome. The study concludes that the Nigerian press played a significant agenda-setting role and recommends balanced, ethical, and policy-oriented coverage in future elections.

Keyword: Framing, Issue-specific, Media, Newspapers, Election

1.   INTRODUCTION

Over the years, the mass media have played a crucial role in disseminating information to the public. The mass media, otherwise referred to as the fourth estate, have developed the principles and standards of how to provide news stories people can trust. News framing has been the concern of many media and communication researchers. In other words, the framing of issues in elections is a discourse which has received universal attention. As a result of this, specific trends in political news coverage have been observed on a global scale, most especially the trend toward higher personalisation and portrayal of politics as a game or contest between political contenders, through the so-called strategic game frame (Dimitrova & Kostadinova, 2013). It has therefore been

maintained by scholars that, in framing political events and issues in the developed countries like USA and Western Europe, the use of game frames are highly prevalent. This is based on the fact that the global trends in political news coverage are not equally pronounced in all countries, considering their political and media system (Dimitrova & Kostadinova, 2013).

In the real sense, looking at Nigeria's media system, they do not always live up to standard as the practice of journalism in Nigeria is bedeviled by some unethical challenges. The media up till now is politically polarized in terms of affiliation, ethnic loyalty, and sectional party and selfish interest (Aghamelu, 2013 cited Dukor, 1999). Nigeria's media system does not always meet standards, as the practice of journalism in Nigeria is plagued

Moreover, the Nigerian media have fallen victim of manipulations by government and politicians. They now witness the falling standard of journalist profession and its negative contribution to the nation building through everyday impolite and indiscreet reporting of events and issues (Aghamelu, 2013). Aghamelu further emphasized that based on the report of the European Union observation mission in respect of the 2003 general elections, the media performance was flawed as they failed to present unbiased, fair and informative coverage of issues and events concerning political parties and candidates contesting the elections.

Government-owned media were said to be biased in favour of parties and candidates in power. This claim can be supported with empirical studies. For instance, (Eze, 2010), in his study on Nigerian press coverage of 2007 presidential election campaigns, found that Nigerian press were biased in the sense that the incumbent or the ruling party received favourable news coverage. While addressing framing biased, (Entman, 2008) explains that biased content helps political party in consistently persuading the people to accept interpretation helpful to the favoured political actor. Therefore, most of the time, the incumbent or ruling party wins elections.

However, the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria was one of the enthusiastically contested elections Nigerians ever observed since her independence in 1960 (Ibraheem, Ogwezzy-Ndisika & Tejumaiye, 2015). This is demonstrated by not only the strategy for strategy and tactics for tactics political advertisements embarked upon by the ruling party (PDP) and the opposition party (APC), but also the volume of interest the election generate across the nation and beyond (Ibraheem & etal 2015). The election somewhat witness a different mass media coverage in the history of elections in Nigeria as the media/journalist not only frame political events and issues on campaigns/advertisements of the contending political parties/candidates, but also news stories, news features, news analysis, editorials, opinions among others on policy issues such as insecurity, education, unemployment, economy etc. After all, the outcome of the election showed the loss of the incumbent president/ruling party, (PDP). In circumstances whereby the incumbent or the ruling party lost to the opposition, it can be assumed that the incumbent might have received little attention of the media framing; perhaps, the opposition party might have come up with extra strategic policies which would in turn provide them with a favourable coverage.

Hence, this study seeks to establish the salient issues that were framed and discussed in the newspapers concerning the incumbent and the opposition party. Considering the fact that the incumbent lost, this study will investigate the prominence credited to the two political parties, direction of coverage and the most dominantly used frame. Against this backdrop, this study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

Research Questions

i. What are the salient issues framed in the coverage of the 2015 presidential elections in Nigeria?

ii. Which of the frames employed by the selected Nigerian newspapers was dominant or prominent in the coverage of the 2015 Nigerian presidential election?

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Framing

Framing as a concept is a tool used by the media to present an occurrence. It can be seen as a way of structuring or restructuring series of reported events and issues. Framing as journalistic tool has been differently defined by various scholars as a phenomenon that deals with way reported events are principally selected and composed with human perception of actuality (Entman, 2007; Porto, 2001; andSchuefele and Tewskbury, 2007).

(Entman, 2007) sees framing as the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation. In the same vein, (Busher, 2006) defines framing as process of selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient. From the above definition, Entman and Busher are of the same view in their definitions of framing as they emphasise that framing deals with the audience perception of reality. Chong and Druckman (2007) define framing as a process by which an individual develops or redevelops their view on a specific issue. Porto, (2001) sees framing as the principles of selection, emphasis and presentation used by journalists to organize the world and report it. Chong and Druckman, and Porto's definitions suggest that the frame used by the media topresent and interpret issues is also used by the people to perceive and interpret issues.

Hence, it can be deduced that framing is an instrument that both politicians and journalists employ to present salient issues to their respective audience. Framing is mostly employed by the politicians during campaign and election period in order to get what they want from the electorates. For instance, a party candidate or his party may tend to use words like, "for the future", "in your heart, you know he is right", "don't stop thinking about tomorrow", "change we can believe in", "change we need", "yes we can", "moving forward", "change" etc are catchy phrases framed by politicians most especially in American politics and some other parts of the world where liberal democracy is practiced. These phrases are framed in order to give insight to public about what the user (politician) stands to achieve. To journalists, framing is employed to set people on how

to think about issues that deal with different aspects of the citizens and the government. O'Gara, (2009)provides further explanation in how the media, in the coverage of politics focus on or frame issues on the political players along these parameters: candidates' race, experience or viability, using metaphors, catchy phrases, and keywords. Thus, framing is a process of news making on different issues about the political players and the people.

Types of Frame Employed in the Coverage of Elections

Mathes (2009) explains that there are different definitions, approaches and types of framing device applied by the media. Scholars have identified various types of frames the media employ in the coverage of politics, especially political campaigns and elections reportage. These include; game frame, strategy frame, strategic-game frame and issue-specific frame (Aalberg, Stromback and de Vreese, 2011;Dimitrova and Kostadinova, 2013; andAbate, 2013). These Frames have been major concern of research adopted by the researchers in media and political communication to examine how both print and broadcast media frameissues and events on political parties and candidates before and after elections. The implication is that the way the media frame issues on candidates can be crucial to the public's understanding and interpretation of the presidential elections stories (O'Gara, 2009). Therefore, it is pertinet to explain the aforementioned types of frames employed by the media.

Game Frame: This is also referred to as horse race frame. It is a type of frame employed by the media in the coverage of elections and campaign. Previous findings of scholars revealed that it is the most dominant frame employed by the media in the United State of America (Aalberg, Stromback and de Vreese, 2011 cited Stromback and Dimitrova 2006). Game frame deals with the language of game and competition; it is about who is winning and who is losing. Game frame is often misunderstood with strategy game.

It is against this assertion that Aalberg, Stromback and de Vreese, (2011) make a distinction by re-emphasizing and explaining that reportage that employs the game frame are news stories that portray politics as a game and are centered around, who is winning or losing elections, in the battle for public opinion, in legislative debates, or in politics in

general; expressions of public opinion (polls, vox pops); approval or disapproval from interest groups or particular constituencies or publics; or that speculate about electoral or policy outcomes or potential coalitions. For instance ,in the study conducted by Abate (2013), it was established that Addis Admas newspaper reported criticized claims that contesting political parties and candidates made that "they will win the elections"(Abate, 2013, p. 50). Such claims are subjected to game frame. From this point of view, game frame can be referred to as the claims that political parties and candidates made to the public(s) in anticipating victory over an opponent.

Therefore, it can be deduce that game frame is a type of frame that deals with claims of winning or having advantage over the opponent in election. This usually happens in political parties' primary elections where one or more of the contending aspirants would see himself/herself as the most influential and powerful aspirant to be the flag bearer of the party. Then, speculation arrives as they are inclined to engage themselves in the battle of wit.

The Strategy Frame: The Strategy Frame refers to news stories that are centered around interpretations of candidates' or parties' motives for actions and positions; their strategies and tactics for achieving political or policy goals; how they campaign; and choices regarding leadership and integrity, including personal traits. It also involves different types of media strategies, including news coverage of press behavior (Aalberg & e tal 2011). Unarguably, the media are seen as the instruments for political actors.

Therefore, strategy frame can be viewed as not only about politician tactics for winning elections, or the motive and campaign techniques but also a strategic way of relating with media to stylishly project the image of the party or the candidate. For instance, in the study of (Dreier and Martin, 2010), "How ACORN was framed: Political controversy and media agenda setting" (Dreier and Martin, 2010) exposed how the Democratic Party of Barack Obama displayed the strategies and tactics for winning the election. ARCON was A Community Organisation which Barack Obama had a silence link with. Before the 2008 presidential election in America, ARCON had become the main center of mainstream media in America, the subject of many national stories in newspapers,

magazines, radio and television before it was discovered a month before elections that Barack Obama had relationship with this organization. It was clear that the Democratic Party's strategies, motives and style of campaign combined with media role helped the party to win the election. Therefore, strategy frame can be defined as a skillful way or method of achieving a purpose in the world of politics.

Issue-Specific Frame: Issue-specific frame deals with concrete interpretive frameworks established in debates on specific issues. Therefore, frames are then operationalised as specific combinations of four frame elements such as problem definitions, causal interpretations, evaluations, treatment recommendations (Mathes and Kohring, 2008). This formula serves well for reconstructing public debates in content analysis and has been applied in a high number of studies (Matthes, 2009). Issue-specific focuses on the character and motivations of the politicians who appear in the stimulus material, as well as one's confidence in the process of the specific policy debate (Jackson, 2011).

Issue-specific frame provides relevant detail and information to an occurrence or issues. It involves various political issues that impact both the people and the government. Such may be on national development, security, health, corruption etc. For instance, in a study conducted by (Busher 2006), "Framing of Hilary Clinton: A Content Analysis of the New York Times News Coverage of the 2000 New York Senate Election", education economy, healthcare, taxes, gun control, soft money, environment and campaign financing were the prominent issues raised in the New York Times newspaper during the 2000 New York Senate election in United State (Busher, 2006, p. 41). In addition to this, (Abate 2013), explains that the Reporter newspaper reported different issues and policies during the Ethiopian 2005 elections. Such issues were socio-economic policy, political agendas, and educational policy.

In educational policy, the issue focused on Southern Nations and Nationalities People Region of the country, where the old policy which required seven and eight grade student to learn Amharic language was replaced by new policy which granted them to take their subjects in English language (Abate, 2013, p. 50).Obviously, during elections, contesting candidates raise debatable issues as part of political campaigns. These issues are then

reported by the media. Therefore, issue specific can be referred to as a way of bringing up debatable issues to inform the electorate about political parties, candidates and/or governmental policies.

Strategic Game Frame: Strategic game frame is defined as news coverage that focuses on political strategy and tactics, current standing in the poll, who is winning and who is falling behind, and other horse-race aspects of the campaign (Dimitrova and Kostadinova, 2013). Aalberg, Stromback and de Vreese, (2011) see strategic game frame on a macrolevel as the politics of game, personality contest, politics as strategy, tactics or strategy of political campaigning and how they campaign, display images of politicians, political power as a goal and politicians as individual rather than spokesperson for certain policies. From this perspective, it can be deduced that strategic game frame encompasses all political activities of a party and or a candidate. For example, (Busher 2006) establishes that Hilary Clinton was framed by New York Times as being political active. This was based on the activities that Hilary engaged herself in. Such activities were; the reports of her open declaration to run for senate seat even as she was still the first lady; the reports of her appointment to head healthcare task force; the reports that she was permitted to attend staff session and cabinet meeting; the reports and claims made that she would win the senatorial seat; the reports of her personality; the reports of how she was portrayed as either a traditional person or non-traditional (political image) and the report of tactics and strategy she adopted during campaign to get elected. Thus, the elements of game frame, combined with the elements of strategy frame are what constitute strategic game frame on a micro level.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Framing Theory

Goffman (1974) first describes framing as schemata(s) of interpretation that allows individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label topics, issues and events. Entman (1993) comprehensively sum this definition up as a process by which the media "select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text

in a way that can promote a certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation. Therefore, media framing of some topics and headlines of certain issues are what influence the understanding of the audience about a particular issue or event. To further explain this, Schuefele and Tewskbury (2007), put it that framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by the audience.

The fact that there were a lot of issues and events during the presidential campaign/election and during the postponement of election date might have caused the selected Nigerian newspapers to report political news stories in a way that might influence people's interpretation and understanding about such stories. For this reason, this study seeks to identify the issues frame by the Nigerian newspapers and establish the dominant frame employed by the media.

4.   METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was designed to explore salient issues framed by the selected Nigerian newspapers APC and PDP presidential candidates in 2015 general election. In order to accomplish these objectives, the researcher adopted the content analysis research design. Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables (Kerlinger, 2000 cited in Wimmer and Dominick, 2011.

Study Population

The Nation, *The Punch* and *The Vanguard* were the three selected Nigerian newspapers that provided the study sample for the study. These three newspapers made up the data sources. The newspapers were selected because of their national coverage and wide circulation. The researcher preferred to use newspapers because they are the preferred subjects for studies adopting qualitative or quantitative content analysis for broadcast media (Iyengar 1991 & Entman 1993 cited in Abate 2013). Also, other researchers or

any interested individual could easily access the selected newspapers for the reliability of the findings from the study.

Study Period

The time frame for the study was between 16th November, 2014 and 26th March, 2015, exactly four months and ten days. The period was chosen because it was the time when the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) officially lifted the ban for presidential campaigns for all political parties to the last day of the campaign which was 26th March, 2015. Political parties' primary elections were also held during the period. This period was very important as it gives opportunity to the researcher to carefully examine the content of the newspapers in order to evaluate news framings and its effect.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The researcher of this study adopted the purposive sampling technique in selecting newspaper samples for this study. Purposive sampling involves respondents, subjects, or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminate those who fail to meet these criteria (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). Hence, the selected newspapers were picked on the geopolitical of their owners. Other considerations are; wide circulation and readership as well as regular publication. For this reason, The Nation, Vanguard, The Punchand The Vanguard, constituted the data sources for the study.

For the sample size of the study, the researcher randomly generated three weekdays from five weekdays, and one day from the two weekend days. Therefore, four days were selected from each week of the sample months. A total of 194 editions (65 The Nation, 66 The Punch, and 63 The Vanguard) were analyzed. Data were coded based on framing categories and analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions.

Table 1: Editions of Newspapers Content Analysed

N e w s p a p e r s	November 2014	December 2014	January 2015	February 2015	March 2015	T O T A L
T h e N a t i o n	8	15	11	16	15	65

The Punch	6	16	12	16	16	66
The Vanguard	8	13	13	14	15	63
T O T A L	22	44	36	46	46	194

Coding Procedure and Relaibility

Coding was conducted manually using a predefined codebook developed from framing typologies by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) and Matthes and Kohring (2008). To ensure reliability, two trained coders analyzed a pilot sample of 30 randomly selected stories. Intercoder reliability was established using Holsti's formula, yielding a coefficient of 0.86, indicating acceptable agreement.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher employed frequency and percentage statistical methods to analyze the data collected. The results of data analysis was presented in tabular forms with adequate presentation of appropriate explanation of the information in the tables.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

1. What are the salient issues framed by the selected Nigerian Newspapers framing of 2015 presidential election in Nigeria?

The purpose of this research question was to determine the dominant issue/subject in the coverage two major political parties, All Progressives Congress (APC) and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria by the selected Nigerian newspapers. It is important to restate here that during campaign/electioneering period, political issues are constructed in the media cycle in order to tell the people how to think. Therefore, this research question seeks to put in perspective the dominant issue/subject that Nigerian newspapers gave saliency to in reporting the overall activities of the (APC) and (PDP). To achieve this objective, data collected on both parties through

the content analysis of the three newspapers for the study which are *The Nation, The Punch* and *The Vanguard* were discussed.

Table 2: Dominant Issues in the Newspapers' Framing APC and PDP in 2015 Presidential Election

Issues	APC No. (%)	PDP No. (%)	Total No. (%)
Corruption / Anti-Corruption	31 (3.5%)	50 (5.7%)	81 (9.2%)
Social Infrastructure	15 (1.7%)	21 (2.4%)	36 (4.1%)
Education	16 (1.8%)	13 (1.5%)	29 (3.3%)
Unemployment / Employment	4 (0.5%)	5 (0.6%)	9 (1.0%)
Security / Terrorism	68 (7.7%)	102 (11.6%)	170 (19.3%)
Economy / National Development	67 (7.6%)	91 (10.3%)	158 (17.9%)
Poverty Alleviation / Welfare	7 (0.8%)	7 (0.8%)	14 (1.6%)
Health	4 (0.5%)	4 (0.5%)	8 (0.9%)
International Relations / Policy	2 (0.2%)	1 (0.1%)	3 (0.3%)
Religion	20 (2.3%)	9 (1.0%)	29 (3.3%)
Ethnicity	9 (1.0%)	5 (0.6%)	14 (1.6%)
Aviation	1 (0.1%)	2 (0.2%)	3 (0.3%)
Domestic Political Conflict	60 (6.8%)	80 (9.1%)	140 (15.9%)
Land and Housing	2 (0.2%)	2 (0.2%)	4 (0.4%)
Campaign	81 (9.2%)	100 (11.3%)	181 (20.5%)
Sports, Leisure & Recreation	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.3%)	3 (0.3%)
Agriculture	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.1%)	1 (0.1%)
Total	**387 (43.8%)**	**496 (56.2%)**	**883 (100%)**

Summary of data in table shows that the newspapers in the reportage of the All Progressive Congress (APC) give more saliency to the party's "campaign" activities and issues bothering on "security/terrorism." On the contrary, although somewhat related,

the newspaper accorded priority to "security/terrorism" issues and the "campaign" activities in their coverage of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

A breakdown of the data shows that the dominant issues in the newspapers coverage of the Presidential campaign of the APC are: "electoral campaigns" (81), "security/terrorism" (68), "economy/national development" (67), "domestic political conflict" (60), "Corruption/anti-corruption" (31) and "religion" (20). The PDP, apart from dominant issue of "Security/terrorism" which is (102), other issues that are dominant are: "campaign" (100), "economy/national development" (91), "domestic political conflict" (80), "Corruption/anti-corruption" (50) and "social infrastructure" (21).

The aggregate of this data shows that there are differences in the dominant issues common to the two political parties. The dominant Issues common to APC are "campaign" (81) and "Security/terrorism" (68), while the common issues to PDP are; "security/terrorism" (102), and "campaign" (100). Other issues common to both parties (APC and PDP) are "economy/national development" (67) and (91), "domestic political conflict", (60) and (80) as well as "corruption" (31) and (50) respectively.

Therefore, it can be inferred from the data discussed, that the dominant issues in the reportage of both parties (All Progressives Congress and Peoples Democratic Party) in the framing of 2015 presidential election in Nigeria are; "campaign" activities, "security/terrorism", "economy/national development", "domestic political conflict" and lastly "corruption" issues/subject.

In the newspapers, campaign activities of APC was given more priority than security/terrorism issue, while the security/terrorism issue on was accorded to PDP than its campaign activities.

Thus, it can be said that most of the news/reportage about APC is basically on Campaign activities rather than policy issues such as security. However, this is not surprising because APC as an opposition party was earnestly contesting to kick out the ruling party (PDP). The party therefore intensified its campaign rather than policy issues, which

accounted for newspapers main focus in the coverage of the 2015 presidential election. This is in line with O'gara's (2009) position that:

…the news media doesn't necessarily just focus on viability in terms of poll standing, but rather it often describes the candidates and the entire election as a competition that is based on strategy and tactics rather than issues'

Meanwhile, news reportage on PDP is essentially on security/terrorism". Interestingly, the issue of security/terrorism has been in existence before and during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Apart from security issue, several policy issues like economy/national development, corruption, social infrastructure etc were the main focus of newspapers mostly on PDP. In most of the news stories, the media accorded more priority to PDP as regards to policy issues which the party raised in an attempt to tackle social ills/problems. For instance: in the news headline titled "Allegation that I Support Boko Haram Wicked- Jonathan" in The Vanguard newspapers published on January 30th, January 2015. It was reported that:

According to the president, his administration is totally committed to reclaiming all the territories being occupied by Boko Haram terrorists in Adamawa State, noting that from the earlier five local governments being occupied by the terrorists, government forces have reclaimed some, including Michika which he said was reclaimed yesterday morning. Page 8

The above extract from the vanguard newspaper is one of the security issues covered by the Nigerian newspapers. Therefore, it is pertinent to note that most of the news stories on PDP published during the electioneering period in 2015 presidential elections were the issues raised by both parties. This implies that throughout the electioneering, PDP focused on issue policy as its candidate reinforced his political speeches on policies during the presidential rally which as well accounts for media attention.

By and large, it can be inferred that campaign activities and policy issues among other issues were really discussed in the newspapers. This is somewhat related to previous studies. Eze, (2010:47) paint more picture on stories covered during the presidential

election in Nigeria that "the major stories covered by the press with regards to the 2007 presidential election campaigns included stories on campaign issues, political issues, policy related issues and miscellaneous issues."

2. **Which of the frames employed by the newspapers is dominant in the framing of APC and PDP in 2015 presidential election?**

The drive of this research question is to ascertain the most dominant frame employed by the newspapers in the coverage of 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. It is instructive to restate that there are various type of frames that the media used in covering political issues. Earlier in this study, the literature review foresaw four types however. It is against this backdrop that this research question seeks to put in place the dominant frame employed by the media in covering presidential elections' issues and events.

Basically, this question seeks to establish whether Nigeria/Africa media report or frame political issues differently from the European and the Western world. Data collected through the content analysis of the three newspapers for the study were discussed.

Table 3: Dominant Frame in the Newspaper Coverage of 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria

Frames	APC No. (%)	PDP No. (%)	Total No. (%)
Game	103 (11.7%)	103 (11.7%)	206 (23.3%)
Strategy	40 (4.5%)	81 (9.2%)	121 (13.7%)
Strategic Game	9 (1.0%)	10 (1.1%)	19 (2.2%)
Issue Specific	235 (26.6%)	302 (34.2%)	537 (60.8%)
Total	387 (43.8%)	496 (56.2%)	883 (100%)

The table above shows the dominance of issue specific frame in about 60.8% of the stories analysed in the newspapers. This is followed by the game frame with the total of 23.3%. Strategy frame is the third frame that was predominantly used with the total of 13.7% and strategic game frame is the lowest with the total of 2.2%.

A breakdown of the data according to the parties individually shows that dominant frame in the selected newspapers coverage of the presidential campaign/election of APC is "Issue specific" (235), for PDP "Issue-specific" (302). This is followed by "Game frame" (103) for each party. For APC, "Strategy frame" (40), whereas, for PDP "strategy frame" (81). The use of strategic game frame on both APC and PDP is (9) and (10) respectively.

In the data discussed, it can be deduced that most of the reports covered on both political parties by the newspapers were "issue-specific frame". This is followed by "game frame" which was equally used on both parties.

It is important to restate here that the use of framing in countries like United State of America, Sweden, and Norway etc differs from the way it is employed in some of the developing countries in Africa. The finding of this study is consistent with the view of scholars that:

"In countries with different political structures and media systems, such as proportional multi-party systems and news markets more regulated by the state, issue frames are assumed to be more common" (Binderkrantz & Green-Perderson, 2009 cited in Aalberg etal, 2013). As a result, it is evident in this study that issue specific frame is dominantly employed by the newspapers in covering political issues and events during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. This finding is consistent with previous research on media framing in developing countries as (Abate, 2013) revealed that issue frame predominate in developing countries.

As results result of the data specify, the newspapers framed 60.8% of the stories on both political parties with the use of issue specific frame. This is based on the fact that most of the news stories framed were issue based. In other words, those issues focused on policies that political parties came up with. As a result, there were several reports on security, education, social infrastructure, corruption, and other related policy issues. For instance, the Vanguard newspaper, on the 5th of February, 2015 framed a report on education policy in headline titled "Education under Jonathan: the Good the Criticism" that:

While it is widely believed in some quarters that President Jonathan did performed in some sectors, it is held that he had neglected the education sector. However, some social critics argued that while the president gave maximum attention to revamping the educationsector, it was targeted to woo the votes of certain geo-political zones during the forthcoming general elections. Again, another school of thought is of the opinion that what the Jonathan administration referred to as achievement in the sector are cosmetic projects that could not stand the test of time. Page 25

While framing political issues and events that deal with policy, The Nation newspaper reported on the security issue/policy on the 10th of March 2015 that:

THE presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, has said his administration will confront insecurity with determination. He expressed outrage and grief at the latest terrorist suicide bomb attacks in Maiduguri, which left scores of people dead. Page 6

These and some other policy issues were framed and discussed in the newspapers.

It is important to note that in this finding, the game frame is remarkably employed by the newspapers on both parties as the second dominant frame. However, this is contrary to the scholars' findings that most studies have documented the predominance of the game frame in election news…(Aalberg et al, 2013). Therefore, it is instructive to re-establish scholars' findings that the reporting style of news media depends on the media/political system and socio-economic condition of the country (Stromback & Kaid, 2008, cited by Abate, 2013). Thus, apart from the fact that the 2015 presidential election was issue/policy-based, the findings of scholars also contributed to the reason why the media/newspapers employed issue-specific frames above others.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that Nigerian newspapers predominantly employed the issue-specific frame in their coverage of the 2015 presidential election, with 60.8% of stories emphasizing policy-related matters such as security, economy, corruption, and

social infrastructure. This suggests that the press gave significant saliency to substantive issues rather than focusing exclusively on political competition. According to Framing Theory, how issues are presented shapes public interpretation and response (Entman, 1993; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). By foregrounding issues like security and economic development, the media highlighted concerns that directly resonated with the electorate, which may have influenced their perception of party credibility and ultimately contributed to the ruling party's electoral defeat.

Furthermore, while the game frame and strategy frame were also employed, they were less dominant compared to issue-based framing. This finding contrasts with patterns in Western democracies, where the game frame is often the most prevalent (Aalberg, Strömbäck & de Vreese, 2011; Dimitrova & Kostadinova, 2013). It affirms earlier observations that framing practices are shaped by political systems and media environments (Binderkrantz & Green-Pedersen, 2009). In Nigeria's context, a developing democracy with high stakes in national development, newspapers tended to emphasize policy debates over electoral "horse-race" coverage. This validates the assumptions of Framing Theory, which posits that media choices in highlighting specific aspects of political reality guide how audiences define problems, interpret causes, and evaluate leaders (Entman, 2007).

6.   CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Nigerian newspapers analyzed (The Nation, The Punch, and The Vanguard) framed the 2015 presidential election largely through issue-specific frames, with emphasis on security, the economy, corruption, and campaign activities.Findings indicate that Nigerian newspapers predominantly used issue-specific frames (60.8%), focusing on substantive themes such as security, the economy, and corruption. This emphasis contrasts with Western trends, where the game frame dominates (Aalberg et al., 2011). Similar to Yusuf (2019) and Udeze & Chukwu (2013), this study confirms that Nigerian newspapers tend to prioritize issue-based frames, suggesting an evolving pattern toward developmental journalism.

The prominence of issue frames also underscores ethical implications. Journalists have a duty to uphold objectivity and fairness, avoiding partisan bias in political coverage. Balanced framing enhances media credibility and contributes to voter education by highlighting substantive policy debates over campaign drama. The findings also reveal that unlike in advanced democracies, Nigerian political reporting during the election prioritized substantive issues over horse-race dynamics, reflecting the socio-political realities of a developing democracy.

7.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is therefore recommended that Nigerian newspapers should continue to prioritize issue-specific frames while ensuring balanced coverage between incumbents and opposition parties to reduce perceived bias. Journalists should uphold professional ethics to minimize political manipulation and partisan reporting, thereby enhancing media credibility. Continuous training in political communication and framing analysis will help reporters to frame issues more responsibly and constructively. Media houses should create platforms for deeper policy debates beyond campaign rhetoric, allowing voters to make more informed choices. Finally, Future studies should compare framing across multiple election cycles in Nigeria to establish long-term trends and assess the impact of media framing on voter behaviour.

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