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A FUSION OF AKWETE-IGBO WOVEN FABRICS AND BATIK INSPIRED BY ULI-IGBO MOTIFS FOR CONTEMPORARY FASHION: IMPERATIVE FOR ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

The Akwete hand-woven fabrics produced by the Igbo and found in the southeastern part of Nigeria celebrate a rich tapestry of intricate and colourful designs that convey significant messages rooted in the Igbo worldview. Traditionally, these fabrics are reserved for special occasions in Igbo culture, where women typically wear them as two wrappers paired with a lace blouse, while men also incorporate them into their attire. It is uncommon to see Akwete fabrics combined with other materials in everyday clothing, underscoring their unique cultural significance. In addition to the Akwete fabrics, Uli traditional hand painting features over a hundred symbolic motifs drawn from Igbo idioms, slogans, and proverbs. Historically, these designs were applied to bodies and walls, serving both aesthetic and spiritual purposes. Unfortunately, the practice of Uli painting has been in decline, approaching a state of near extinction in recent years. Given the cultural importance of these

motifs, this study posits that integrating Akwete fabrics with Uli-inspired batik designs in clothing construction can aid in their sustainability and revitalize interest in these art forms. Through qualitative research, desk methodology and studio exploration, the study produces sample apparel that highlights this synergy. The findings indicate that by incorporating diverse indigenous fabrics into contemporary fashion design, one can significantly bolster economic sustainability in Igbo land and beyond. Specifically, the combination of Akwete hand-woven fabrics and batik designs inspired by Uli motifs has the potential to enhance their marketability and longevity while simultaneously promoting cultural preservation. In conclusion, the study suggests that fashion designers embrace a variety of indigenous fabrics from different regions. This approach not only fosters unity but also safeguards the diverse cultural heritage of the nation, ensuring that traditional textiles like Akwete are celebrated and utilized more prominently in modern fashion.

Keywords: Akwete hand-woven fabrics, Uli traditional painting motifs, batik, contemporary fashion, Igbo, economic sustainability.

Introduction

Contemporary fashion in Nigeria has witnessed many transformations as regards to cloth styles of indigenous fabrics. Most ethnic groups in Nigeria have brought in some transformations probably inspired by western fashion to enhance their cloth styles made from indigenous fabrics. Some have also gone the

extra mile of producing a printed version of their indigenous textiles to create varieties and promote accessibility, for instance the Adire dyed fabric print and Akwete- Igbo hand woven textiles to mention but a few. While some factory produced indigenous fabrics prints like Adire are frowned at because of the effects on the local producers, they are still being smuggled into the country. These indigenous fabrics are still produced and utilized up till date.

Akwete hand woven fabrics produced by the South-Eastern Igbo found in Nigeria are one of the garbs worn by them and also indigenously woven manually by them. The Akwete people produce these fabrics that bear their name to further emphasize ownership and control. In the contemporary fashion scene in Igbo land, one could rarely find people adorned in Akwete hand-woven textiles, for some special occasion (Chudi-Duru, 2017). Some of the Igbo remember that their parents and grand relatives used these woven fabrics at one time or the other but not of recent.

In the Nigeria contemporary fashion scene today, Akwete hand woven fabrics have not been sufficiently utilized to construct some casual outfits which could be adorned frequently.This is what prompted this study. This study has observed that some of indigenous fabrics produced in Nigeria have been infused into the contemporary fashion;for instance the aso-oke, by using them to construct wears which could be used as office wears or more so, combined or patched with other fabrics to construct some simpler apparels

which could be adorned as casual wear or leisure wear and boho - chic.

Uli traditional painting is not often utilized as part of dress in contemporary fashion, rather some of the Igbo prefer being tattooed. This particular culture is almost going into extinction. Willis(1974) **recorded over a hundred motifs utilized by the Igbo to decorate their bodies and walls and each is symbolic representing Igbo culture, worldviews and ideologies. This study posits that if these motifs could be transferred to the fabrics using batik as a medium and combined with akwete hand woven fabrics to construct some apparels, which could be worn frequently in contemporary fashion, perhaps it could aid their sustainability economically.As this fusion will produce some innovative cloth wear styles that are new and also suit the recent fashion instead of the former ways they were utilized. This practice offers better choices to consumer demands as newer styles evolve from this synergy. It will**alleviate economic pressures on artisans while fostering an appreciation for Igbo cultural heritage in modern designs.

Problem of the study

Uli traditional painting is not often utilized as part of dress in contemporary fashion, rather some of the Igbo prefer being tattooed. This particular culture is almost going into extinction. Willis (1974) recorded over a hundred motifs utilized by the Igbo to decorate their bodies and walls and each is symbolic representing Igbo culture, worldviews and ideologies. This study posits that if these motifs could

be transferred to the fabrics using batik(wax resist dyeing-adire) as a medium and combined with akwete hand woven fabrics to construct some apparels, which could be worn frequently in contemporary fashion, perhaps it could aid their sustainability economically. As this fusion will produce some innovative cloth wear styles that are new and also suit the recent fashion instead of the former ways they were utilized. This practice offers better choices to consumer demands as newer styles evolve from this synergy. It will alleviate economic pressures on artisans while fostering an appreciation for Igbo cultural heritage in modern designs. The question is this: why can't Akwete fabrics be constructed into some casual cloth wears that could be utilized often in the contemporary fashion just like some of its peers.

Aim of the study

1. To produce a kimono jacket using a sample of Akwete-Igbo hand woven fabric and a batik fabric inspired by Uli-Igbo traditional painting symbols as motifs.

Theoretical framework

Several theories can be applied in this study, each providing a distinct lens through which to understand the intersection of culture, fashion, and textiles. Below are the theories relevant to this study:

- Cultural Sustainability theory by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009) firmly establishes that culture fundamentally shapes ones understanding of the world. F. David Peat (1938-2022) advocated for

the necessity of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural heritage preservation. This theory asserts the need to preserve and adapt traditional practices, such as Akwete weaving and Uli designs, ensuring cultural continuity amid globalization.

- Design theory - Propounders: - Victor Papanek (1923-1998) stressed the designer's critical role in effecting social change and implementing sustainable practices. Roozbeh Shirazi (1967-Present) - advocated for integrating traditional motifs in contemporary design, underlining their cultural relevance. This framework decisively supports the fusion of traditional Akwete fabrics with Batik techniques, emphasizing the significance of cultural motifs in modern fashion.
- Economic Sustainability theory propounded by E.F. Schumacher (1911-1977) proposed 'Small is Beautiful,' focusing on sustainable economic practices that prioritize local resources and skills. Amartya Sen (1933-Present) highlighted the need for capabilities and sustainable development in economic practices. This theory frames how the fusion in fashion can create sustainable economic opportunities for local weavers and artisans, directly enhancing their livelihoods while promoting cultural heritage.
- Fashion Theory, propounded by Katherine M. G. Stansfield (1980-Present) - analyzed the powerful connection between culture, identity, and fashion. Miriam Schapiro (1923-2021) - highlighted the

invaluable contributions of women's art and craft to the narratives of art and fashion. This theory compellingly explores how the fusion of Akwete hand woven fabricsand Uli batik designs can transform identities within contemporary fashion by celebrating rich cultural heritage.

The converging perspectives of Cultural Sustainability, Design, Economic Sustainability, and Fashion theories create a powerful framework to examine the critical importance of merging Akwete-Igbo woven fabrics and Batik inspired by Uli-Igbo designs. This fusion not only actively fosters economic sustainability but also contributes to the preservation and evolution of cultural identities in modern fashion. This theoretical framework will decisively guide this research and practice to alleviate economic pressures on designers while forging a deeper appreciation for the rich cultural heritage in contemporary designs.

Literature Review

Textile

Textiles are flexible materials composed of a network of natural or artificial fibers, known as yarn or thread. These fibers are interlaced, knitted, woven, felted, or bonded together to create fabrics or cloths, which are then used in a multitude of applications ranging from clothing and household items to industrial and medical products.The term "textile" originates from the Latin word textilis, meaning "woven." Traditionally, textiles were made from natural fibers such as cotton, wool, silk, and linen. With advances in technology, synthetic fibers like polyester, nylon, and acrylic have been developed, offering

additional properties such as strength, elasticity, and resistance to moisture and chemicals (Kadolph, 2014).The manufacture of textiles involves several steps:

Fiber Production: Fibers are sourced either from natural origins (plants, animals) or synthesized chemically.Yarn Formation: Fibers are spun into yarns through processes such as twisting and drawing.

Fabric Construction: Yarns are then converted into fabric via weaving, knitting, or non-woven technologies like felting or bonding.Finishing: The fabric undergoes treatments to enhance appearance, texture, or performance, such as dyeing, printing, and coating (Corbman, 1983).

Textiles are ubiquitous in daily life. They are essential for apparel, upholstery, carpets, curtains, and bedding. In industrial contexts, textiles are used for conveyor belts, filters, and reinforcements in composites. Technical textiles serve specialized functions in aerospace, medicine (e.g; surgical sutures, bandages), and automotive industries (Horrocks & Anand, 2016).Modern textile science is increasingly focused on sustainability, developing eco-friendly fibers and recycling processes to reduce environmental impact (Fletcher, 2014). Innovations such as smart textiles—fabrics with integrated electronic components—are expanding the possibilities of textile applications.

Contemporary Fashion

Contemporary fashion refers to clothing and accessories that reflect the current trends, tastes, and cultural influences of the present moment. It is a dynamic and ever-evolving segment of the fashion industry, characterized by its responsiveness to contemporary lifestyles, advancements in technology, shifts in social values, and the global exchange of ideas. Unlike traditional or classic fashion, which tends to emphasize timeless silhouettes and enduring styles, contemporary fashion is distinctly modern, often embracing innovation, experimentation, and a forward-thinking approach to design.

At its core, contemporary fashion is defined by its relevance to the present day. Designers and brands in this segment typically target a demographic that values style, quality, and accessibility, often appealing to urban professionals, millennial, and Gen Z consumers. Contemporary fashion labels are known for producing garments that are more trend-driven than luxury fashion yet offer higher quality and a greater sense of individuality than mass-market fast fashion. This segment bridges the gap between high-end designer wear and affordable, everyday apparel, providing consumers with versatile, stylish options that align with their lifestyles and values (Jackson & Shaw, 2009).A key feature of contemporary fashion is its rapid response to cultural and social changes. Designers draw inspiration from art, music, social media, political movements, and global events, translating these influences into clothing that resonates with the current generation. For example, contemporary fashion often incorporates themes of inclusivity, sustainability, and

gender fluidity, reflecting broader societal conversations and consumer expectations. The rise of eco-friendly materials, ethical production practices, and diverse representation in advertising campaigns is all hallmarks of contemporary fashion's commitment to staying attuned to the world around it (Black, 2012).

Contemporary fashion is also shaped by technological innovation. Digital platforms, e-commerce, and social media have transformed how designers present their collections and how consumers engage with fashion. The immediacy of online communication allows trends to emerge, spread, and evolve at an unprecedented pace. Virtual fashion shows, influencer marketing, and direct-to-consumer business models enable contemporary brands to connect with audiences globally and respond quickly to shifting tastes (Brydges & Sjöholm, 2019).

While the term "contemporary fashion" is sometimes used interchangeably with "modern fashion," it typically refers to a specific price point and market segment within the fashion industry. Contemporary brands are positioned between high fashion (also known as haute couture or luxury fashion) and fast fashion. They offer stylish, on-trend pieces at mid-range prices, balancing quality and affordability. Examples of contemporary fashion labels include Theory, Sandro, Maje, and Vince, which are known for their clean lines, sophisticated aesthetics, and adaptability to both casual and professional settings.

Contemporary fashion is a reflection of the present, shaped by cultural, social, and technological forces. It

prioritizes relevance, innovation, and accessibility, offering consumers stylish options that resonate with their identities and values. As society continues to evolve, contemporary fashion will remain at the forefront of expressing and shaping the zeitgeist. Samples of contemporary fashion inspired by cultural forces are placed in the plates below.



Plate 1: Kimono jackets inspired by Aso-oke hand woven fabrics of the Yoruba. Source: Pinterest. This is used inNigeria contemporary fashion.

Indigenous fabrics

Indigenous fabrics are traditional textiles that originate from specific cultural, ethnic, or geographic communities and reflect centuries-old techniques, patterns, and meanings passed down through generations. These fabrics are often handcrafted using locally sourced natural fibers such as cotton, wool, silk, or plant-based materials, and are produced through methods like weaving, dyeing,

embroidery, or basketry unique to each region. Examples include the kente cloth of Ghana, ikat and java batik from Indonesia and India, Guatemala's huipil, and the bark cloth of Uganda.

Indigenous fabrics are more than just materials for clothing—they are symbols of cultural identity, heritage, and artistry. The motifs, colours, and weaving patterns embedded in these textiles often hold deep cultural significance, representing social status, spiritual beliefs, or historical narratives. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of preserving these traditional crafts, both as a means of supporting indigenous communities economically and as a way of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Integrating indigenous fabrics into contemporary fashion and design not only celebrates their beauty but also helps raise awareness about the diverse cultures and histories they represent.

Akwete- Igbo hand woven fabrics

In the Southeastern part of Nigeria, especially Akwete in Ndoki and Asa areas of Abia State, women and girls practiced the art of cloth weaving known as Akwete using the women's vertical loom. Lamb & Holmes (1980) note that Akwete is the most famous of all places that utilize the woman's' vertical loom in Nigeria; although there are various areas in which weaving is being practiced, for instance Asaba in Delta state, Abakaliki in Ebonyi state, Owerri in Imo state and Nsukka in Enugu state. Goodlife (2010), Powerhouse Museum (2008), Nwachukwu and

Ibeabuchi (2012), proclaim that the Igbo are widely known for Akwete-cloth weaving which is basically practiced by women. Lamb & Holmes (1980) has a report that the origins of the Akwete weaving tradition are far from clear and there seems to be a number of external influences combined in Akwete to bring into existence those cloths which are now considered to be characteristic of this region. They further reported that an Igbo legend mentions that weavers from that village were among the pioneers of Akwete weaving in the late nineteenth century. From the mid to late nineteenth century, weaving grew from a part-time activity to full-time occupation in which all Akwete women participated. At this period, Akwete weavers were responding to the patronage of neighboring Ijaw people of the Niger-Delta and evolved novel techniques in creating desired patterns in new textile materials. According to Nwachukwu et al (2012), the Akwete cloth is originally referred to as "Akwa Mmiri" (cloth of the water) meaning towel. The people believe that Akwete cloth is as old as the Igbo nation. Because of the dexterity of the weavers who demonstrated great mastery of technique and beauty of design; the art of Akwete cloth weaving was erroneously believed to have been introduced from Okene in Kogi State where a similar but highly developed style had earlier existed.

Ekwueme (2009) and Aronson (1980) believe that the ancestors of this Igbo traditional costume were imported from the island of Bonny in Rivers state. These ancestors settled in the mainland. While the men's occupation was fishing, the women designed and wove the intricate patterns now known as Akwete. She further states that

these intricate designs have arguably been adjudged as one of the most famous of the womens' vertical loom cloths in Nigeria. Ekwueme (2009) supports Lamb &Holmes (1980) and asserts that though the origin of this unique traditional industry is still shrouded in mystery, history however, reveals that the production of the cloth is the traditional profession of the women folk who started weaving from until their hands were strong enough to handle a narrow wall loom. She opines that Akwete is common amongst Nigerians mostly in the eastern part of the country but this study strongly opposes this as most young men, women and youths do not even know what Akwete looks like talk less of acquiring one. However, Afigbo and Okeke (1982) and Goodlife (2019) disagree with this view of the origin of Akwete weaving because they believed that the legendary weaver Dada Nwakata who is acclaimed to be the founder of Akwete weaving began weaving with designs of her invention. She is said to be the founder of Akwete weaving and has remained a role model for Akwete weavers who like her claim they can weave any cloth design set before them. Dada Nwakata unraveled threads from an open woven cotton cloth locally known as "acham" brought to the area through trade with the Potoki (Portuguese) between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries when the latter operated in the Bight of Biafra. After studying the weave structures of the heavily ornamented cloth, Dada Nwakata copied them and secretly began to weave a new style of Akwete designs. This style was revealed after her death by a deaf and dumb friend who was the only person she permitted in her company when she wove her cloths.

Lamb &Holmes (1980) strongly believe that Akwete is the traditional hand woven cloth of the Igbo; produced by highly talented women in the town of the same name. The method uses a uniquely wide version of the single heddle loom and the skills have been transferred from mother to daughter since ancient times. Remnants of Igbo weaving have been dated back to the 9th century A.D with the excavation of Igbo Ukwu woven raffia fibre cloth (Shaw 1970).

Lamb & Holmes (1980) further observed that it has been highly prized by Igbo women for ceremonial dresses such as the 'up and down' which is wrapped round the waist and another under the arms. Akwete was soon overtaken by cheap imported materials. With the introduction of the lighter polyester silk threads and beautiful new patterns, Akwete competes remarkably well with the best woven materials in the world. The artistry and craftsmanship that goes into the Akwete weaving have given it uniqueness far above other woven fabrics in West Africa. Lamb & Holmes (1980) postulate that although there are some uniquely traditional Akwete patterns passed down over centuries, each woman weaver still tries out new designs in keeping with modern fashion trends thus creating an interactive and vibrant industry. In the process, some of the women of Akwete have set up a cooperative to coordinate their marketing. Their works have the stamp of their individual designs innovations while retaining their traditional character. However if Akwete industry is vibrant as Nwachukwu et al (2012) claim, it would have been very popular like some of its counterparts such as the kente fabric of Ghana which is being used globally.

Clarke (2013) observes that Akwete village is on the southern fringes of the Igbo speaking area of Nigeria and that Akwete women wove cloths that were traded throughout the Niger delta, for use on various ceremonial occasions. Akwete (2012) supported Shaw (1970) and notes that Igbo weaving must have dated back to the 9th century based on the Igbo Ukwu finds of woven raffia fibre cloth. It further states that Akwete is the traditional hand woven cloth of the Igbo, and produced by highly talented women in the town of Akwete and transferred from mother to daughter. According to Lamb & Holmes (1980), the unique weavings of Akwete women are known throughout West Africa, however, this study disagrees with this statement because Akwete cannot claim the same popularity as Kente woven cloth of Ghana. Today the location of Akwete village is somewhat remote, but in the 19th century it was strategically located along the slave and palm oil trading routes, from the interior to the port cities of Opobo and Port Harcourt, and textiles where it became a valued trade good. Shaw (1970) in Oyedele, Ayokanmi & Obisesan (2014) have mentioned that archaeological excavation has revealed the presence of woven textile made of fabric other than cotton at Igbo-ukwu, although how and by whom they were made was not known.

However, Akwete fabric is still woven in Akwete village but still remains unknown to the majority of the Igbo people. A new ground has to be broken so as to take Akwete designs to a higher ground. There is need therefore to find new ways of giving more exposure and recognition to the Akwete fabrics through further creative

innovations. Some samples of Akwete hand woven fabrics can be viewed in plates 2-:





(Plate 2: akwete hand woven fabric)Plate 3: akwete hand woven fabric
Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).





Plate 4: akwete hand woven fabric Plate 5: akwete hand woven fabric
Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).



Plate 6: akwete hand woven fabric.Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).

Uli/Uri traditional painting

Uli is a traditional art form of the Igbo people of southeastern Nigeria, primarily practiced by women. It involves the use of organic pigments, derived from plants such as the uli tree (Combretum zenkeri), to create fluid, linear designs on the human body and on the walls of buildings. Uli painting is distinguished by its freehand, spontaneous style, featuring motifs inspired by nature—such as leaves, animals, birds, and abstract geometric patterns.

Historically, uli painting was closely associated with important cultural and social events, including festivals, rites of passage, and other communal gatherings. The designs were often symbolic, conveying meanings related to fertility, beauty, prosperity, and spiritual protection. On the body, uli was applied as temporary decorations, similar to tattoos but non-permanent, while wall paintings could last longer and served to beautify homes and shrines.

Uli art is celebrated for its elegance, minimalism, and rhythmic qualities. The motifs are typically rendered in dark hues against lighter backgrounds, emphasizing contrast and visual harmony. Though the traditional practice has declined, uli motifs continue to inspire contemporary Nigerian art, fashion, and design, serving as a powerful link to Igbo cultural heritage.The values of this tradition were highly valued by the Igbo people.

However, the advent of civilization and religion shifted their focus toward other cultures. This study aims to reignite interest in uli, not through shrines or body art, but by promoting its adaptation to batik fabrics. In doing so, it seeks to establish a strong foundation for integrating uli into diverse socio-economic applications. Samples of some uli traditional motif symbols are placed below.

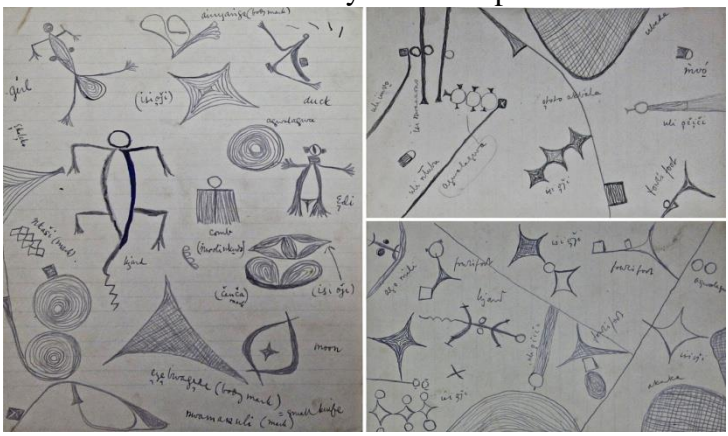

Figure 1: Drawings of *uli* motifs, with Northcote Thomas's annotations. Few of Thomas's field notes survive from his anthropological surveys. There is, however, a collection of these drawings on sheets of notepaper, evidently made by different people during his 1910-11 tour of what was then known as Awka District, Southern Nigeria. Cambridge University Library.



Plate 7: *Uli* decorations on the new concrete Iyiazi shrine walls, Agukwu Nri, during the opening of the refurbished Odinani Museum, 28 December 2018. Photograph by George Agbo.

Batik

Batik is a traditional textile art form that involves creating intricate patterns and designs with wax on fabric as a resist-dyeing technique. The process centers on applying wax to specific areas of cloth to prevent those sections from absorbing dye, allowing artisans to build complex, multi-colored patterns layer by layer. While batik is practiced in various regions across the world, it is most famously associated with Indonesia, where it has been recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO, 2009).

The Batik Process

The creation of batik is a meticulous and time-honored craft. Artisans begin with a piece of fabric, usually cotton or silk, and use a tool called a *canting* (a small copper spouted container) or a stamp known as a *cap* to draw or print patterns with hot wax. Once the wax has cooled and hardened, the fabric is immersed in dye. The waxed areas resist the dye, preserving the original color of the fabric beneath. After dyeing, the fabric is dried, and additional layers of wax and dye may be applied to achieve the desired complexity and variety of colors. Finally, the wax is removed, often by boiling the fabric, to reveal the finished design.

Batik is deeply rooted in cultural traditions and often features motifs with symbolic meanings. In Indonesia, for example, certain batik patterns were historically reserved for royalty or used for special ceremonies such as weddings and religious rituals. Common motifs include flowers, birds, geometric shapes, and mythical creatures, each carrying specific cultural messages or blessings. Batik designs are also found in African, Indian, Malaysian, and Chinese cultures, each adding unique regional influences and techniques.

In addition to its traditional uses, batik has found a prominent place in contemporary fashion, interior design, and fine art. Designers incorporate batik fabrics into modern clothing, accessories, and home décor, blending heritage with innovation. The versatility and beauty of batik patterns have made them popular globally, and modern artisans experiment with new color palettes,

abstract forms, and non-traditional materials to expand the boundaries of the craft (Kusuma, 2011).

Batik production remains a significant economic activity in many communities, supporting local artisans and preserving traditional skills. In Indonesia, for instance, batik-making provides employment for thousands of people, especially women. Governments and cultural organizations also promote batik as a symbol of national identity and as a valuable export product.

While batik is celebrated for its artistry, the process can have environmental impacts, particularly due to the use of synthetic dyes and large amounts of water. In response, some artisans are adopting eco-friendly dyes and more sustainable methods, ensuring that the tradition can thrive in harmony with environmental concerns (Yuniati, 2018).

Batik is much more than a textile; it is a living tradition that encapsulates the values, beliefs, and creativity of the communities that practice it. Through its combination of artistry, symbolism, and craftsmanship, batik continues to inspire and connect people across cultures and generation. In this study, some uli traditional motif symbols were drawn on a fabric using wax after which it was dyed to the desired colour, to produce a batik inspired uli traditional motif symbols. This batik was utilized in the studio exploration.



Plate 8: An artist using wax to create designs on fabrics. Source: wordpress.com

Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to a system or process's ability to support long-term economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural aspects of the community. At its core, economic sustainability means managing resources efficiently and responsibly so that future generations can meet their own needs while current generations continue to prosper. This concept is one of the three pillars of sustainability, alongside environmental and social sustainability.

In practical terms, economic sustainability involves promoting stable employment, encouraging innovation, and fostering a resilient economy that can adapt to

changing circumstances. It emphasizes the importance of balancing growth with prudent use of resources, avoiding practices that lead to depletion or long-term harm. Sustainable economic practices include investing in renewable energy, supporting local businesses, and developing policies that ensure fair wages and equitable access to economic opportunities. Ultimately, economic sustainability seeks to create lasting prosperity that benefits individuals, communities, and the planet as a whole.

Relating economic sustainability to the fusion of Akwete-Igbo woven fabrics and Batik inspired by Uli-Igbo motifs for contemporary fashion involves exploring how this creative integration can support long-term economic growth, resource efficiency, and community well-being within the fashion industry. Through this one could also achieve the following:

1. Value Addition and Local Industry Growth: By merging traditional Akwete weaving techniques and Batik dyeing enriched with Uli-Igbo motifs, the fashion designers will create unique, high-value products that stand out in the global and local markets. This value addition can stimulate demand, encourage local production, and reduce reliance on imported fabrics, keeping more economic activities and profits within the region.

2. Job Creation and Skill Preservation:
The fusion process requires skilled persons—Akwete

weavers, Batik makers, and Uli artists—thus creating employment opportunities and incentivizing the transfer and preservation of indigenous skills. This sustains livelihoods and prevents the extinction of cultural arts, aligning with the principles of economic sustainability.

3. Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):
The innovative blend of fabrics and motifs can lead to the establishment and growth of SMEs focused on textile production, garment making, and fashion retail. Thriving SMEs contribute to broad-based economic growth and resilience, which are key elements of economic sustainability.

4. Export Potential and Foreign Exchange Earnings:
Contemporary fashion that highlights the fusion of these rich cultural expressions has significant export potential. By appealing to diaspora and international markets interested in authentic African fashion, this approach can generate foreign exchange and strengthen the local economy.

5. Sustainable Resource Use:
Traditional textile practices were relying on locally sourced, renewable materials, and eco-friendly dyeing methods. But by adopting and modernizing these methods which is what is taking place recently, the fashion industry can minimize environmental impact while achieving economic goals—an essential aspect of economic sustainability.

6. Cultural Tourism and Brand Identity:

The unique aesthetic created by blending Akwete and Batik inspired by Uli traditional motifs symbols can serve as a cultural ambassador, attracting tourists and enhancing Nigeria's brand identity. This, in turn, brings in additional revenue streams for the local economy.

Fusing Akwete-Igbo woven fabrics and Batik inspired by Uli-Igbo motifs for contemporary fashion is not just an artistic innovation but a strategic move towards economic sustainability. It drives local industry growth, employment, exports, and cultural preservation, while promoting resource use—all of which are imperative for sustaining economic prosperity in the fashion sector and beyond.

Studio exploration

During the studio exploration, some materials were used in the studio to achieve the fusion of Akwete-Igbo hand woven fabrics and batik inspired by Uli-Igbo traditional painting motifs as an imperative for economic sustainability. They are as follows: Akwete hand woven fabric, batik fabrics, sewing machine, a pair of scissors, thread, sewing needle, beads, tape and tailors chalk.Some other materials were also used to enhance the hand woven fabrics with a view to improve the surface quality, add more value, and aesthetics. A hand woven fabric named fancy block was utilized for this studio exploration alongside a piece of batik decorated with various Uli traditional motif symbols. The studio processes are hereby recorded below:

1. The sketch of the Kimono jacket to be constructed was made.
2. Akwete hand woven fabric and the batik inspired by Uli traditional motif symbols were laid and cut according to the sketch of the design made with the appropriate measurement.
3. The cut out pattern was constructed with the aid of a sewing machine.
4. It was then enhanced with some beads.
5. The finished garment was modelled on a gown and some pairs of trousers.

The sketch utilized in this study:

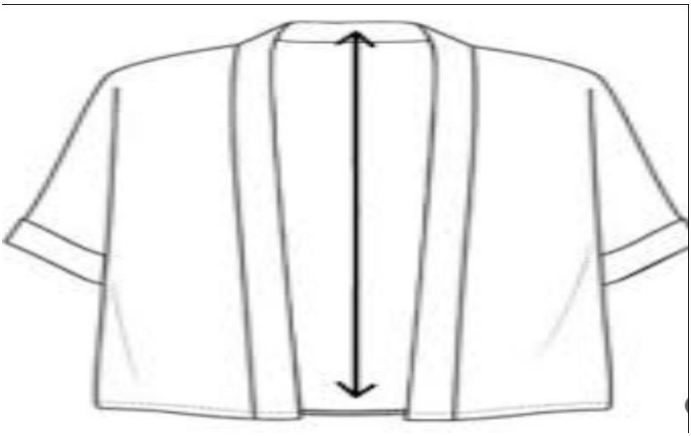

Figure 2: sketch of the kimono jacket constructed in this study. Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).

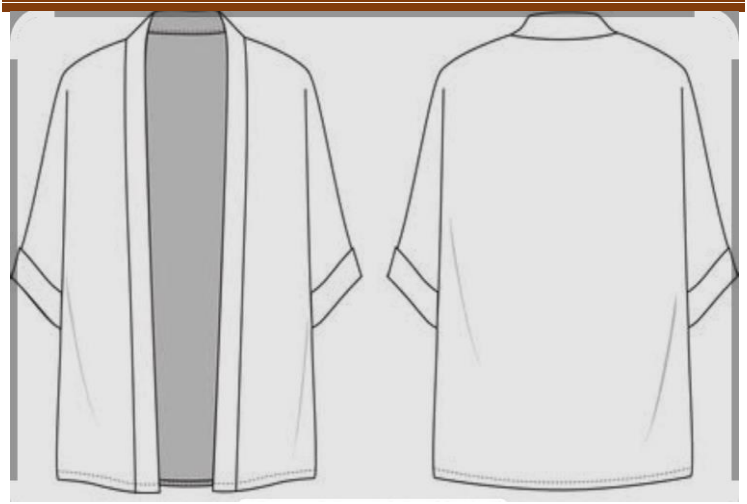

Figure 3: sketch of the kimono jacket showcasing the front and back views. Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).



Plate 9: batik inspired by Uli traditional fabric. Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).



Plate 10: Akwete hand woven symbols. Source: Chudi-Duru(2025).



Plate 10: cutting of the Akwete hand woven fabric into a Kimono.
Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).



Plate 11: cutting of the Akwete hand woven fabric and some stripes of Uli inspired batik. Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).





Plate 12: constructing of the Akwete hand woven fabric and some stripes of Uli inspiredbatik to produce a Kimono Source: ChudiDuru (2025).

Plate 13: the completed Kimono Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).



Plate 14: a kimono made with Akwete hand woven fabric and some stripes of Uli inspired batik to suit the contemporary fashion in Nigeria. Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).

Results, Discussion and Findings

The findings indicate that by incorporating diverse indigenous fabrics into contemporary fashion design, one can significantly bolster economic sustainability in Igbo land and beyond. Specifically, the combination of Akwete hand-woven fabrics and batik designs inspired by Uli motifs has the potential to enhance their marketability and longevity while simultaneously promoting cultural preservation. In conclusion, the study suggests that fashion designers embrace a variety of indigenous fabrics from different regions. This approach not only fosters unity but also safeguards the diverse cultural heritage of the nation, ensuring that traditional textiles like Akwete are celebrated and utilized more prominently in modern fashion.



Plate 15a: a kimono made with Akwete hand woven fabric and some stripes of Uli inspired batik to suit the contemporary fashion in Nigeria being modelled. Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).



Plate 15b: a kimono made with Akwete hand woven fabric and some stripes of Uli inspired batik to suit the contemporary fashion in Nigeria being modeled. Source: Chudi-Duru (2025).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the fusion of Akwete-Igbo woven fabrics with batik techniques inspired by Uli-Igbo motifs presents a compelling pathway for innovation within contemporary fashion while promoting economic sustainability. By integrating these rich indigenous textile traditions, designers can create unique and culturally resonant garments that appeal to both local and global markets. This synthesis not only revitalizes traditional craftsmanship but also provides new economic opportunities for artisans and communities involved in fabric production and design. Embracing this fusion supports the preservation of cultural heritage and encourages sustainable practices through the use of locally sourced materials and artisanal methods. Ultimately, leveraging the aesthetic and symbolic power of Akwete and Uli in contemporary fashion is not just an artistic endeavor, but a strategic imperative for fostering economic resilience and cultural pride in an increasingly competitive and globalized industry.

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EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS ON THE TEACHING OF IGBO CULTURE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABIA AND IMO STATE

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Abstract

This paper explores the growing intersection between digital learning technologies and the preservation of indigenous cultural heritage, focusing on the Igbo culture in secondary schools in Abia and Imo States. The primary objectives of the study are to assess the current use of digital tools in the teaching of Igbo culture, evaluate their effectiveness in enhancing student's engagement and cultural retention, and investigate the challenges educators face in integrating technology into cultural education. The study argues that while traditional methods of teaching Igbo culture remain foundational, they often lack the capacity to engage 21st-century learners meaningfully. Digital resources such as mobile applications, interactive videos, virtual reality, and

culturally embedded educational games offer innovative pathways for revitalizing and sustaining indigenous knowledge systems. However, these tools should serve as enhancers not replacements for face-to-face, community-rooted cultural instruction. The position taken in this paper is that digital tools, when effectively integrated into pedagogy, have the potential to bridge generational gaps in cultural transmission, strengthen cultural identity among Igbo youth, and enrich learning experiences. However, this integration must be done cautiously, ensuring the authenticity and contextual relevance of cultural content. The study concludes that the digitalization of indigenous education is both an opportunity and a responsibility. It recommends curriculum reforms that prioritize cultural content, the up skilling of teachers in digital pedagogies, improved ICT infrastructure in schools, and stakeholder collaboration including families, communities, and policy makers in preserving Igbo heritage through education. These efforts are vital to safeguarding Nigeria's diverse cultural legacies in the face of globalization and digital transformation.

Keywords: Digital Learning, Tools, Teaching, Igbo Culture, Secondary Schools, Abia State, Imo State

Introduction

The Igbo culture, one of the three major ethnic heritages in Nigeria, is rich in values, language, traditions, oral literature, and indigenous practices. Over the years, however, modernization, urbanization, and

westernization have contributed to a gradual erosion of cultural knowledge among the youth. In particular, Igbo adolescents increasingly show reduced interest in learning their language and cultural values due to the influence of digital entertainment, foreign media, and diminished societal emphasis on indigenous knowledge (Eze & Umezinwa, 2021).

The use of digital learning tools in education has emerged as a transformative strategy globally, including in Nigeria, providing new opportunities for improving engagement and contextual learning (Okafor & Anozie, 2023). Within this trend, digital platforms can potentially revitalize the teaching of traditional content like Igbo culture by making it more interactive and appealing to 21st-century learners.

Cultural preservation is vital for identity, social cohesion, and historical continuity. For the Igbo people, language, folktales, festivals, proverbs, kinship, and customs are essential components of heritage that foster community values and knowledge transfer. Without deliberate educational interventions, such cultural traits risk extinction within a few generations (Nwachukwu & Mba, 2022). The preservation of Igbo culture, therefore, ensures that younger generations understand their roots, participate in cultural practices, and maintain a collective ethnic consciousness despite globalization.

Education plays a critical role in sustaining and transmitting cultural heritage. In formal educational settings, culture can be taught through subjects like language, history, literature, and civic education. Informal education, including storytelling, apprenticeship, and family engagement, also reinforces traditional values.

Schools, particularly at the secondary level, are essential spaces for cultural reinforcement, especially when curriculum content is enriched with indigenous materials and practices (Ifeanyi & Ogu, 2020). Teachers, as cultural transmitters, have the responsibility to contextualize learning experiences that reflect learners' environments.

Digital learning tools including educational apps, multimedia presentations, e-books, interactive simulations, and virtual reality have revolutionized how content is delivered and consumed. With the widespread use of smart phones and internet access among students, digital tools offer new ways to enhance learner engagement, retention, and accessibility (Akinyemi & Chukwuemeka, 2024). In the context of cultural education, these tools can present Igbo stories, language lessons, proverbs, and cultural practices in dynamic, gamified, and visually rich formats, thereby appealing to tech-savvy learners and promoting experiential learning (Okorie & Nnadi, 2023).

Despite policy efforts to promote Nigerian languages and culture in schools, there is a noticeable decline in the teaching and learning of Igbo culture in secondary schools across Abia and Imo States. Many teachers rely on outdated, text-heavy, or non-interactive methods that fail to capture students' interest. Furthermore, there is limited integration of digital learning tools specifically tailored to the Igbo cultural context (Nwankwo & Ekechi, 2022). As a result, students often perceive cultural subjects as less relevant compared to science or technology-related fields. If this gap continues, future generations may lack not only fluency in

Igbo but also awareness of key cultural values and practices (Okechukwu & Njoku, 2025).

> Digital learning has the capacity to bridge generational knowledge gaps, especially in the context of indigenous knowledge systems, but its integration into cultural education in Nigeria remains largely underutilized" (Okafor & Anozie, 2023, p. 41).

Objectives of the Paper

This position paper seeks to:

1. Evaluate the current state of teaching Igbo culture in secondary schools in Abia and Imo States.
2. Examine how digital learning tools are being used to support the teaching of Igbo cultural content in Abia and Imo States.

The paper focuses on the teaching of Igbo culture in public and private secondary schools within Abia and Imo States, two predominantly Igbo-speaking regions. It explores how digital tools such as educational mobile apps, interactive storytelling, virtual museum tours, and gamified language instruction are being applied or can be adapted to improve engagement in Igbo cultural education. The scope does not extend to other Nigerian ethnic groups or post-secondary institutions.

Concept of Digital Learning Tools

Digital learning tools refer to software applications, platforms, and digital content used to facilitate teaching and learning processes. These tools range from educational apps, learning management systems (LMS), videos, and podcasts, to immersive

technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). They enable interactive, flexible, and personalized learning experiences.

In the context of cultural education, digital tools can be employed to digitize cultural content, gamify traditional knowledge, and create virtual environments that simulate indigenous practices (Okechukwu & Njoku, 2025). Such tools enhance students' motivation, foster creativity, and make abstract cultural concepts more concrete and engaging. For instance, gamified mobile apps that teach Igbo proverbs or traditional dance via step-by-step animation provide an innovative approach to learning.

According to Okafor and Anozie (2023), "Digital learning platforms not only deliver content but also reshape the learner's interaction with indigenous knowledge systems in a way that promotes contextual relevance and cultural retention"

Overview of Igbo Culture and Its Pedagogy

The Igbo culture encompasses a wide range of traditional values, language, music, arts, festivals, spirituality, and social norms that define the identity of the Igbo people. Pedagogically, Igbo culture has historically been transmitted through oral traditions, storytelling, music, drama, apprenticeship, and community participation. Elders, parents, and community leaders served as cultural custodians and educators.

However, in formal education systems, the pedagogy of Igbo culture is often constrained by rigid curricula, outdated materials, and language marginalization (Nwankwo & Ekechi, 2022).

Consequently, students may view the subject as irrelevant or monotonous. Reinvigorating the pedagogy of Igbo culture with multimedia tools and participatory digital content provides a promising way forward.

> There is an urgent need to modernize indigenous pedagogies to resonate with digital-native learners, particularly by integrating technology in the instruction of Igbo language and cultural values (Okorie & Nnadi, 2023, p. 55).

Empirical Studies on Digital Learning in Nigeria

Several empirical studies have examined the integration of digital tools into Nigeria's education system, with evidence pointing to increased learner engagement, improved performance, and enhanced accessibility. Akinyemi and Chukwuemeka (2024) conducted a study involving 450 secondary school students across three southern Nigerian states and found that multimedia-based instruction significantly improved learning retention compared to traditional chalk-and-talk methods. Their findings emphasize the value of animation, simulation, and interactive content in facilitating student-centered learning.

Similarly, Okafor and Anozie (2023) explored the impact of digital storytelling on learning outcomes in cultural education. Their study involving 30 teachers and 200 students revealed that the use of digital folklore animations enhanced learners' understanding and appreciation of Nigerian myths and values. The study concluded that “digital tools are underutilized yet extremely effective in contextual subjects like cultural history and indigenous literature” (p. 48).

Status of Teaching Igbo Culture in Schools

The teaching of Igbo culture in Nigerian secondary schools, especially in the southeastern region, faces ongoing challenges related to low student interest, inadequate teaching materials, and marginalization of indigenous subjects in the curriculum. According to Nwankwo and Ekechi (2022), Igbo language and cultural subjects are often regarded as less prestigious than STEM subjects, leading to reduced enrollment and funding.

Moreover, teaching methods are predominantly theory-based and rely on outdated textbooks, limiting student engagement. Okorie and Nnadi (2023) note that most secondary schools in Imo and Abia States lack culturally enriched and technologically supported learning resources, which could otherwise bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and contemporary learners' expectations.

Digitalization of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Digitalization has been proposed as a powerful tool for preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge systems (IKS). In the Igbo context, digital tools such as mobile apps, podcasts, virtual museums, and online dictionaries are increasingly being explored to revive interest in cultural heritage.

Okechukwu and Njoku (2025) developed a digital learning app that gamifies Igbo proverbs and idioms for secondary school students. Their pilot study in Owerri showed a 61% increase in vocabulary retention and a measurable rise in cultural curiosity among participants. They argue that "digitization not only archives cultural

content but transforms how young learners interact with it" (p. 80).

In a broader review, Nwachukwu and Mba (2022) emphasize the need for government and academic institutions to collaborate in digitizing oral histories, traditional music, and indigenous arts to safeguard them from extinction.

Challenges in Teaching Nigerian Languages and Cultures

Despite the recognized importance of indigenous education, several barriers persist. These include: Teacher Capacity and Attitude: Many teachers are not adequately trained in integrating ICT into language or cultural instruction, leading to limited innovation in delivery (Ifeanyi & Ogu, 2020).Curriculum Limitations: Cultural subjects often occupy a peripheral space in the national curriculum, and few resources are allocated to their development (Nwankwo & Ekechi, 2022).

Technological Barriers: Poor infrastructure, lack of internet connectivity, and low access to digital devices in rural schools impede the effective use of digital learning tools (Akinyemi & Chukwuemeka, 2024).

Language Prestige and Urbanization: The growing dominance of English and urban youth's preference for Westernized education has created attitudinal challenges toward learning Igbo culture (Eze & Umezinwa, 2021). These challenges limit the full adoption of digital innovations in the teaching of indigenous knowledge.

Overview of Secondary Education in Abia and Imo States

Abia and Imo States, located in Nigeria's Southeast region, are predominantly Igbo-speaking and culturally rich. Both states have made significant investments in expanding access to basic and secondary education through public and private institutions. According to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), secondary school enrollment rates in both states remain above the national average, with a growing number of students participating in core and elective subjects (UBEC, 2023).

However, despite high literacy rates and strong cultural roots, the prominence of indigenous subjects such as Igbo language and culture has been declining. The school curriculum continues to prioritize STEM and English language-based subjects, leading to reduced emphasis on cultural education. Many students, even in urban Igbo regions, graduate with limited proficiency in their mother tongue and shallow understanding of cultural practices (Nwankwo & Ekechi, 2022).

Status of ICT Infrastructure in Schools

ICT infrastructure in secondary schools across Abia and Imo States presents a mixed picture. While some urban schools, especially private ones, have access to computers, projectors, and internet-enabled classrooms, the majority of rural and public institutions face significant challenges. A state-level ICT audit by Okoroafor and Eze (2024) revealed that only 32% of public secondary schools in Abia State and 29% in Imo State had functioning ICT labs as of 2023.

Moreover, unstable electricity supply, lack of trained personnel, and poor digital maintenance culture

further hamper the consistent use of digital resources. This situation limits the potential for widespread integration of digital tools in teaching and learning, especially for non-mainstream subjects like indigenous languages and culture.

Igbo Language and Cultural Curriculum

The National Policy on Education (NPE) mandates the teaching of one's mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment at the primary and junior secondary levels. Accordingly, Igbo is offered as a core or elective subject in schools in Abia and Imo States. However, in practice, the curriculum remains underdeveloped and often lacks locally relevant content that reflects contemporary cultural realities (Okafor & Anozie, 2023).

Furthermore, the Igbo language and cultural curriculum is largely text-based, with few opportunities for experiential or interactive learning. Traditional folktales, customs, proverbs, music, and oral history are presented as static information rather than dynamic, lived experiences. The lack of supporting digital content such as e-books, videos, and gamified platforms limits student engagement and deep learning (Okechukwu & Njoku, 2025).

Teachers' and Students' Digital Competency

The digital competency of both teachers and students in Abia and Imo varies significantly by location and school type. Urban schools generally report higher levels of digital literacy due to better access to training and devices. However, a 2023 study by Akinyemi and

Chukwuemeka showed that only 42% of secondary school teachers in Imo State reported feeling confident using ICT tools for instructional purposes.

Many teachers trained in traditional pedagogy lack exposure to educational technology and require substantial up skilling to effectively incorporate digital tools into cultural instruction. On the student side, a growing number of learners especially in urban areas are familiar with Smartphone, social media, and basic digital tools, suggesting potential for digital learning if properly harnessed (Eze & Umezinwa, 2021).

Argument and Position of the Paper

The central argument of this paper is that digital learning tools, when appropriately integrated, can significantly enhance the teaching and learning of Igbo culture in secondary schools. Rather than replacing traditional pedagogical methods, digital tools should be seen as complementary instruments that can revitalize students' interest, improve engagement, and modernize the delivery of indigenous knowledge in culturally relevant ways.

Justification for Integrating Digital Tools in Teaching Igbo Culture

Digital learning tools are increasingly transforming educational landscapes globally. In Nigeria, their relevance in promoting indigenous education is gaining attention, especially in regions where younger generations are becoming detached from their cultural roots. The integration of digital technology offers new modes of engagement that are more aligned with the

media consumption habits and learning preferences of today's students (Akinyemi & Chukwuemeka, 2024).

Digital platforms can convert cultural artifacts such as folktales, proverbs, traditional dances, and rituals into formats that are accessible, engaging, and memorable. Tools like educational apps, virtual exhibitions, and interactive games can immerse students in cultural experiences without geographical or temporal limitations. As Okechukwu and Njoku (2025) note, "technology, when rooted in local context, becomes a bridge between heritage and innovation" (p. 83).

Limitations of Traditional Teaching Methods

Conventional approaches to teaching Igbo culture often limited to textbooks, rote memorization, and teacher-centered instruction have proven inadequate in capturing students' attention or fostering deep understanding. Cultural subjects are frequently treated as theoretical rather than experiential, depriving learners of the opportunity to connect with their identity in meaningful ways (Nwachukwu & Mba, 2022).

Moreover, the lack of teaching aids, visual materials, and practical exposure contributes to the low status of Igbo culture in school curricula. Students report that lessons are "boring," "irrelevant," or "outdated," a reflection of instructional strategies that do not evolve with the times (Okafor & Anozie, 2023). Without reform, such pedagogical limitations will continue to marginalize indigenous knowledge in the classroom.

Position: Digital Tools as Enhancers, Not Replacements, of Cultural Teaching

This paper posits that digital tools should not replace traditional methods of cultural education, such as storytelling by elders, oral performance, and community rituals. Instead, they should enhance and extend these practices by adapting them to contemporary learning environments. The human and communal essence of Igbo culture cannot be fully captured by technology alone, but digital platforms can act as supplementary conduits for preservation and access.

Rather than viewing technology as a threat to cultural authenticity, educators should leverage it to preserve oral traditions, digitize fading customs, and increase the relevance of culture in formal education. In doing so, a balanced model can be achieved—one that values both heritage and innovation.

Implications of the Position

Educational Implications

The integration of digital tools in teaching Igbo culture demands a shift in curriculum design to include digital competencies alongside cultural content. This change encourages the use of interactive platforms and multimedia resources to reinforce cultural instruction (Okeke & Nwachukwu, 2022). Teacher training must be prioritized to build both digital literacy and cultural competence, ensuring educators are confident in using tools like language learning apps, animated folk tales, and virtual museums (Iwu & Ugochukwu, 2023). Furthermore, digital tools increase student engagement and enhance learning outcomes through multisensory

experiences and personalized learning paths (Adebayo, 2021).

Cultural Implications

Digitizing Igbo cultural instruction offers a pathway to revitalize indigenous knowledge among youth, who may otherwise feel disconnected from their heritage. Through digital storytelling, music, and virtual performances, students can experience cultural practices that are otherwise rare in modern urban contexts (Eze & Ezeokafor, 2021). However, there's a risk of cultural dilution if digital content is poorly curetted or overly modernized (Anyaegbu, 2020). Therefore, authenticity must be preserved while embracing technological innovation to strengthen cultural identity (Nwankwo, 2022).

Technological and Policy Implications

There is a pressing need for educational policy reform that promotes the integration of ICT in cultural education. Government and NGOs must invest in digital infrastructure, provide training resources, and develop culturally-relevant e-content (Chukwuemeka & Obi, 2023). Community and stakeholder involvement including traditional leaders and local artists is also essential to ensure content accuracy and community ownership (Okonkwo, 2024).

Challenges and Limitations

Several challenges threaten the effective implementation of digital tools in teaching Igbo culture. A major issue is poor infrastructure and limited internet

connectivity in rural schools, which restricts access to digital resources (Olowu, 2021). Moreover, many teachers are resistant to adopting new methods due to lack of training or confidence (Okorie & Uche, 2023). Additionally, the digital divide exacerbates educational inequality, with urban students more likely to benefit than their rural counterparts (Akinyemi & Chidiebere, 2022). These limitations call for strategic interventions at the systemic level.

Conclusion

Digital learning tools offer promising prospects for enhancing the teaching of Igbo culture in secondary schools. By blending technology with tradition, students can engage with their heritage in more dynamic and meaningful ways. However, the success of this integration depends on thoughtful curriculum reforms, teacher preparedness, infrastructure support, and cultural authenticity. While digital tools should not replace traditional methods, they serve as valuable enhancers that can make cultural education more engaging and accessible.

Recommendations

1. Ministries of Education in Abia and Imo States should develop ICT-inclusive cultural education policies.
2. Regular digital literacy and cultural pedagogy workshops should be provided to educators.
3. Involve cultural custodians in co-developing digital content for use in schools.
4. Improve internet access and provision of digital tools in rural and underserved areas.

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REINCARNATION: A PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

The concept of reincarnation, also known as rebirth is the belief that a person, after death, can return to life in another body or form. The belief in reincarnation is not confined to a particular culture or tradition; it has existed for centuries, and continues to hold a significant place in both Western and African philosophy. Given the increasing popularity of reincarnation, there is need to consider or rather examine the philosophical problem peculiar to the belief in reincarnation: the problem of personal identity. The fundamental philosophical questions that stem from this are: in reincarnation, is the earlier and latter beings one and the same person or are they entirely two different persons? What conditions (if any) must be met for a person to persist from one time to another, that is, to continue existing in a reincarnated form rather than cease to exist following death? It is obvious that we can all change, but how much change is possible for one person to go through without losing their identity and becoming a very different person? These are some of the central questions the paper interrogates. By exploring them, the author will evaluate whether the belief in reincarnation is philosophically justifiable when examined through the lens of personal identity.

Keywords: Death, personal identity, person, philosophy, reincarnation.

Introduction

Reincarnation is a basic concept that has attracted the attention of many thinkers, including ancient philosophers. This is probably because it is directly connected with such enduring but perplexing questions such as the nature of a person, the meaning of life, and the mystery of death, which humans have always been interested in. Reincarnation implies the survival hypothesis that asserts that the human person or soul will continue to exist in some form or body after the death of the physical body. The implication here is that a person can inhabit different bodies at different times. This idea pervades the history of both African and Western philosophy and as such, the belief in reincarnation has till date, exerted great influence on several communities in Africa to the extent that at the birth of a child, the next task becomes to find out who reincarnated the baby.

Philosophically, reincarnation is related to two central problems: the mind-body problem and the problem of personal identity. The mind-body problem is concerned with how the mind and body are related to each other, with scholars proposing three theories in an attempt to explain the interaction. The first theory is modern materialism, which contends that mental states are reducible to physical brain states. Thus, ruling out the possibility of reincarnation entirely. Epiphenomenalism, which regards the mind as a separate yet dependent by-product of the brain, has the same implication for reincarnation. By

contrast, dualism, which views the mind as a distinct and independent entity from the brain, is a necessary presupposition for the possibility of reincarnation.

The issue of personal identity further complicates the debate about the logical possibility of reincarnation. If reincarnation is to be philosophically defensible, it must account for how a person remains the same across different lives despite changes in body. The paper is an enquiry into reincarnation within the broad context of personal identity. This is very important for the success of this research because knowledge of that which enables us to identify and re-identify a person is necessary if reincarnation is to be understood at all.

Reincarnation

According to Onyewuenyi (1996), is derived from two Latin words: *re* meaning 'again', and *incarnare*meaning 'to enter into the body.' He went further to proffer a definition of reincarnation. He states, "It is simply the theory that when the soul separates from the body at death, it informs another body for another span of earthly life."This is the classical understanding of the concept of reincarnation and extant literatures on the subject affirm this conception.

Reincarnation is understood to work or function in a number of ways. However, what these views all have in common is the idea or belief of an immaterial aspect of a person entering into another body after death. In the ordinary conception, a living person known as A is simply identified as a deceased person known as B, such that

person A would be regarded as the reincarnation of person B. Thus, in reincarnation, it is believed that while the physical body perishes, an essential and non-physical aspect of a person survives death and continues its existence in a new form or body. This nonphysical entity is called the soul. Umezuruike (2007) explains it succinctly:

> Reincarnation is the belief that the soul enters a new (human or animal) body after death. To reincarnate means to bring back the soul after death in another body. Here, the soul returns after death to live in a new body. During reincarnation, it is believed that the soul enters into a new human body after death.

The foregoing scholarly perspectives point to a definite substance, which has to do with the past and present existence of a single person. They suggest that once a person dies, there is a possibility of the person to return to life in a new and reformed self, as a newly born baby, thereby ensuring form of personal persistence beyond death. Hence, the general notion about the belief system in reincarnation is that there is a higher tendency that human beings live more than once after their first birth and death. That is, the soul or essential immaterial nature returns multiple times to live again (rebirth into another body). Each return may witness variations in social or economic status, natural abilities or talents, and degrees of spiritual or intellectual awareness, which shape the individual's new existence.

Personal Identity

As a working definition for this paper, personal identity is the ontological factor in the nature of a being that makes person A distinctively person A, and person B distinctively person B. In other words, it is the nature of a person's individuality and autonomy, and their persistence through time.

According to the Standard Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2002), personal identity addresses the philosophical questions that arise about oneself by virtue of beinga person. One makes a judgment of personal identity whenever one says that a person existing at one time is the same as a person existing at another time. For instance, late Muhammadu Buhari, who served as Nigeria's military head of state between 1983 and 1985, is the same individual who also served as a democratically elected president from 2015 to 2023.

From an African philosophical perspective, however, personal identity extends beyond the question of persistence through time to include one's relationships and communal ties. In African thought, particularly expressed in the notion of *Ubuntu* among the Southern Bantu peoples, the individual is seen as inseparable from the community: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." This perspective highlights that personal identity is not defined merely by temporal continuity or physical sameness, but by social connectedness and moral responsibility within a community. Thus, in contrast to the more individualistic framing of Western philosophy, the

African view situates identity in the inter-subjective and communal reality of human existence.

The Problem of Personal Identity

The problem of personal identity deals with the criteria for identifying incarnate persons. It revolves around how we can determine the possible grounds on which a newly born baby or a person now living can be adjudged to be the same and exact person or someone who is now deceased. Importantly, there is no single problem of personal identity, but rather, a wide range of questions that are at best loosely connected. Below are the most familiar:

Who am I? Personal identity refers to properties that defines one as a person or make one the person one is, and which distinguishes one from others. Hence, to have an 'identity crisis' is to become unsure of what one's most characteristic properties are – of what sort of person, in some deep and fundamental sense, one is.

Personhood. What does it mean to be a person as opposed to a non-person? More specifically, we can ask: at what stage in our development from a fertilized egg can we say a person comes into existence? Similarly,could a chimpanzee or even a robot qualify as a person, and under what conditions? Locke (1975), for example, defined a person as "a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places." This definition emphasises self-consciousness as the mark of personhood.

Persistence. What does it take for a person to continue existing rather than cease to exist? What makes it the case that someone who existed in the past is the same individual as you? What could make you survive death and what would necessarily end your existence? Questions such as these are called the questions of personal identity over time and they often arise out of the hope or fear that we might continue to exist after death. Locke (1975) proposed that personal identity consists in the continuity of consciousness or memory thus, if one can remember performing an action or having an experience, then oneis the same person who had it. However, Cartesian dualism, as advanced by Descartes (1993), locates persistence in the immaterial soul: the "thinking substance" (*res cogitans*) that survives independent of the body. In his work *Meditations on First* Philosophy, Descartes distinguishes between two kinds of substances: the immaterial "thinking substance" (*res cogitans*) and the material "extended substance (*res extensa*). The former is considered the immaterial soul, which can exist independently of the body. Materialists, on the other hand, reject both memory and the soul, claiming that personal identity depends solely on bodily continuity. These competing views reveal the complexity of the persistence problem.

Evidence. What evidence bears on the question of whether the person here now is the one who was here yesterday? Is the self who is reading this paper the same as the self who got up this morning? Evidence and the persistence question might seem to be the same. For this reason, it is important to distinguish between the two.

What it takes a person to persist through time is one thing; how we ought to evaluate the relevant evidence is another. For instance, if a criminal had fingerprints just like yours; the courts may conclude that he is the same person as you. But even if they are right to do so, having the same fingerprints as you do is neither necessary (you could survive without any fingers at all) nor sufficient (someone else could have fingerprints just like yours) for personal identity.

What am I? Finally, personal identity raises the metaphysical question of what sort of beings we are. What sort of beings, metaphysically speaking, are you, I, and other human persons? What are our fundamental properties, in addition to those that make us persons? What, for instance, are we made of? Are we composed entirely of matter, as stones are, or are we partly or wholly immaterial? Are we substances, metaphysically independent beings, or is each of us a state, aspect, or activity of something else? There is no consensus or even a dominant answer to these questions. Descartes argued that the self is essentially a soul, a non-material, thinking substance, while Aristotle viewed the soul as the "form" of the body, inseparable from it. Contemporary philosophers remain divided. Some adopt a materialist account that reduces humans to physical organisms, while others defend dualist or hybrid models that preserve a non-material dimension of the self.

These questions highlight the depth of the problem of personal identity. They also provide the philosophical background against which debates about reincarnation

must be situated for the belief in reincarnation presupposes that a deceased person can persist in a new body, raising the central question: what makes it the case that the individual in a past life is truly the same person as the one who now exists?

Reincarnation and the Problem of Persistence

Persistence, as a problem of personal identity, has to do with the nature of the continued existence of persons through time and their awareness of such existence. In its simplest formulation, the persistence question asks what it takes for the same person to exist at two different times. The most common way to frame the question is: if a person A exists at one time and a person B exists at another time, under what possible circumstances is it the case that A and B are the same person? This question lies at the heart of reincarnation: what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for a deceased being to survive death and exist as someone else? Questions such as this make us wonder how it might be possible for a person to survive death and either temporarily or permanently animate another body, and how to decide if such post-mortem survival has actually occurred.

There are two main competing theories that try to answer this question: dualism and materialism. According to Churchland (1984), dualism claims that our essential nature and consciousness is captured in some immaterial substance that is part of us, commonly referred to as the soul. This is not to say that we exist only as immaterial souls, but that our souls are what makes us, 'us.' One's personal identity, therefore, would consist in one's

immaterial soul. The material parts of us, like our physical bodies, are merely containers for housing our souls. That is to say, person A remains person A as long as that person still has the soul of person A, even if the body is different. On the other hand, materialism, as Churchland also asserts, denies the existence of any immaterial soul. According to this philosophical school of thought, we exist only as matter, such that we are completely material beings. Thus, there is no immaterial soul that captures the essence of our being. Therefore, one's personal identity would consist in one's material substance. That is, person A remains as person A as long as that person still has the physical body or matter of person A.

Both of these accounts of personal identity – dualism and materialism – were rejected by the 17th-century English philosopher, John Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1975*), which contained the first extended treatment of the topic in Western philosophy. Book II, chapter 27, of the *Essay*, *"Of Identity and Diversity,"* introduces a famous example in which the soul of a prince, carrying with it consciousness of the prince's past life, is transferred to the body of a cobbler. Locke argued that the post-transfer cobbler-body person would be the same person as the prince, despite not having the prince's former body. In the modern world, this is called brain transplant rather than soul transfers. Locke also held that the identity of persons consists of sameness of consciousness. According to him, consciousness can be transferred from one immaterial substance to another, so that the immaterial substance that was initially the mind of one person might become the mind of a different

person. This is usually interpreted to mean that identity consists of facts about memory: someone existing now is the same as someone existing yesterday because he remembers the thoughts, experiences, or actions of the earlier person.

These theories have their lapses. There are severe criticisms of dualism as a philosophical theory; however, the most thought provoking of these is one raised byH.H Price in his work, *Survival and the Idea of another World* (1953). Price asks if we could actually have a society of disembodied souls and what existence as a soul would actually be like. His answer is that we could be trapped in a dream world of memories from our life, with the communication possible only through telepathy. To expatiateon Price's criticism, we can further ask: what exactly is the soul? If our body or brain controls our emotions, our senses, our memories and our physicality, what is left of "us" without the body? If there is nothing left of "us" in the soul, how can the soul possibly be the essence of our identity? These objections suggest that dualism is problematic andhas severe weaknesses, which in fact leads to the conclusion that human beings are not, essentially, immaterial souls. As such, the whole theory of dualism is philosophically incoherent as it seems that there are serious problems with the view that people can survive death because they are essentially incorporeal.

Materialism offers a more grounded alternative, but it too is not without difficulties. What materialists rely on in making judgments of personal identity in everyday life are facts about bodily evidence such as sameness of

appearance, sameness of fingerprints, sameness of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), and so on. This suggests that to say that two individuals are the same person means that they both share the same physical characteristics. However, this suggestion raises the question of what sameness of human bodies consists of. It cannot consist simply of similarity of bodily characteristics becausedifferent individuals may share similar characteristics and even identical DNA (as in identical twins). A more plausible materialist view would be that persistence consists of spatio-temporal continuity and continuity of bodily characteristics.

The dualist assumption holds that personal identity is preserved by the persistence of the soul between life and death. However, for materialism, nothing bridges the spatio-temporal gap between the body that perishes and the body that reincarnates. Without such a bridge, the "reincarnated" person cannot be said to be identical with the person who died. According to Williams (1973), bodies must follow the same space-time track (spatio-temporal unity). He, therefore, seems to rule out survival after death sincedeath severs the space-time trajectory. With the track broken, the original cannot survive, all that can survive is a copy of the dead person, and a copy is not the same as the original person. Therefore, there is no continuity.

In interrogating further, suppose my memories are erased and replaced with accurate memories or apparent memories of the life of someone long dead (my paternal grandmother, maybe), can we conclude, based on Locke's

memory evidence, that the resulting person is not I but my grandmother brought back to life, or should we instead, infer based on physical continuity (that is, materialism) that the person is I with different memories? Williams also provides a response. He argues that memory is not a good guide to identity, since memories and personality can be fabricated;lost, or implanted, and personal identity cannot be proved through mental activity alone. He proffered that identity comes from physical characteristics. Thus, personal identity depends on the way in which we recognise each other and without our bodies, we cannot be fully identified.

Conclusion

Reincarnation is the belief that the soul of a deceased person can transmit into a new body after death. However, personal identity suggests intriguing possibilities for identifying conditions under which a deceased person could be identical to a living person. Evidence for reincarnation abound: personal confessions made by the person who reincarnated a deceased, confirmations from the oracles or witch doctors attesting that a deceased person has been reincarnated, body marks or scars which a reincarnated person had in their previous existence, which are now seen in their present life's body. Yet the strengths of these evidencesare questionable. It is not an understatement to state that the belief in reincarnation is, to a large extent, grounded in hearsays, customary practices, or religious convictions passed down from childhood. Thus, it cannot be said that there exists any verifiable evidence that could address satisfactorily the numerous philosophical problems surrounding

reincarnation. This paper has laid bare the tension between different theories of reincarnation. Dualism allows for reincarnation but struggles with the coherence of disembodied identity. Materialism, on the other hand, denies reincarnation outright, as nothing bridges the spatio-temporal gap between the deceased body and the supposed new body whereas Locke's memory theory provides a conceptual opening for reincarnation but falters on questions of reliability and authenticity of memory. Since all the theories falter in one aspect or the other, the author us of the opinion that unless it can be shown that a premortem and postmortem person are one and the same individual,the logical possibility of reincarnation remains contestable.

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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NIGERIAN LANGUAGES: THE CONCERN OF IGBO LANGUAGE

BY

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Abstract

This study examined the role of policy implementation in the development of Nigerian languages, with a particular emphasis on the Igbo language. The objectives were to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies on language education, investigate the challenges facing their implementation, and propose strategies for strengthening Igbo language development. The central research question guiding the study was: To what extent has policy implementation influenced the promotion and sustainability of the Igbo language in Nigeria. The argument of the study is that while Nigeria has progressive policies that recognize indigenous languages, ineffective implementation has limited their impact, thereby contributing to the gradual decline of the Igbo language. The position of the study is that successful implementation of policies is crucial for revitalizing the Igbo language and safeguarding Nigeria's linguistic and

cultural heritage. Findings reveal that policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Education recognize the use of mother tongue in early education, yet lack of political will, inadequate funding, globalization, and negative societal attitudes hinder effective application. Despite these challenges, opportunities for revitalization exist through digital media, community initiatives, curriculum reform, and comparative lessons from other African languages. The study concludes that policy implementation is not merely an administrative task but a strategic tool for cultural preservation and identity consolidation. Recommendations include the enforcement of mother tongue education, investment in teacher training, use of digital platforms to promote Igbo, provision of adequate institutional funding, and engagement of both local communities and the Igbo diaspora in language promotion efforts.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Igbo Language, Nigerian Languages, Education Policy, Cultural Preservation.

Introduction

Language remains a key driver of national identity, cultural heritage, and sustainable development. In multilingual nations like Nigeria, language policy is designed to promote linguistic diversity while ensuring national cohesion. The Nigerian Constitution and the National Policy on Education (2022 revision) provide explicit recognition of indigenous languages as essential tools of instruction in early education and as vehicles of cultural preservation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). However, scholars argue that effective implementation of

such policies is more decisive than their mere formulation, as implementation determines whether languages like Igbo thrive or continue to face marginalisation (Okorie & Ume, 2023).

Despite its official recognition, the implementation of language policies in Nigeria has been fraught with inconsistencies, weak institutional monitoring, and limited investment in teacher training and instructional materials. Studies show that the mother-tongue instruction policy is often neglected in schools, with English dominating classrooms, especially in urban centres (LSE Research Online, 2024). This situation has led to poor literacy foundations for learners and gradual erosion of indigenous languages, including Igbo. UNESCO (2025) highlights that mother-tongue instruction is not only a right but also a proven catalyst for better academic achievement and social inclusion, yet without implementation strategies, policy pronouncements remain ineffective.

The Igbo language, spoken by millions, is one of Nigeria's three major indigenous languages, yet it faces serious developmental threats. Reports indicate a steady decline in its use among children and young adults, particularly in urban households, where English is increasingly prioritised (El País, 2024). Scholars have raised concerns that, unless urgent steps are taken, Igbo may experience accelerated endangerment in the coming decades (Nwankwo & Eze, 2021). Encouragingly, initiatives such as community-based literacy centres, digital Igbo platforms, and open-source language technologies (Igbo API Dataset Authors, 2024) are creating new possibilities for revitalisation. However,

these initiatives require strong policy backing and structured government support to achieve nationwide impact.

The effectiveness of policy implementation thus becomes central to the survival and development of the Igbo language. As noted by Oyetade (2023), language policies that remain unimplemented amount to "rhetorical symbolism" with little developmental impact. For Igbo, translating policy into action requires coordinated efforts in education, media, technology, and family life. Strengthening implementation will ensure that Igbo is not only preserved but also positioned as a vehicle of socio-economic development, cultural identity, and national integration. This background underscores the importance of examining policy implementation as a veritable tool for the development of Nigerian languages, with specific focus on the Igbo language.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria's multilingual context makes indigenous language development a national priority. While policies such as the National Policy on Education (2022) stipulate that the mother tongue or language of the immediate community should be the medium of instruction at the early stages of education, the reality in schools across the country reveals poor compliance (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). In practice, English continues to dominate as the language of teaching and learning, even in regions where Igbo and other indigenous languages are widely spoken (LSE Research Online, 2024).

This discrepancy between policy and practice has resulted in weak literacy foundations, cultural alienation,

and the gradual decline of languages such as Igbo among younger generations (Nwankwo & Eze, 2021). Studies further reveal that policy implementation suffers from inadequate teacher training, lack of instructional resources, negative parental attitudes, and the absence of sustained government funding (Okorie & Ume, 2023). Without deliberate and effective implementation mechanisms, Igbo risks losing its relevance in education, media, and intergenerational transmission (El País, 2024). Thus, the critical problem is not the absence of language policies in Nigeria, but rather the failure to effectively implement them to safeguard and develop the Igbo language.

Objectives of the Paper

The main objective of this paper is to examine policy implementation as a veritable tool for the development of Nigerian languages, with a specific focus on Igbo. The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the role of policy implementation in sustaining and promoting indigenous languages in Nigeria.

Research Questions / Position Focus

This paper is guided by the following research questions:

1. How can policy implementation serve as a tool for the development of Nigerian languages?

This paper is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to academic discourse by emphasizing the centrality of policy implementation in language preservation and development. Second, it provides policymakers with evidence-based insights on why the

gap between policy formulation and execution persists in Nigeria, especially regarding Igbo. Third, it offers practical strategies for educators, cultural organizations, and community leaders to strengthen the teaching and use of Igbo in schools, homes, and media (UNESCO, 2025). Finally, the paper aligns with global goals for linguistic diversity and sustainable development, highlighting the need for Nigerian indigenous languages to remain viable in an era of globalization (IgboAPI Dataset Authors, 2024).

This paper focuses specifically on the role of policy implementation in the development of Nigerian indigenous languages, with particular emphasis on Igbo. It examines educational, cultural, and technological contexts that influence language policy execution. While reference is made to other Nigerian languages for comparative purposes, the central concern is the Igbo language. The paper is limited by its nature as a position paper rather than an empirical field study. Hence, it relies on existing policy documents, scholarly publications, and secondary data rather than primary field data. Another limitation is that the rapidly changing digital landscape may affect the dynamics of Igbo language development in ways that go beyond current policy frameworks (Oyetade, 2023). Nonetheless, the paper provides a valuable foundation for further empirical research and advocacy on the importance of effective policy implementation.

Concept of Language Policy and Implementation

Language policy refers to the deliberate efforts by governments or institutions to regulate, promote, or control the functions, usage, and status of languages

within a society. It encompasses decisions about which languages are recognized, how they are taught in schools, and the domains in which they are used (Spolsky, 2021). According to Bamgbose (2020), language policy is both a symbolic and functional tool for shaping national identity and development. However, policy without implementation is ineffective; implementation involves the actual enforcement, monitoring, and evaluation of policy goals through legal, educational, and institutional frameworks (Okorie & Ume, 2023).

In multilingual contexts like Nigeria, language policy often aims to balance the promotion of indigenous languages with the use of English as a lingua franca. Yet, as Oyetade (2023) argues, the effectiveness of any language policy rests not merely on its formulation but on its consistent execution across education, governance, and media. Thus, language policy and its implementation are inseparable: while policy outlines intentions, implementation ensures realization.

The Role of Language in National Development

Language is central to cultural identity, education, political participation, and socio-economic advancement. UNESCO (2025) emphasizes that languages are not only tools of communication but also carriers of knowledge systems, traditions, and innovation. In the context of national development, language determines access to education, participation in governance, and inclusion in economic opportunities. Nations that invest in their indigenous languages create pathways for cultural sustainability and human capital development.

In Nigeria, indigenous languages such as Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo serve as vehicles of cultural preservation and local participation, but their developmental potential is constrained by policy neglect. Studies show that mother-tongue education enhances literacy, cognitive development, and self-esteem in children, thereby laying the foundation for national productivity (LSE Research Online, 2024). Unfortunately, the dominance of English in formal education continues to undermine the role of indigenous languages in development. Therefore, strengthening language policy implementation is critical to harnessing the full developmental role of Nigerian languages.

Overview of Nigerian Language Policy (Constitutional and Educational Provisions)

Nigeria's language policy is embedded in both constitutional and educational frameworks. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999, as amended) recognizes the multilingual nature of the nation and encourages the promotion of indigenous languages for cultural preservation and unity. Specifically, Section 55 provides for the use of English, Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo in the National Assembly, while Section 97 extends similar recognition at the state level (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999/2023).

In education, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2022) stipulates that the medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education shall be the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community, after which English gradually becomes the main medium (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). The

policy also encourages the study of at least one major Nigerian language at the secondary school level. However, scholars note that while these provisions are laudable, implementation has been weak due to lack of teacher preparation, inadequate teaching resources, and negative attitudes towards indigenous languages (Okorie & Ume, 2023; Oyetade, 2023).

Overall, Nigerian language policy frameworks reflect an acknowledgment of the importance of indigenous languages, but without robust implementation, their developmental potential remains unrealized. The Igbo language exemplifies this paradox: recognized at the policy level but inconsistently implemented in practice.

Policy Implementation and Challenges in Nigeria

While Nigeria's language policies are comprehensive on paper, implementation remains the weakest link. The National Policy on Education (2022) mandates mother-tongue or language of the immediate community as the medium of instruction in the early years of basic education. However, in practice, English dominates classrooms even at lower levels of schooling (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). This mismatch between policy and reality is attributed to systemic challenges such as poor teacher training, inadequate instructional materials in indigenous languages, and insufficient monitoring mechanisms (Okorie & Ume, 2023).

Another challenge is the societal preference for English, which is often perceived as the language of prestige, mobility, and globalization. Parents and communities frequently discourage indigenous language

instruction, believing it could disadvantage their children in competitive environments (LSE Research Online, 2024). Moreover, political will to enforce policies is inconsistent, with language provisions in the constitution and education policy often treated as symbolic rather than actionable (Oyetade, 2023). These challenges combine to weaken the effective implementation of language policies, leaving Nigerian indigenous languages, including Igbo, vulnerable.

The Place of Igbo Language in Nigerian Language Policy

The Igbo language, one of Nigeria's three major indigenous languages alongside Hausa and Yoruba, holds a formally recognized position in national language policy. The 1999 Constitution (as amended) provides for the use of Igbo in the National Assembly and at state levels in southeastern Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999/2023). Similarly, the National Policy on Education (2022) mandates the teaching of at least one major Nigerian language, which often includes Igbo, at secondary school level. Despite these policy provisions, the functional development of Igbo has lagged.

Recent studies highlight a worrying decline in the intergenerational transmission of Igbo, with urban families increasingly favoring English in domestic communication (Nwankwo & Eze, 2021). Media representation of Igbo has also reduced compared to Hausa and Yoruba, further marginalizing the language's status (El País, 2024). Nevertheless, innovative initiatives are emerging: digital platforms, Igbo language applications, and open-source projects such as the

IgboAPI dataset are revitalizing interest in Igbo (IgboAPI Dataset Authors, 2024). However, without consistent policy implementation especially in schools, teacher training, and curriculum development Igbo risks being celebrated symbolically but sidelined practically.

Policy Implementation as a Tool for National Identity and Cultural Preservation

Language policy implementation is a strategic tool for building national identity and safeguarding cultural heritage. In multilingual nations like Nigeria, effective language policy ensures that indigenous languages, including Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba, are preserved as integral components of national culture and identity. Scholars argue that language is not only a means of communication but also a repository of values, history, and traditions (Eze, 2021). Without adequate implementation of language policies, languages face erosion due to globalization and the dominance of foreign languages like English. Policy implementation, therefore, strengthens cultural continuity by institutionalizing the use of indigenous languages in education, governance, and media (Okoro, 2022).

Education Policy and Mother Tongue Instruction

Education policies in Nigeria emphasize the use of mother tongue or language of immediate environment at the early stages of learning, as captured in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2014 revision). Studies show that children learn faster and develop stronger literacy skills when taught in their first language before transitioning to English (Obi & Ume, 2020). However,

poor implementation of this policy remains a challenge as most schools continue to prioritize English, undermining the role of Nigerian languages in intellectual and cognitive development (Anyanwu, 2023). Effective implementation would not only enhance learning outcomes but also promote the functional use of indigenous languages across generations.

Policy Implementation and Multilingualism in Nigeria

Nigeria's linguistic diversity, with over 500 languages, makes multilingual policy implementation both a necessity and a challenge. On one hand, multilingualism fosters inclusivity, cultural exchange, and social cohesion (Yusuf, 2021). On the other, ineffective policy implementation has often led to language marginalization, where only a few major languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) dominate public domains while minority languages face endangerment (Ogunwale, 2022). Successful multilingual policy implementation requires equitable recognition, funding for language development, and training of teachers in local languages. Without such interventions, Nigeria risks losing many minority languages, alongside the cultural knowledge embedded within them.

The Concern of Igbo Language

Historical Overview of Igbo Language Development

The Igbo language, one of the three major Nigerian languages, has a rich historical and cultural foundation, deeply rooted in the traditions and identity of the Igbo people. Before colonial rule, Igbo was widely spoken across the southeastern part of Nigeria and served

as the medium for cultural transmission, trade, and social organization. During the colonial era, the introduction of English as the official language marginalized Igbo, though missionary activities and the publication of early Igbo texts, such as translations of the Bible, helped to preserve the language in written form (Eme & Umeasiegbu, 2020). Post-independence, efforts were made to integrate Igbo into Nigeria's educational curriculum as a language of instruction and cultural preservation. However, these initiatives were inconsistently implemented, leaving Igbo at risk of decline in both spoken and written domains (Onuoha, 2022).

Despite constitutional recognition of indigenous languages, the place of Igbo in Nigeria's language policy remains weak and inadequately implemented. While provisions in the National Policy on Education (2014) mandate the teaching of mother tongue or the language of the immediate environment in early education, implementation has been inconsistent, especially in urban areas where English dominates (Okeke, 2021). Igbo is often taught only as a subject rather than being used as a medium of instruction, limiting its functional role in education and society. Furthermore, the lack of political will and insufficient investment in the development of Igbo language teaching materials and teacher training has worsened the situation (Ezeh & Okafor, 2023). Today, Igbo struggles to gain official visibility, particularly in administration, science, and technology, where English remains the dominant medium.

Several challenges hinder the development of the Igbo language. First, negative attitudes among speakers

contribute significantly to its decline; many Igbo parents prefer raising their children in English, associating it with socioeconomic mobility (Umeh, 2020). Second, globalization and migration have intensified the dominance of English and other global languages, reducing intergenerational transmission of Igbo. Third, internal linguistic diversity—dialectal variations within Igbo—has also posed difficulties in standardizing the language for educational and administrative purposes (Nwachukwu, 2022). Additionally, poor policy enforcement, limited government funding, and weak institutional support have marginalized the role of Igbo in media, technology, and governance (Okoye, 2021). These challenges have contributed to UNESCO's concern that Igbo could be among endangered languages if deliberate revitalization efforts are not made.

Opportunities and Prospects for Revitalizing Igbo Language

Despite the challenges, numerous opportunities exist for revitalizing the Igbo language. The increasing use of digital platforms, social media, and technology offers space for Igbo to thrive, particularly among younger generations. Online content creation, mobile applications, and Igbo language podcasts have contributed to the language's visibility (Anyanwu & Opara, 2023). Educational reforms that encourage bilingualism and mother tongue instruction provide another avenue for revival. The inclusion of Igbo in Nollywood films, music, and popular culture has also strengthened its presence in entertainment. Furthermore, diasporic Igbo communities have shown interest in

preserving the language, supporting weekend schools and cultural associations abroad. With political commitment, curriculum development, and community-driven initiatives, Igbo has the potential to regain prominence in Nigerian society.

Discussions and Position Statement

Critical Analysis of Policy Implementation on Igbo Language Development

Policy implementation has remained one of the weakest links in the promotion of Nigerian indigenous languages, including Igbo. Although constitutional and educational provisions exist, such as the National Policy on Education (NPE) which emphasizes mother tongue instruction at the primary level, the gap between policy formulation and execution remains wide (Okeke, 2021). In practice, Igbo language is often neglected in schools outside the South-East region, and even within Igbo-speaking communities, English tends to dominate as the language of instruction (Onwuama, 2022). This failure highlights a systemic lack of political will, inadequate resource allocation, and weak monitoring mechanisms. As a result, policies that should empower Igbo language development instead remain largely rhetorical, without meaningful grassroots impact (Okoro & Eze, 2023).

Position of the Paper: Making Policy Work for Igbo Language

This paper posits that effective policy implementation is critical to reversing the decline of Igbo language usage and ensuring its integration into Nigeria's broader development agenda. Beyond policy documents,

there must be concrete strategies—including curriculum enforcement, language teacher training, media content creation in Igbo, and incentives for its daily use in schools and communities (Nwachukwu, 2020). The position advanced here is that language policies must move from being mere symbolic gestures to practical, measurable, and enforceable actions. Specifically, Igbo should not only be taught but also used as a medium of instruction in Igbo-speaking areas up to the junior secondary school level. Furthermore, periodic policy reviews must be undertaken to address emerging challenges posed by globalization and digitalization (Ezeani, 2024).

Stakeholders' Role in Effective Implementation (Government, Schools, Families, Media, Communities)

For Igbo language development to be effective, multiple stakeholders must be engaged in collaborative action. The government must demonstrate political commitment through funding, legislation, and enforcement of existing language policies. Schools should prioritize teacher training and create conducive environments for mother tongue instruction, while families play the primary role of transmitting the language to children in daily interactions (Obi & Chukwu, 2021). The media also has a crucial role to play by increasing the visibility of Igbo in broadcasting, films, social media, and digital platforms, making the language attractive and relevant to younger generations (Umeh, 2023). Finally, communities must mobilize cultural and linguistic pride through festivals, publications, and community-based education initiatives. Only through such collaborative

engagement can policy be effectively translated into sustainable practice.

Looking forward, the survival and flourishing of the Igbo language will depend largely on Nigeria's ability to integrate indigenous languages into its national development framework. Language is not only a cultural heritage but also a strategic tool for cognitive development, identity formation, and socio-economic growth (UNESCO, 2022). If well implemented, language policies could make Igbo a vehicle for literacy expansion, technology adoption, and creative industries. Moreover, with the rise of digital platforms, there are opportunities to digitize Igbo for use in mobile applications, artificial intelligence tools, and e-learning systems (Okafor, 2025). Therefore, the future of Igbo language lies in its ability to adapt to changing socio-economic realities while retaining its cultural essence. Ultimately, a policy-driven, stakeholder-supported, and technology-enabled approach will secure Igbo's rightful place in Nigeria's development trajectory.

Position and Conclusion

This paper positions that effective policy implementation, is critical to the survival, growth, and relevance of the Igbo language in Nigeria's socio-political and cultural development. The mere existence of policies without proper enforcement renders them ineffective. Therefore, policies on mother tongue education, cultural preservation, and multilingualism must be backed with strong institutional frameworks and practical action.

In conclusion, the development of the Igbo language is not only a cultural necessity but also a national

imperative. Language is central to identity, and the neglect of Igbo undermines Nigeria's broader cultural heritage. Policy implementation should thus be regarded as a tool for empowerment, identity consolidation, and sustainable development in Nigeria, with the Igbo language serving as a key example of what can be achieved through proactive strategies.

Recommendations for Strengthening Policy Implementation for Igbo Language Development

Based on the discussions and analysis, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should ensure the strict implementation of mother tongue instruction at the primary school level, with Igbo as the medium of instruction in Igbo-speaking states.

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A SOCIO-RELIGIOUS INTERROGATION OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG THE ADULTS OF EBONYI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates the socio-religious dimensions influencing the use and misuse of alcohol among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Guided by Social Learning Theory and Religious Commitment Theory, the study aims at examining the cultural and social factors that promote alcohol consumption, religious doctrines surrounding its use, the extent and patterns of misuse, and the consequences as well as the role of religious institutions in mitigating alcohol-related problems. The research adopts a descriptive survey design. A structured questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale was administered to a sample of 400 respondents, selected through multi-stage sampling. Data were analyzed using mean scores. The findings reveal that alcohol consumption is strongly linked to cultural traditions and social norms, including peer influence and hospitality practices. Religious institutions discourage alcohol misuse and play significant roles in creating awareness, though their rehabilitation efforts remain limited. The study concludes that alcohol misuse in the

area is a product of cultural permissiveness and inadequate intervention and recommends stronger collaboration between religious bodies, health agencies, and the government to curb the trend.

Keywords: Alcohol-consumption, socio-religious, misuse, religious-institutions.

Introduction

Alcohol consumption has long been a significant part of social and cultural life in many African communities, including those in Nigeria. It serves multiple roles—from its use in traditional ceremonies and religious rituals to its consumption as leisure and socializing substance. In Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, alcohol is widely available and socially accepted, especially in the form of locally brewed drinks like palm wine and *burukutu*. Despite its cultural embeddedness, the misuse of alcohol has increasingly become a public health and moral concern in the area, leading to issues such as domestic violence, health complications, road accidents, and moral decay (Okeke and Obi, 2021).

At the heart of this concern lies a tension between societal acceptance of alcohol and religious condemnation of its abuse. Religion plays a central role in shaping moral conduct in Nigerian communities, often serving as the ethical compass for individual and collective behaviour. The major religions in the area—Christianity and traditional belief systems—present varied perspectives on alcohol consumption. While some denominations

promote moderation, others advocate for total abstinence, particularly in response to the social problems associated with misuse (Nwachukwu, 2023).

Religion in Nigeria plays a pivotal role in shaping moral values and behavioural expectations. It also acts as a powerful social institution capable of influencing lifestyle choices (Okonkwo andAnaduaka, 2021). This paper therefore, adopts a socio-religious lens to interrogate how societal norms and religious beliefs interact to shape attitudes toward the use and misuse of alcohol among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area.

Background to the Study

Alcohol has historically held both functional and symbolic roles in African societies. It is widely used in social ceremonies, religious rites, and as a symbol of hospitality and masculinity. In many Nigerian communities, including those in Ebonyi State, alcohol—particularly in its locally brewed forms such as palm wine, *burukutu,* and ogogoro or kaikai—is considered part of the cultural heritage and is used in libation, marriage ceremonies, funerals, and festivals (Adelekan *et al.,* 2020). The communal acceptance of alcohol in these contexts has normalized its use, often blurring the line between responsible consumption and harmful misuse.

In Ebonyi Local Government Area, alcohol consumption among adults is pervasive and socially ingrained. The traditional and social acceptance of alcohol in the community has contributed to its widespread availability and consumption across age, gender, and socio-economic

classes. However, there is growing concern over the increasing misuse of alcohol, which is often manifested in forms such as binge drinking, alcohol dependence, and involvement in alcohol-related accidents and violence. Health professionals and community leaders alike have observed rising cases of liver disease, family neglect, and youth delinquencies, and gender-based violence associated with excessive alcohol intake (Ebonyi Health Report, 2025; Okeke and Obi, 2021).

While societal norms appear to tolerate alcohol use, religious institutions in the area have consistently expressed concern over its misuse. Christianity, the predominant religion in Ebonyi LGA, generally discourages drunkenness and moral laxity, emphasizing self-control and righteous living (Nwachukwu, 2023). Different denominations hold varying interpretations regarding moderate consumption, with Pentecostal churches advocating total abstinence, while some Catholic and Anglican communities allow moderate use. Despite these religious teachings, many adherents continue to consume alcohol, some covertly, suggesting a gap between religious doctrine and individual behaviour.

Moreover, the intersection of social approval and religious disapproval presents a complex dilemma for communities and policymakers. While some view alcohol as a harmless aspect of culture, others argue that its misuse poses a direct threat to social cohesion, spiritual wellbeing, and public health. This tension underscores the need for a socio-religious investigation into how adults in Ebonyi LGA perceive, use, and misuse alcohol.There is a

need to understand the motivations behind alcohol use, the societal and religious reactions to misuse, and the roles of religious institutions in mitigating its harmful effects.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the cultural significance of alcohol in many African communities, including Ebonyi Local Government Area, its misuse has become a pressing social and public health issue. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the harmful consumption of alcohol, especially among adults, leading to a wide range of consequences such as domestic violence, road accidents, health deterioration, marital breakdowns, and decline in moral standards (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023; Chukwuma and Odo, 2022). These problems not only strain families and communities but also increase the burden on the healthcare and security systems.

What makes the issue more complex is the seeming contradiction between societal tolerance and religious condemnation of alcohol misuse. In Ebonyi LGA, alcohol is widely used in traditional ceremonies, festivals, and social gatherings, thus reinforcing its acceptance. However, religious institutions—especially churches—preach against excess and often view alcohol misuse as a sin and a sign of spiritual decline (Nwachukwu, 2023). Despite this, many professed adherents of Christianity in the area continue to misuse alcohol, raising questions about the effectiveness of religious teachings and the socio-cultural pressures influencing behaviour.

Furthermore, existing studies on alcohol use in Nigeria have often focused on youth or urban populations, neglecting the adult rural demographic that is equally, if not more, affected. Little attention has been given to how religious beliefs and social norms interact to influence attitudes and practices related to alcohol consumption in specific local contexts such as Ebonyi LGA. Without a clear understanding of these socio-religious dynamics, interventions remain superficial and culturally disconnected.

Therefore, this study interrogates the socio-religious factors that shape the use and misuse of alcohol among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area. It aims to uncover the underlying contradictions, belief systems, and societal practices that sustain harmful drinking behaviours, despite the presence of religious teachings against them.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

i. What are the cultural and social factors that promote alcohol consumption among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area?
ii. What are the dominant religious perspectives and doctrines concerning alcohol use and misuse within the community?
iii. To what extent is alcohol misused among adults in Ebonyi LGA, and what are the common patterns of such misuse?

iv. What are the social and religious consequences of alcohol misuse among adults in the local context?
v. What roles do religious institutions play in addressing and mitigating alcohol misuse among adults in Ebonyi LGA?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to interrogate the socio-religious dimensions of alcohol use and misuse among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

i. Examine the cultural and social factors that promote alcohol consumption among adults in Ebonyi LGA.
ii. Investigate religious perspectives and doctrines on alcohol consumption and misuse within the community.
iii. Assess the extent and patterns of alcohol misuse among adults in the area.
iv. Identify the social and religious consequences of alcohol misuse in the local context.
v. Evaluate the roles of religious institutions in addressing and mitigating alcohol misuse among adults.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons, especially within the context of public health, religious engagement, social behaviour, and community development in Ebonyi Local Government Area and beyond.

The study will contribute to existing scholarly literature by offering a multidisciplinary analysis that combines sociological and religious perspectives on alcohol use. It will fill a gap in empirical research that often overlooks adult alcohol consumption in rural communities and rarely integrates local religious views into behavioural health discourse. It may also serve as a reference point for future researchers who are interested in substance use within socio-religious frameworks in African contexts.

The findings will be valuable to public health practitioners by highlighting the extent and pattern of alcohol misuse among adults, and the socio-cultural factors contributing to it. This can inform health education, community-based interventions, and the development of locally appropriate strategies for reducing harmful drinking.

Religious institutions, especially churches and faith-based organizations, will benefit from insights into how their teachings are perceived and practiced regarding alcohol use. The study may help them refine their moral teachings and pastoral approaches to more effectively address alcohol-related problems in their congregations.

By revealing the socio-religious dynamics behind alcohol use and misuse, the study can foster a more coordinated response involving families, religious bodies, and local government. It will encourage community dialogue around responsible living, health, and social accountability.

Scope of the Study

This study is limited to examining the socio-cultural and religious factors influencing the use and misuse of alcohol among adults (aged 18 and above) in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. It focuses on understanding how traditional practices, social norms, and religious doctrines—particularly within Christian denominations—shape attitudes and behaviors related to alcohol consumption. The study investigates patterns of alcohol use, the social and religious consequences of misuse, and the role of religious institutions in addressing alcohol-related challenges. Data collection and analysis are restricted to the specified geographical area and demographic group to ensure contextual relevance and depth of analysis.

Conceptual Framework

Alcohol use is a widespread social practice that serves diverse functions across cultures and communities. It is often associated with leisure, social bonding, religious ceremonies, and rites of passage (World Health Organization [WHO], 2023). In many African societies, including communities in Nigeria, alcohol consumption is deeply embedded in traditional and social events such as festivals, marriages, burials, and conflict resolution (Olanrewaju *et al*., 2022). Moderate alcohol use in such settings is often culturally acceptable and may even symbolize hospitality and maturity. However, this cultural normalization may obscure the transition from use to

misuse, particularly in communities where regulation and awareness are limited.

Alcohol misuse, on the other hand, refers to patterns of consumption that pose risks to an individual's health, social relationships, or economic well-being. It includes binge drinking, chronic dependency, and drinking that result in physical, psychological, or social harm (National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism [NIAAA], 2022). According to WHO (2023), alcohol misuse is a major global health concern, contributing to over 3 million deaths annually and exacerbating conditions such as liver disease, mental disorders, domestic violence, and road traffic accidents. In Nigeria, studies have shown an increasing trend in alcohol abuse, particularly among adults in both urban and rural communities (Okonkwo and Abah, 2021).

The distinction between alcohol use and misuse is not always clear-cut, especially in communities where excessive drinking is normalized or even valorized. Cultural practices and peer influence play a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward alcohol. For example, men are often encouraged to drink as a symbol of masculinity, while women who consume alcohol may face stigma (Adediran and Okoye, 2023). Additionally, economic hardship, unemployment, and psychological stress are known drivers of alcohol misuse, especially in low-income settings.

Religious beliefs and institutions also significantly influence perceptions of alcohol use. In Christian

communities across Nigeria, alcohol consumption is generally discouraged, especially among devout members and clergy. While some denominations allow moderate drinking (e.g., wine during Eucharist), others condemn it entirely as sinful (Iheanacho, 2022). Despite this, alcohol misuse persists among some adherents, indicating a gap between doctrine and practice. Religious institutions, therefore, play a dual role: they can either provide spiritual support for those battling addiction or contribute to silence and denial around the issue due to fear of stigma.

The socio-religious perspective on alcohol use and misuse provides a comprehensive lens through which to understand the complex interplay of cultural norms, social expectations, and religious doctrines that influence individuals' behaviors concerning alcohol consumption. In many African societies, including Ebonyi State, alcohol occupies a dual role: it is both a socially accepted substance used in communal and traditional rites and a subject of moral concern within religious teachings (Okonkwo and Abah, 2021). This duality often creates tension between cultural heritage and religious obligations, shaping individual and community attitudes toward alcohol.

Socially, alcohol use in Ebonyi communities is closely tied to cultural identity, status expression, and social cohesion. It is common during ceremonies such as marriages, festivals, funerals, and traditional meetings, where offering alcohol is considered a symbol of respect and hospitality (Olanrewaju *et al.*, 2022). Peer influence

and community norms further reinforce the acceptability of drinking, especially among men. However, these social dynamics also contribute to patterns of excessive consumption and normalization of misuse, especially in contexts where regulatory mechanisms are weak or non-existent.

From a religious standpoint, most Christian denominations dominant in Ebonyi Local Government Area—including Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism—discourage excessive drinking and interpret alcohol misuse as morally and spiritually harmful. While moderate use (e.g., sacramental wine) may be tolerated in some churches, many religious leaders preach total abstinence based on biblical injunctions such as Ephesians 5:18, which warns against drunkenness (Iheanacho, 2022). Religious teachings often associate alcohol abuse with sin, moral decay, and spiritual weakness. Consequently, devout Christians may refrain from drinking entirely or do so in secrecy, leading to underreporting and hidden patterns of misuse within religious communities.

Moreover, religious institutions in the area serve as important agents of socialization, rehabilitation, and moral guidance. Through sermons, counseling, youth programs, and community outreach, churches attempt to shape public morality and promote healthy lifestyles (Adediran and Okoye, 2023). However, their effectiveness in curbing alcohol misuse varies depending on their level of engagement with social realities such as poverty, unemployment, and trauma, which are

underlying factors in substance abuse. Some scholars have argued that the religious condemnation of alcohol, while morally grounded, may sometimes lead to stigmatization rather than supportive interventions (Eze and Chukwuma, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two major theories: Social Learning Theory and Religious Commitment Theory

Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory (SLT) as propounded by Albert Bandura in 1977 posits that behavior is learned through the observation, imitation, and modeling of others within a social environment. According to Bandura (1977), individuals—especially children and adolescents—acquire new behaviors not only through direct experience but also by watching others, especially those they regard as role models, such as parents, peers, religious leaders, and community figures.

In the context of alcohol use and misuse, Social Learning Theory provides a useful lens for understanding how adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area may adopt drinking behaviors based on what they observe in their immediate social and cultural environment. When individuals see respected community members or elders consuming alcohol during cultural events or family gatherings, they may begin to associate alcohol with social acceptance, adulthood, or prestige. This modeling effect is reinforced when such behaviors are met with

positive social outcomes, such as praise, attention, or inclusion in community circles (Cheng and Lo, 2021).

Furthermore, peer influence plays a significant role in shaping drinking behavior, especially among adults in rural and semi-urban settings. Social Learning Theory explains how individuals, through social interaction, may learn and internalize norms that either condone or discourage excessive alcohol consumption (Elek *et al*., 2020). In communities where alcohol use is normalized or even glorified, individuals are less likely to perceive drinking—especially in excess—as harmful. Conversely, if the dominant group exhibits abstinence or moderation, others may adopt those behaviors to maintain social alignment.

Social Learning Theory also helps to explain the potential impact of religious institutions in modifying behavior. Religious leaders who model abstinence or preach against the misuse of alcohol can influence their followers through verbal persuasion and moral example. When these teachings are reinforced through communal practices—such as counseling, public testimonies, or support groups—they can contribute to behavior change by altering the perceived rewards and consequences associated with alcohol misuse (Beck *et al*., 2022).

Thus, Social Learning Theory is particularly relevant for a socio-religious analysis of alcohol use because it bridges the social and religious dimensions of behavioral acquisition and transformation. It provides a theoretical foundation for exploring how observed behaviors,

reinforced by cultural and religious norms, shape individual choices regarding alcohol. The theory also offers practical implications for designing interventions that use positive role modeling, community engagement, and faith-based programs to reduce alcohol misuse in Ebonyi Local Government Area.

Religious Commitment Theory

The Religious Commitment Theory offers a valuable framework for understanding how individuals' levels of religious involvement and adherence to spiritual principles influence their behavior, including the use or misuse of alcohol. Rooted in the broader sociology of religion, this theory posits that individuals who are highly committed to their religious beliefs are more likely to exhibit behavior that aligns with their faith's teachings and moral codes (Worthington et al., 2003). Religious commitment encompasses both intrinsic dimensions—such as personal devotion and internalized belief systems—and extrinsic aspects—such as participation in organized religious activities, church attendance, and adherence to institutional expectations.

In the context of alcohol consumption, the Religious Commitment Theory suggests that people who are more religiously committed are less likely to engage in behaviors considered sinful or harmful by their religious communities, including alcohol misuse (Mokhtari *et al*., 2021). For example, Christian denominations dominant in Ebonyi Local Government Area—including Catholic, Pentecostal, and Evangelical churches—generally

condemn drunkenness and view it as both a moral and spiritual failing. Individuals with higher levels of religious commitment may internalize these teachings and, as a result, are more likely to abstain from or strictly regulate their alcohol intake to align with spiritual and communal expectations.

This theory is particularly useful in a socio-religious study of alcohol use in Ebonyi Local Government Area, where religion plays a central role in shaping social norms and personal values. People with strong religious ties may avoid alcohol misuse not only due to personal convictions but also because of fear of social stigma, loss of religious fellowship, or divine retribution (Onyekuruand Onuoha, 2022). Religious commitment also fosters social support systems, such as pastoral counseling and prayer groups, which can serve as protective factors against substance abuse.

Moreover, religious commitment can act as a behavioral anchor in environments where other regulatory systems are weak. In rural or semi-urban communities where law enforcement and health education are limited, strong religious involvement may substitute for formal controls by promoting internal discipline and moral accountability (Iwuagwu *et al*., 2023). However, the effectiveness of this theory is mediated by the consistency of religious messaging, the authenticity of role models within religious institutions, and the extent to which religious organizations engage with broader social issues like poverty, unemployment, and trauma—factors that often lead to alcohol misuse.

In summary, Religious Commitment Theory supports the notion that increased religiosity is associated with reduced likelihood of alcohol misuse. It provides a framework for understanding how religious beliefs and practices influence individual behavior and highlights the potential for faith-based interventions in addressing alcohol-related problems in Ebonyi Local Government Area.

Empirical Review

Agbo (2021) conducted a study titled *"Cultural Beliefs and Alcohol Consumption Patterns among Adult Males in Nsukka, Enugu State."* The research adopted a descriptive survey design involving 250 adult male respondents selected, using simple random sampling. The findings showed that alcohol consumption was deeply entrenched in cultural practices such as traditional marriages and burial rites. The study concluded that cultural norms significantly influence the initiation and continuation of alcohol use. The researcher recommended culturally sensitive interventions that respect traditions while discouraging misuse.

Okaforand Nwankwo (2020) examined *"Religious Influence on Alcohol Use among Adults in Southeast Nigeria."* The study employed a mixed-method design with a sample size of 300 adults drawn purposively from churches and mosques across Ebonyi and Anambra States. Findings revealed that individuals with higher religious commitment—especially in Pentecostal and Catholic settings—were significantly less likely to misuse alcohol. The study recommended that religious

institutions play a more proactive role in substance misuse education.

Ifeanyi and Okoye (2022) carried out a study on *"Alcohol Misuse and Social Dysfunction among Married Adults in Abakaliki Urban."* Using a cross-sectional survey approach, the study sampled 200 participants through stratified random sampling. Results indicated that alcohol misuse was closely linked to domestic violence, marital discord, and economic instability. The researchers recommended integrating alcohol counseling services into community health programs.

Adebayo and Yusuf (2023) explored *"Faith-Based Interventions and Alcohol Addiction Recovery in Southwest Nigeria."* This qualitative study involved 30 recovering alcoholics enrolled in religious rehabilitation centers. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings showed that spiritual discipline, moral teachings, and religious fellowship played a crucial role in relapse prevention. The study recommended government partnerships with faith-based organizations for more holistic alcohol abuse recovery programs.

Chukwu and Okorie (2021) investigated *"Peer Pressure and Alcohol Misuse among Youth and Young Adults in Ebonyi State."* The study used a correlational research design and involved 350 participants between the ages of 18 and 35, selected through multistage sampling. The results confirmed that peer influence was a significant predictor of alcohol misuse, particularly among those with

weak family or religious support. The authors advocated for youth mentoring programs anchored in religious and cultural institutions.

Mbah and Okonkwo (2022) studied *"The Role of Religion in Reducing Substance Abuse in Rural Communities in Nigeria."* Using a descriptive survey design, 280 adult respondents from four rural communities in Southeast Nigeria were selected through cluster sampling. Findings indicated that regular religious attendance, pastoral counseling, and community prayer sessions reduced the incidence of alcohol and other substance misuse. The study recommended increased government funding for religious-based health promotion initiatives.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. The design is suitable for studies that aim to collect detailed information about existing phenomena from a large population. It enables the researcher to systematically describe the current socio-religious dynamics influencing alcohol use and misuse among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area without manipulating variables (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Area of the Study

The study is situated in Ebonyi Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. The area is predominantly rural with emerging urban settlements and

is characterized by strong traditional customs and vibrant religious institutions including Catholic, Pentecostal, Anglican, and indigenous churches. These socio-religious contexts provide a unique environment for understanding the factors influencing alcohol consumption among adults.

Population of the Study

The target population for the study comprises all adults aged 18 years and above residing in Ebonyi Local Government Area. According to projections from the National Population Commission (NPC, 2023), the adult population in the area is estimated to be 64,000.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 400 adults was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for finite population:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size (64,000)

e = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{64000}{1+64000(0.05)^2} \quad = 398.76 \quad = 400$$

A multi-stage sampling technique was used: Stratified sampling to categorize the area into urban and rural zones;Cluster sampling to select wards from each stratum;Simple random sampling to select individual respondents from households within each cluster.

Instrument for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled *"Socio-Religio Alcohol Use and Misuse Questionnaire (SRAUMQ)."* The instrument comprised two sections: Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents while Section B contained the main items onuse and misuse of alcohol.The questionnaire utilized a 4-point Likert scaleformat ranging from *stronglyagree (4)* to *stronglydisagree (1).*

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through trained research assistants who administered the questionnaires in person. Assistance was provided to respondents with low literacy levels by translating the items into the local dialect (Izzi). Ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly observed.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26. Descriptive statistics such as means were used to summarize demographic information and item responses.

Findings and Analysis

The table below contains the responses generated in the answer to the research questions:

Research Question 1: Cultural and Social Factors Promoting Alcohol Consumption

Table 1 presents respondents' responses on the cultural and social factors promoting alcohol consumption.

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Alcohol is used in cultural/social events	180	120	60	40	3.1
Peer influence contributes to drinking	160	130	70	40	3.0
Alcohol is used to show hospitality	150	140	70	40	3.0
Alcohol consumption is more accepted for men	130	150	80	40	2.9

The mean scores indicate that cultural and social factors such as cultural ceremonies and peer pressure are key promoters of alcohol consumption. The high mean score for cultural events (3.1) and peer influence (3.0) suggests that alcohol use is deeply embedded in social norms. Gender norms also play a role, though slightly less strongly (2.9), pointing to gendered perceptions of drinking.

Research Question 2: Religious Perspectives and Doctrines Concerning Alcohol Use

Table 2 shows respondents' responses on the religious perspectives and doctrines concerning alcohol use

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
My religion discourages alcohol use	200	110	60	30	3.2
Religious leaders preach against alcohol misuse	180	120	70	30	3.1
Some religious groups allow moderate drinking	100	120	100	80	2.6
My religious beliefs influence my view on alcohol	190	130	50	30	3.2

Most respondents affirmed that their religions discourage alcohol use and that their personal views are influenced by religious teachings (Mean = 3.2). However, the mean score for moderate alcohol use being allowed by some denominations (2.6) shows moderate variability in religious stances, indicating that while abstinence is dominant, some denominations may tolerate limited alcohol use.

Research Question 3: Extent and Patterns of Alcohol Misuse

Table 3 shows respondents' responses on the extent and patterns of alcohol misuse

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Alcohol is excessively consumed in this area	160	140	60	40	3.0
Daily alcohol consumption is common	150	130	70	50	2.9
There is a problem of alcohol dependency	140	130	80	50	2.9
Binge drinking is a frequent practice	155	135	70	40	3.0

The responses point to a noticeable level of alcohol misuse in Ebonyi LGA. All items have means around or slightly below 3.0, indicating that a significant portion of adults regularly engage in harmful drinking patterns including dependency and binge drinking, though some respondents remain neutral or disagree slightly.

Research Question 4: Social and Religious Consequences of Alcohol Misuse

Table 4 presents respondents' responses on the social and religious consequences of alcohol misuse

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Alcohol misuse leads to family conflict	170	130	60	40	3.1
It causes job loss or poor performance	160	130	70	40	3.0
It affects religious participation	165	130	70	35	3.1
It brings about social stigma	175	130	60	35	3.1

Respondents agree that alcohol misuse has serious social and religious consequences. The highest mean (3.1) reflects that many people associate alcohol misuse with social stigma, while family conflicts and reduced religious participation are also widely acknowledged problems. These findings reinforce the negative impact of alcohol on community wellbeing.

Research Question 5: Role of Religious Institutions in Mitigating Alcohol Misuse

Table 5 presents respondents' responses on the role of religious institutions in mitigating alcohol misuse

Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
Religious institutions organize awareness campaigns	180	130	60	30	3.1
They offer counseling services	160	140	60	40	3.0
They run faith-based rehabilitation programmes	150	130	70	50	2.9
They collaborate with health agencies	160	140	60	40	3.0

The data shows that religious institutions play an active role in curbing alcohol misuse. With a mean score of 3.1, organizing awareness campaigns is the most recognized effort. Other roles such as offering counseling and

collaborating with health institutions are also moderately affirmed, though support for rehabilitation efforts (2.95) is slightly lower, suggesting room for growth in direct intervention services.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the socio-religious dynamics surrounding alcohol consumption and misuse among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area. The analysis was guided by five research questions and responses were measured using a 4-point Likert scale.

The findings revealed that cultural and social elements strongly influence alcohol consumption in the area. Respondents generally agreed that alcohol is used during social and cultural events such as traditional marriages, funerals, and community festivals (Mean = 3.1). Peer influence was also highlighted as a strong factor (Mean = 3.0), affirming Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory which emphasizes that behaviors are learned through observation and imitation. The use of alcohol to express hospitality (Mean = 3.0) and the societal norm that views alcohol consumption as more acceptable for men (Mean = 2.9) further reveal the entrenched social norms that perpetuate drinking habits.

Respondents agreed that most religious doctrines in the area discourage alcohol consumption (Mean = 3.2) and that religious leaders often preach against its misuse (Mean = 3.1). However, there was some neutrality in responses regarding the allowance of moderate alcohol consumption by some denominations (Mean = 2.6),

indicating a theological variance in alcohol-related doctrines. Most respondents affirmed that their religious convictions shape their views on alcohol (Mean = 3.2), supporting the Religious Commitment Theory (Worthington et al., 2003), which posits that religious teachings significantly influence individual behavior and lifestyle choices.

The study found that alcohol misuse is prevalent in the area, with mean scores ranging from 2.9 to 3.0. Respondents acknowledged excessive consumption (Mean = 3.0), daily use (Mean = 2.95), dependency (Mean = 2.9), and binge drinking (Mean = 3.0). These patterns align with previous studies such as Agbo and Okoye (2022), which report an increase in habitual and problematic alcohol use in rural and peri-urban Nigerian communities. These patterns indicate a public health concern that needs targeted interventions.

Findings showed high levels of agreement on the negative consequences of alcohol misuse. Most respondents strongly agreed that alcohol abuse leads to family conflict (Mean = 3.08), job loss or underperformance (Mean = 3.03), diminished religious participation (Mean = 3.06), and social stigma (Mean = 3.11). These consequences point to the disruptive nature of alcohol misuse on personal, family, and communal life. This confirms earlier empirical work by Eze and Nwankwo (2021), which showed that alcohol misuse in local communities contributes significantly to household dysfunction and moral decline.

The findings reveal that religious institutions are actively involved in reducing alcohol misuse. Respondents indicated that these institutions organize awareness campaigns (Mean = 3.15), offer counseling (Mean = 3.05), run rehabilitation programmes (Mean = 2.95), and collaborate with health agencies (Mean = 3.05). These interventions show a strong institutional commitment to addressing the issue from both moral and psychosocial standpoints. The active participation of religious organizations is crucial for reinforcing abstinence and recovery programs, especially in deeply religious societies like Ebonyi.

Summary of the Study

This study examined the cultural, social, and religious dimensions of alcohol use and misuse among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The research was anchored on Social Learning Theory and Religious Commitment Theory, which provided a lens for understanding how individuals' behaviors are shaped by their environment and religious beliefs.

A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The target population consisted of adult residents of Ebonyi LGA, from which a sample of 400 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. A structured questionnaire based on a 4-point Likert scale was used to collect data. The instrument covered aspects such as socio-cultural motivations, religious doctrines, and patterns of alcohol misuse, consequences, and the role

of religious institutions. The data were analyzed using mean scores.

The findings revealed that alcohol consumption is deeply rooted in cultural practices and social interactions, with peer pressure and traditional hospitality norms being significant drivers. Most religious doctrines in the area discourage alcohol use, and religious beliefs significantly influence personal attitudes toward alcohol. The extent of alcohol misuse was found to be moderately high, characterized by binge drinking, daily use, and dependency. Socially, alcohol misuse was linked to family breakdowns, job loss, and stigma, while religious participation was negatively affected. Importantly, religious institutions were shown to play proactive roles in addressing alcohol misuse through awareness campaigns, counseling, and limited collaboration with health agencies.

The study concludes that both cultural acceptance and religious disapproval coexist in a complex dynamic that influences alcohol-related behaviors in the community. It recommends stronger faith-based interventions, public health education, and community-level dialogue to reduce harmful alcohol use among adults in Ebonyi LGA.

Conclusion

This study has provided a comprehensive socio-religious exploration into the factors influencing alcohol consumption and misuse among adults in Ebonyi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. The findings show that alcohol use is not only a personal choice but also a cultural

and social practice entrenched in community traditions and events. While the use of alcohol is often normalized in social contexts, its misuse has resulted in adverse outcomes, including family disintegration, poor job performance, diminished religious involvement, and social stigmatization.

Importantly, the study highlights the role of religious belief systems in shaping attitudes and behaviors related to alcohol. While many religious doctrines condemn alcohol misuse, their effectiveness in influencing behavior varies across denominations. Religious institutions, however, have emerged as vital agents in promoting behavioral change through awareness campaigns, counseling, and spiritual guidance, even though their capacity in providing structured rehabilitation remains limited.

Ultimately, the study concludes that addressing alcohol misuse in Ebonyi LGA requires a multi-dimensional approach—one that recognizes the influence of cultural norms, strengthens religious institutional involvement, and incorporates public health strategies. A collaborative effort among families, religious leaders, community heads, and policy-makers is essential for reducing the prevalence and impact of alcohol misuse in the area.

Community leaders and cultural custodians should initiate awareness programs that re-evaluate traditional practices which promote alcohol consumption during events such as burials, marriages, and festivals. These practices should

be redesigned to emphasize moderation or alternatives to alcohol use.

Religious bodies should intensify their efforts in addressing alcohol misuse by incorporating structured rehabilitation support, regular sermons against excessive drinking, and setting up faith-based counseling centers that can offer both spiritual and psychological support.

Local health authorities and Ebonyi State Ministry of Health should work collaboratively with religious institutions to implement public health campaigns on the dangers of alcohol misuse. Mobile sensitization units and community seminars could be effective in reaching adults in rural and urban parts of the LGA.

The local government should regulate the sale and distribution of alcohol, especially in proximity to schools, churches, and residential areas. Age restrictions, operating hours for bars, and licensing enforcement should be strictly upheld.

Schools and community development associations should design and implement life-skills programs targeted at young adults to equip them with decision-making skills that discourage substance abuse. This will help break the cycle of early exposure to alcohol consumption.

Community-based peer support groups should be established to help individuals struggling with alcohol dependency. These groups can offer a safe space for sharing experiences, encouraging sobriety, and reintegrating into the community.

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PRECOLONIAL BURIAL CUSTOMS OF THE IZHI PEOPLE

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Abstract

This study explores some of the traditional burial customs of the Izhi people from the earliest times, focusing on the cultural, spiritual, and social practices surrounding death and burial within the community. The Izhi, a sub-group of the Igbo ethnic group in southeastern Nigeria, have developed complex funeral rites that reflect their deep-seated beliefs in the afterlife, ancestral veneration, and communal solidarity. The research examines the processes involved in preparing the dead for burial, the roles of family and community members, the significance of ritual objects, and the observance of mourning periods.

It also analyzes how status, age, and gender influenced burial patterns, especially in differentiating the rites for elders, titled men, warriors, women, and children. By utilizing oral traditions, interviews, and existing ethnographic records, the paper traces the continuity and transformation of these customs over time, including the impact of colonialism, Christianity, and modernization on traditional burial practices. The study further explores the symbolism of traditional musical instruments, dances, and sacrifices that often accompany burials, as well as the taboos and prohibitions observed during funeral ceremonies. The research argues that while many elements of Izhi burial customs have adapted to changing times, core cultural values surrounding respect for the dead and community involvement in death rites remain resilient. The study contributes to the broader understanding of Igbo funerary culture and highlights the importance of preserving indigenous knowledge systems in the face of socio-cultural change.

Keywords: Death, burial, burial-rites, Christianity

Introduction

Death is a universal phenomenon. It happens to all humans, young and old. It is also a mysterious occurrence that defies comprehension and any satisfactory explanation. Across the world and in the lengthy history of man, several concepts of death have been made. Some have viewed death as a snatcher of life with the conclusion that the only approach to it is to enjoy oneself while one lives. That is, let us ‘eat, drink and be merry today for

tomorrow we die'. For those whose approach to death this represents, there is nothing that would stop them from anything that could make for enjoyment be it moral or immoral, normal or abnormal. Since for these people, the only meaning derivable from life is to indulge oneself, they are ever swift to go full length to achieve it. There are others who see death as the best that can happen to a living man. For this group of thinkers, life is an unfortunate journey that should never have been undertaken and the earlier one exit earth, the better for him. The ancient Greek tragedian, Sophocles expressed this pessimism when he remarked, "It is best of all never to have been born, and second, the best by far, if one has made his appearance in this world, only to go back again, as quickly as may be, thither whence he has come." Going further he said, "Death is not the greatest of ills; it is worse to want to die, and not be able to."[1] Ernest Nagel also expressed similar viewpoint when he declared that *"human destiny is just an episode between two oblivions*."[2] That is, for him, the journey of man from birth to death signifies nothing. Another attitude or approach to death is that of those who seek to conquer it by the achievement of fame or earthly recognitions. For these people, the sharp edge of death is considerably dulled by their hope that their popularity on earth would guarantee their stay in men's and society's memory long after they had died. This thinking is behind the building and erection of murals and monuments on this world. There are also those who see death as the gateway to a new life in the great beyond where one could either spend eternity with his God or gods or with the devil. This group of people lives their lives in everyday consciousness that their

actions on earth would determine their place in death. Thus, the belief of a man or a people concerning death shapes their attitudes both to life and to death.

The Izhi people of northeastern Igbo land have their own concepts and perceptions of death. Long before the arrival of European colonizers in the area, the people have had their own body of beliefs about death, their approach to it and the way they treated their dead. Their view on death informed the way they handled the burial of their dead ones. Relying principally on oral information and also on other written sources, this paper probes and accounts for the concept of death and burial practices in traditional Izhi society.

The Land and People of Izhi

The Izhi people are one of the principal inhabitants of the northeastern Igbo land. They are among the Igbo clans referred to as Abakaliki in the present-day Ebonyi State of Nigeria. A handful of them can also be found in Cross River and Benue States. Their sister clans are the Ezza and Ikwo peoples of the same area. The Izhi make-up the three Local Government Council areas in Ebonyi State namely: Abakaliki, Ebonyi and Izhi Local Government Areas. The Izhi clan is geographically located between 80 20' E longitudes and 60 30' N latitude. It is bounded by Ukelle and Osopong of Cross River State in the east; Tiv and Idoma of Benue State in the north; in the west, the Izhi is bounded by Ezza-Effium, Ngbo L'Izhia; and in the south, it shares boundaries with Ezza and Ikwo peoples.[8] The Izhi clan covers a landmass of about 1,988 square

kilometers. The Izhi area is well watered by the Ebonyi River which straddles the land from the northern end to the south and its outlets and tributaries- Abee and Ngele Akparata. There is also the Enyim River which separates the Izhi people from the Ukelle of the Cross River valley.[9]The major occupation of the Izhi people is agriculture.

The Izhi people are believed to have descended from the same ancestor as the Ezza and Ikwo peoples of the same geographical zone. Nico Van Steensel observes that,

> The Izhi are usually mentioned together with Ikwo and Ezza. They have a common ancestor called Enyi Nwegu… He had three sons who became the founderof the Ezza, Izhi and Ikwo tribes….[3]

Elizabeth Isichei supports the claim stating that *"the Ezza, Izhi and Ikwo trace their origin from three brothers, whose father came from Afikpo."*[4] Those three brothers were Ezekuna, Nnodo and Noyo respectively who are said to have been the sons of the Abakaliki putative father named Ekuma Enyi. While the Izhi substantially shares this position, uncertainty continues to exist as to when and how the said Ekuma Enyi arrived their present abode. The Izhi holds two major accounts on this. According to the elders of Amegu Izhi, Ekuma Enyi was the great ancestor of the Izhi clan but his place of origin is not known. The other version has it that Ekuma Enyi descended from heaven with the aid of a rope called *Ihalafpum* and landed at Amegu-the ancestral home of the Izhi people.[5] This is

said to have taken place at a time when heaven and earth were very close. However, as a result of some offence that he is said to have committed, heaven could not allow Ekuma Enyi to return there and then threw down the rope that he could have used to go back.[6] The idea of their ancestor coming down from heaven on a rope can probably be a manifestation of Professor Afigbo's observation concerning a preliterate people who make similar statements for lack of remembrance of what really happened.[7] It is arguable that the Izhi had lost all memory of their migration journey.

Death in Izhi Cosmology

In Izhi cosmology, death is viewed as universal and an inevitable end for every man. It is an issue that comes to all classes of people in the society- the suckling, the young, the old, the righteous and the profane. The Izhi name for death is *onwu* and the act of being dead is known as '*anwuhu'* and in order to capture the universality of death, the people have a saying which states that, *onwu nodzuru madzu l'ile* (death awaits all). Solomon Nwiboko submits that, *"death in Izhi is as old as mankind. It originated from the creation of man. It is unpreventable and has no regard to persons rich or poor. It does not consider the social and economic status of individuals."*[10]

The Izhi do not see death as the extinction of life but as a departure from the physical world to another (the spirit world). That is, the deceased only simply moved on to join other departed ones in the land of the spirit. They believe that death is a continuation of the life of the deceased in

another sphere and as such they do everything during burial to equip the dead with all that is needed for a great life in the place beyond. The Izhi also conceives of death as the embarking on a far journey which requires necessary items or resources in order to sustain the journey. This was why during the pre-colonial period, men, especially influential ones, got buried with their slaves so that the slaves would serve them in the land of the dead.[11] The Izhi people also believes in reincarnation. This is a major reason why families do well to give befitting burials to their deserving dead. They do so in order to, among other reasons, convince him to come back to their families. The elders pray standing in front of the remains of the deceased before burial, recalling his good deeds and pleading for his quick reincarnation. S.I. Nwiboko provides an example of such prayers below:

> Your death gave us rude shock for we can never be tired of you. You have been a lover of peace and friend to everyone. Look at us that you left, who can do those things that you used to do. As you go, remember that you were born into this family and that your foreskin was buried in this family. We know that you are going to come back very soon. Do not waste time! Our ancestors, we thank you for sending him to us; when he comes back, may he be more helpful.[12]

The Izhi strongly believe that the souls or ghosts of those who had died do come back to the world reincarnated. The reincarnating dead can either be born again as a man,

woman or even as an animal. A person who died as man or woman could chose to reincarnate in the opposite sex. It is not uncommon to hear an Izhi man or woman saying that in his or her next world he or she will come as a woman if the person is a man or come back as man if the person is a woman. The people also believe that a person reincarnates seven times and then finally ends as a tree in the forest.

The Izhi also believe in the concept of *ogbanje,* the continuous birth and death of the same children. They believe that some children who they call *ogbanje* engage in continuous cycles of birth and death to the same woman or family. Such children are regarded as evil children who come to cause endless cycle of pain and sorrow in the families where they are born. In order to stop such cycle, they are normally flogged with cane or have their faces carved with razor blade when they die. In some cases, one of their fingers or toes was cut off before being buried in the evil forest. This is to cause the soul of the evil child to be rejected in the spirit world so that it can return to the family without dying prematurely again. Indeed, there were instances of such babies born with similar scar they were given at death before they were buried unceremoniously[13]

Types and Causes of Death in Izhi land

Although the Izhi believe that death is natural and inevitable, they still hold the view that death does not occur without a cause. There are two types of death in Izhi. Good death and bad death. Each is dependent on the

factor(s) responsible for such death. According to N. M. Mbam,[14] there are many things that could cause death in Izhi land among which are as follows:

Illegal Acquisition of Land

Izhi people believe that the heaven and the earth have equal power and influence on man and when *Ali*, the earth is desecrated, it causes mysterious death. This is especially the case when there is contravention of land shared or demarcated by the *Uke* led by the *Ishi-Uke* and the *Okoro* led by *Ishi-Okoro*. These are the two groups of elders selected from the two Izhi kindreds of *Igbojima* also known as *Izhida* and *Unwuerwa* also known as *Anmeke* to oversee the affairs of communal land distribution among the people. After they had done their work, anyone who contravenes or resisted their decision attracts the consequence of mysterious death. Stephen Nwamini,[15] in adding to the above submits that, the causes of death in Izhi land are many. According to him, the Izhi cosmology believes that if a man does not fall victim to matters related to either land (*ali*), women (*nwanyi*) or money (*okpoga*), then, such man would live long. It is the belief of the Izhi people that the above could make or mar the life of anyone who kept or desecrates their rules. Land in Izhi is regarded as the most important asset since the people's livelihoods as farmers depended on it. Any illegal encroachment therefore leads to the death of the offender.[16]

Sexual Immorality

On the issue of women as a cause of death, Ukeh Nwebonyi[17] maintains that it is an abomination in Izhi land for a son to have sexual affairs with his father's wife i.e. step mother or his mother, sister or closely-related family members. He further added that any sexual act between a married woman whose husband is alive and another man married or not is adultery *(ogori*) and it leads to the death of either the adulterous woman, her children or the husband if he is in anyway aware of the wife's adulterous act but did not send her back to her parents pending when the necessary traditional cleansing and purifications has been done on the woman. Such illegal sexual intercourse is culturally prohibited as it is viewed as an abomination. Some of its effects include driving defaulters' mad, psychological disorders and finally death if the offender failed to confess. However, if the person confesses, it is pardonable following some sacrifices to appease the gods and goddesses of the land as stated above.[18]

Unlawful Acquisition of Money

Izhi people view it as an act of laziness if an able-bodied man is unable to fend for himself. Thus, every Izhi person strives to make money enough to take care of oneself and their dependents. Because of the high premium put on money, some people could go to any length to make money and the ones who follow illegal routes which usually involve the use of black magic (*juju*) meets sudden death.[19]

Witchcraft and Evil Spirits

Another cause of peoples' death in Izhi is witchcraft, black magic or sorceries known as *mgbashi* in Izhi. Others include curses from the gods, affliction from evil spirits and desecration of the village or community deities. If a death is suspected to have been caused as a result of*mgbashi,* consultation is normally made to a native doctor to validate such suspicion. Upon the discovery of the person whose witchcraft activities had led to the death of the victim, such witch or wizard is beaten to death on the orders of the village or community elders.[20]In more recent times, the person is fined or ostracized from the village or community. In a situation whereby death is not suspected to have been caused by sorcery, witchcraft or black magic, evil spirits may be blamed, usually spirits of dead ones whose dead bodies were not probably buried or who had not been given full burial rites by their relatives. Death is also caused by curses from the gods or from parents on their children etc. Consequently, the people take precautions not to place curses on their children. People also do everything in their powers to avoid being cursed or not to attract curses to themselves either from the gods or from their fellow man.

Oath Taking or Breaking of Oaths

Deaths can occur when people break the oaths or covenants, they entered into with gods. People have also died as a result of swearing under false pretenses. There are several types of oath of innocence that could be

administered or taken by anyone in Izhi. Oath is called *enwa* and oath taking is *agu-enwa* in Izhi. There is the death-oath called *enwa-anwuhu*. It is administered on anyone who claims innocent of any crime. The person who takes such oath is deemed to be exonerated if he did not die within the specified period usually six month or one year. If the person is guilty of the offence, he or she will certainly die mysteriously within the period specified during the oath-taking. A person who commits a crime and goes ahead to take the death-oath of innocence, incurs outright death in Izhi land.[21]

Burial Methods in Izhi

There are several methods of conducting burials in Izhi. The method for any particular burial is determined by such matters as the age of the deceased, his economic and social standing, the economic and social status of his children, grand-children, relatives, and sometimes his in-laws. The cause of someone's death also contributes in determining the way the person is to be buried. In Izhi, every culturally conscious person wishes to be accorded a befitting burial at death but not all who desires befitting burial gets it because of its elaborate nature and capital intensive. The above-mentioned conditions play a role in deciding whether or not the deceased can have a befitting burial.

In Izhi, the following items must be present for a burial to qualify as befitting. They include; a cow, a goat (*eghu okpezi*), a fowl (*oku--ikenga*), a mat (*utute*), wrappers (*ekwa-odzu*), gun powder (*nshiegbe*), Yams (*ji-ubvu*) and

palm-wine for libation. These items have their significances. The cow and goat accompanies the dead as a present to the ancestors and is given to avoid arriving to the spirit world empty-handed. It is believed that if the dead arrived empty-handed, he would suffer much shame over there and his spirit would come back to disturb his children. If at the time of the death of a deserving person, his children are not able to provide the materials for a befitting burial, the burial will still be done but it would be assumed that the deceased was only preserved in a pit covered with soil waiting when items will be available for a proper burial. The Izhi people do not regard such as proper or complete burial and refer to it as *eli-mkpachi.*[22] Achi Ajibo, notes that if the corpse is not well treated or properly buried, the spirit of the deceased would come back to torment the family members.[23] In a situation where such disturbances occur, the services of a soothsayer was sought in order that he may communicate the dead to ascertain what should be done to appease it. The children would have to make haste to complete the burial process in order to avert further torment from the spirit of the dead. The libation poured during the burial is a farewell bid of the spirit as it journeys to the land of the dead and also a request for the ancestors to warmly receive the departed soul. Another important aspect of conducting a befitting burial is the beating and dancing of the *okperegede* dance whose rhythm is believed to reach the land of the dead. Peter Nwuzor believes that the *okperegede* dance is an indispensable part of a befitting burial.[24]

Burial Ceremony

Many ceremonies accompany the burial of aged men and women in Izhi land. For one to be adjudged aged in Izhi, such person must have attained the age of 70 or above. Although before the advent of western education, the real ages of people were not known but the yardstick for determining aged men or women was that the person must have had children, grandchildren and sometimes great grandchildren and must have passed through both child and adult circumcisions.[25]

Funeral Ceremony of an Aged Man/Woman

When an aged man dies, it is the duty and responsibility of the eldest son to make it known to relatives and the public. This he does by the shooting of cannons (*okpolali).*[26]Until the cannons are fired the deceased man is assumed to be asleep and nobody will be allowed to cry over him. After the shooting, people became free to cry. The corpse will be laid in the first wife's hut while elderly women and his first daughter would take care of it by fanning the mouth of the deceased to drive away flies. The women will keep awake dressing the corpse throughout the night until the following day. A goat (*eghu-ujiku*) is given to them as compensation for their services.

In the morning of the second day, the funeral procession (*erwu-ubvu)* begins. The procession is made up of three categories of women. The first are mature young girls, the second are middle-aged and then the elderly women coming last. All the women run round the village playground and market places singing mournful songs and letting the entire village know that a person had died.

The youngest daughter of the deceased carries *ụkpara,* a traditional wooden tray with which the deceased welcomed his guests with kola nuts while alive. The eldest daughter will hold the photograph of the deceased and his bag, cap and walking stick.[27]

The procession which is a symbolic search for the dead would take the women to the market square to look for the deceased where he usually stayed in the market while alive. If he was a drunkard, the procession would look for him at the palm-wine spot in the market; if he was a wealthy farmer, they would look for where he stayed to sell his yams while alive et cetera.

The procession also goes to every compound where the deceased daughters are married, especially the ones within the village. In any of the compounds visited, they were given presents like goats, fowls, money and sometimes cooked foods. The deceased's eldest son also gives them fowl (*oku erwu ubvu*). After the procession, all the women would return back to the deceased's compound to kill the goats, fowls and to share all the presents they received.

The burial proper takes place on the second day of the deceased's passing, and having announced the death of the fellow to the villagers through the procession, all the villagers, relatives, kinsmen, friends and well-wishers are welcomed and free to attend the burial ceremony. Sons and daughters of the deceased bring their friends and dancing groups to come and entertain guests and to sympathize with them while the burial lasted. As is the

case with the first announcement of the deceased passing, the portion or burial place of the dead would be shown by the first son. This is a traditional right of the first son to do except in a situation where such a son is too tender or not available to perform his duty, in which case an approved representative performs the rite. Following the indication of the interment portion of land, the first son or his representative would remove soil from the surface using a hoe. After that, four men, two each from Igbojima (Izhida) and Unwuerwa (Anmeke) kindreds are selected to dig the grave. Those who dig the grave wear palm fronds on their arms as indication that they were not digging for farming. At the end of the digging, they were given dry pieces of bush meat (*anu-egu*) and palm-wine.[28]

Dressing and Addressing of a Corpse

The daughters of the deceased bathe or wash the corpse. Thereafter, two men each from the two major kindred would be selected to enter the house to dress the corpse. They wear it beautiful clothes, wrappers and traditional cap (*okpulishi-eka)* if the deceased was a titled person. Those who dressed the corpse are entitled to some wrappers. The corpse is then carried outside and laid on a local mat (*utute)* with which it would be later wrapped and buried with. The use of coffin is a recent development and is gradually being accepted. At this stage, the dead is addressed for the last time. This rite is known as *agwa-ikenga.* In doingthis, the first son, usually with a cock in the right hand, stands at the feet of the deceased and recounts to the corpse how he was informed of his illness and how he reacted on hearing it. He would account for

what and how he and other members of the family did their best to get him cured but that the sickness persisted till death. Sometimes he names all the places they went in search of cure and how much they spent, the number of oracles and magicians consulted, numbers of things sold or sacrificed. After all this, the dead person is addressed finally as follows:

> If it is God's wish and time for your death, then go and rest peacefully and cause no trouble to anyone. But if it is an enemy who killed you with juju, make sure you wage war against that person and take vengeance. Go and organize your age-grade members and fight whoever is responsible for your death until such a person dies like you. Protect your children and your wives; make yourself to be reborn by your daughters, sons, relatives.[29]

After this, two tubers of yam (*ji eke l'upfu)* were brought and laid at the feet of the deceased and palm wine poured in its mouth as a mark of last respect. All the children of the deceased and his namesakes (*ogbo)* were called to touch the corpse and to donate a fowl each or money in place of fowl to him. This is necessary to make the dead happy with his children. A broken piece of local earthen water pot *(mbeji*), filled with water is touched to the mouth of the corpse as a way of cleansing the dead person of any bad words he may have said against anybody while alive or as a way to let go of any problem the dead may have had with any living person. This rite is referred to as *eye mini l'onu* (putting water in the mouth of a deceased).

Following this, an old man from the linage of the deceased would take the fowl and almost repeats what the oldest son of the deceased had said and then pours some wine on the corpse's mouth reminding him that his relatives and friends are paying him their last homage and would thenceforth drink no more with him. The fowl is then killed and the blood poured on the corpse's right hand and on the arm where the cow-skin from a cow that had been slaughtered is tied. At the end of this last farewell address, the fowl is thrown into the air towards the entrance of the compound and then the corpse is carried to the grave.[30]This is always the most emotionally charged moment and usually accompanied with great wailing and crying as the deceased finally proceeds on the last journey.

All the forgoing rituals undertaken to give the deceased a befitting burial were necessary to qualify him for veneration or worship after death. Ancestral worship is cherished because not everybody who died in Izhi land would qualify to be venerated. Ancestors are custodians of public morality and traditional laws and norms and only those who lived clean and honest lives when they were alive could qualify to be regarded as an ancestor. Those who lived wickedly and died shameful deaths were never qualified and thus exempted from recognition or veneration as an ancestor. In Igbo land generally, ancestors were people who lived good and transparent lives, and who died in traditionally and socially accepted ways, and who received befitting burials. In order to underscore the importance of transparent living in the attainment of this status, the elders, before interment,

would normally stand before the remains of the deceased ancestor and make prayers as follows, recalling his good deeds while he was alive:

> Your death gave us rude shock for we can never be tired of you. You have been a lover of peace and friend to everyone. Look at us whom you left, who can do those things that you used to do? As you go, remember that you were born into this family and that your foreskin was buried in this family. We know that you are going to come back very soon. Do not waste time! Our ancestors, we thank you for sending him to us; when he comes back, may he be more helpful.[31]

Hindrances to Befitting Burial of an Aged Man/Woman

In Izhi culture and tradition, there are many factors that can hinder the dead from receiving a befitting burial. If a person died childless, he or she would not be given a befitting burial irrespective of his or her age at the time of death. The person may have been married but the failure to produce offspring(s) would make him unqualified to receive a befitting burial. Such people are usually buried in the evil forest or bad bush known locally as *ochieja.* This is a wasteland specifically designated for such use. Such person is never buried with new clothes; is buried face downwards and there is never any funeral ceremony-only a goat may be slaughtered and eaten outside the home. Their property or belongings are always carried to

the evil forest along with their corpses and heaped on their graves. The reason is to erase any memory of such person as it is regarded as unpleasant. At their burial, the elders lament and regret that the person lived and left the world without contributing any offspring. They then charge him or her to go and come back responsible and a useful person *laa dje agbazita abya*. This category of dead people does not merit veneration or mention during prayers by the living relatives but rather regarded as evil fugitive spirits *ejo maa* or *obuta-uswe.*

Those who died of some kinds of diseases are not also given befitting or proper burial. Such diseases include smallpox (*igbogbo)* or cholera. Part of the reason was the contagious nature of those diseases. Those who committed suicide are equally not given befitting burials. They are usually buried on the spot where they hanged themselves out there in the bush. Those who drowned are also not qualified for befitting burial. They are buried at the bank of the stream or river where they drowned (*ogbu-ngele*). For this type, it is assumed that if the corpse is buried at home, his or her children would also die of drowning. In the case of drowning however, the children of the deceased are allowed to do his or her funeral ceremony after one year.[32]

Conclusion

The Izhi do not see death as the extinction of life but as a departure from the physical world to another (the spirit world). That is, the deceased only simply moved on to join other departed ones in the land of the spirit. They believe

that death is a continuation of the life of the deceased in another sphere and as such they do everything during burial to equip the dead with all that is needed for a great life in the place beyond. The Izhi also conceive of death as the embarking on a far journey which requires necessary items or resources in order to sustain the journey. This was why during the pre-colonial period, men, especially influential ones, got buried with their slaves in order that the slaves would serve them in the land of the dead. The Izhi people also believe in reincarnation. This is a major reason why families strive to give befitting burials to their deserving dead. They do so in order to, among other reasons, convince them to come back to their families. In short, those who could not give befitting burial to their father or mother are culturally forbidden from partaking in the burial rights of another person as it is believed that the spirit of such person's dead relative which was not given proper burial could strike the individual dead instantly. The various rituals surrounding death and burial in Izhi underscores the cosmology and deep rooted belief of the people in life after death.

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PROMOTING ETHICAL AND VALUES OF EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This study investigated the ethical and value of education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study comprised 267 public secondary school principals, and data were collected using a validated structured questionnaire as the instrument for gathering information. The instrument was subjected to a pilot test which was administered on 20 principals in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient values of 0.80, 0.88 and 0.85 for Sections A to C respectively with a general reliability co-efficient of 0.84. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to analyse data for the study. The findings of the study revealed that ethical and value education is perceived as inadequate in Anambra State, with issues such as corruption, societal influence, and insufficient resources hindering its effective implementation. Despite these challenges, strategies such as policy formulation, curriculum revision, and better monitoring were identified as key to improving ethical education. The study also found no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female principals regarding the state, challenges, and

strategies for ethical education. Based on the findings, it is recommended that both the government and educational stakeholders take urgent steps to strengthen the integration of ethical and value education in the secondary school curriculum to contribute to sustainable national development.

Keywords: Ethical Education, Value Education, Secondary Schools, Sustainable Development, Challenges, Strategies.

IntroductionThe concept of sustainable development has evolved over centuries. Its early roots can be traced back to 17th-century Europe, where concerns about deforestation led to discussions on sustainable forest management (Whitfield, 2015). However, the modern articulation of sustainable development emerged in the 20th century. A significant milestone was the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, which brought global attention to environmental issues. The concept gained further prominence with the 1987 Brundtland Report, officially titled Our Common Future, which defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), in Whitfield, 2015). This definition was central to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, also known as the Earth

Summit, which established action plans and strategies for sustainable development.

Ecological economist Herman Daly advocated for a steady-state economy, where resource consumption is balanced with the Earth's ecological limits.He argued that continuous economic growth is incompatible with environmental sustainability and proposed measures like resource caps and ecological tax reforms (Daly, 1990). Development economist Jeffrey Sachs emphasized the importance of integrating economic, social and environmental objectives.He played a key role in formulating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advocating for a holistic approach to address global challenges like poverty, inequality and climate change (Sachs, 2015). Building upon these perspectives, sustainable national development can be defined as a holistic approach to national progress that harmonizes economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that development meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. Furthermore, sustainable development can be defined as a dynamic process of positive socio-economic change that meets present human needs while preserving ecological systems and natural resources for future generations. It represents an integrated approach to development that simultaneously addresses economic viability, social equity, and environmental sustainability through participatory governance, ethical resource management, and intergenerational responsibility. Rather than prioritizing short-term economic gains at the expense of

environmental health or social cohesion, sustainable development seeks to harmonize these dimensions through innovative policies, technologies, and social arrangements that enhance human wellbeing while respecting planetary boundaries. Importantly, sustainable development is not a fixed end state but an adaptive process requiring continuous learning, stakeholder engagement, and responsiveness to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Nigeria's efforts toward achieving sustainable development are shaped by a challenging environment marked by economic instability, governance issues, and widespread social disparities. Despite these obstacles, the country has shown a strong dedication to sustainability through several policy frameworks. Notably, Nigeria has aligned its development strategies with international sustainability goals, particularly through its involvement in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023–2027 (Osagie-Jacobs, 2025). This initiative reflects a partnership between Nigeria and global stakeholders to promote sustainable development in line with both national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).Despite these policy frameworks, Nigeria faces several interconnected challenges in implementing sustainable development. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2022) stated that the economic setback experienced when crude oil prices crashed in early 2016 significantly reduced government funds available for financing sustainable development initiatives. Inadequate coordination among government agencies, policy

inconsistency, and implementation gaps undermine sustainable development efforts (Osagie-Jacobs, 2025).

The need for strengthened data systems for evidence-based planning and monitoring has been identified as a priority area requiring enhanced collaboration. Persistent poverty, inequality, and inadequate access to basic services such as education, healthcare, and clean water impede progress toward sustainable development goals (the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2022). These social challenges make it difficult to achieve balanced development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. A critical but often overlooked factor influencing sustainable development outcomes in Nigeria is the ethical dimension, particularly regarding moral and values education. The country currently faces numerous challenges stemming from moral deficits, including youth restiveness, juvenile delinquency, drug addiction, sexual promiscuity, extortion, bribery, and corruption. These issues represent significant obstacles to sustainable development as they undermine social cohesion, good governance, and economic progress. The absence of moral values training among learners contributes to these challenges, with educational institutions at all levels failing to adequately emphasize character development alongside academic achievement (Pam et al., 2024)t. Despite the importance of ethical and value education, scholars in the field have frequently turned a blind eye to this subject, and those who have attempted research in this area have encountered resistance from both policy formulators and practitioners.

Ethical and value education are increasingly acknowledged as vital components for fostering national development and enhancing social cohesion in Nigeria. These educational approaches serve as foundational mechanisms that instill moral judgment, empathy, and a sense of civic responsibility in individuals, thereby shaping them into conscientious citizens capable of contributing positively to societal growth. As Nigeria grapples with multifaceted socio-economic and political challenges, the emphasis on ethical and value-based instruction becomes not just relevant but necessary in cultivating a culture of integrity, tolerance, and accountability.

Educational ethics is a specialised field, akin to bioethics, which deals with the complex moral questions arising from educational policy and practice. According to Levinson (2023), educational ethics provides theoretical and practical tools that help educators and policymakers navigate and apply ethical principles in their work. It fosters a nuanced understanding of the implications of educational decisions, ensuring that teaching practices and policies align with values of fairness and justice. Ethical education goes further to engage students with a range of worldviews, moral dilemmas, and ethical decision-making processes. Blackrock Educate Together (2025) defined ethical education as educational approach that encourages learners to critically explore societal issues, reflect on the development of their own moral beliefs, and understand the ethical dimensions of personal and collective actions. The objective is to nurture students

who can think critically and act ethically, thus contributing meaningfully to their communities.

Value education, on the other hand, is defined by several scholars and institutions as the process through which individuals internalise societal values and norms. Powney et al. (2025) defined value education as an activity that helps people articulate their moral beliefs, evaluate the impact of values on personal and social well-being, and adjust their behaviours accordingly. Another definition highlights that value education initiates young people into the moral and social frameworks necessary for functioning effectively in society (Pam et al., 2024). Patil (2018) defined value education as encompassing all educational processes through which individuals develop desirable behavioural patterns and moral reasoning aligned with societal expectations. The Altera Institute (2025) further explains that value education is about instilling fundamental virtues such as honesty, integrity, and respect, equipping students with the tools to make ethical choices in their lives.

In Nigeria, scholars and practitioners assert that embedding ethical and value education into school curricula is indispensable for national transformation (John-Nelson et al., 2025). It is widely believed that these educational strands can address widespread problems such as corruption, indiscipline, and unethical conduct in both public and private spheres. Ethical and value education is seen not only as a means of individual character development but also as a crucial strategy for societal renewal, guiding both leadership and citizenship

towards constructive engagement in national affairs (Ike & Onyia, 2024).

Furthermore, value education plays a critical role in promoting national unity and social harmony in Nigeria. By fostering an understanding of cultural norms, traditions, and collective values, it helps young Nigerians cultivate respect for diversity, empathy, and a strong sense of national identity. These attributes are especially important in a multi-ethnic, religiously diverse society where unity and mutual respect are essential for peace and progress. Ultimately, ethical and value education are not peripheral to development; they are core instruments for equipping individuals to navigate societal complexities and contribute to a just and prosperous nation. The implementation of value-based education in Nigeria, as outlined in the National Policy on Education, has been largely ineffective due to several factors. One of the primary issues is the erosion of the value system. According to Shobha and Kala (2015), a value system organizes individuals' beliefs, goals, interests, and standards of behviour, which they hold dear. In traditional African societies, there was a strong emphasis on community living, and values such as respect for elders, dignity of labor, patriotism, self-reliance, and hospitality were highly cherished (Avoseh in Nwafor, 2022). However, in contemporary Nigeria, these values have steadily eroded, and there has been a significant shift towards subjective and relative value systems (Nwafor, 2022). This shift has had serious implications for education, especially in the teaching of values to young people. Ike and Onyia (2024) opined that the decline in

societal values is mirrored in the educational system, which reflects the broader moral decay present in society. Another critical factor contributing to the failure of value-based education in Nigeria is poor parental upbringing. The family plays an essential role in character formation and the transmission of societal values. Parents or caregivers introduce children to societal standards and virtues, which help children, internalize these values and form their moral compass. Unfortunately, many parents have neglected this responsibility, with some providing minimal guidance in terms of values education, as observed by Duban and Aydogu (2016). This lack of parental engagement in value and ethical education significantly hampers the development of children's moral character and their understanding of societal norms. This has increased call for promoting mapping out measures for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools.

Ethical and value reorientation in education is crucial for national development and improved productivity. To foster the desired behvioural change in society, it is essential that both Federal and State governments, along with curriculum planners, address the deteriorating state of ethics and values. This can be achieved by redesigning school curricula to emphasize virtues such as respect for others, human dignity, honesty, rule of law, morality, hard work, self-discipline, non-violence, and cooperation. These values should be embedded as foundational elements of socialization and cultural learning, supported by effective teaching strategies. There is also a pressing need to retrain teachers through workshops so they are

better equipped to promote ethical awareness and value systems, given the central role of schools in knowledge transmission (John-Nelson et al., 2025; Walia, 2022). Incorporating ethics and value education in schools enables students to reflect on the moral implications of their decisions. Gardelli, et. al. in Nwafor (2022) provided three key reasons for this: the socialization argument, which views ethics as essential for shaping responsible citizens; the quality of life argument, which sees ethical education as a way to guide students toward living morally upright lives; and the tool argument, which suggests that ethics education enhances academic performance across other subjects (Ike & Onyia, 2024). Beyond the classroom, broader societal reorientation is necessary. The mentality of individuals, communities, and society at large should be reshaped towards ethical living, a task that can be championed by agencies such as the National Orientation Agency and supported by the media (Ekeh, 2019). Additionally, ethical and value education should be promoted at home, in places of worship, and during cultural events, reinforcing these principles across all aspects of daily life (Nwafor, 2022). Finally, appropriate punishment for those who violate societal values is essential to discourage unethical behviour and reinforce the importance of moral conduct.

Gender plays a significant role in shaping the experiences and outcomes of ethical and value education in Nigerian secondary schools. Understanding how gender influences students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards moral education is critical for designing inclusive and effective programmes that foster ethical consciousness

and social responsibility among all students. Studies conducted in Nigerian secondary schools reveal nuanced insights into the role of gender in ethical and value education. Ajogbeje (2023) stated that both male and female students showed similar levels of knowledge and behavioral responses to moral education programmes, indicating that gender alone does not predict receptiveness or ethical behavior outcomes in moral sensitization efforts. However, some research contrasts this finding by showing that female students often score higher in character knowledge, attitudes, and competences related to ethical education compared to male students (Hambali, as cited in Ajogbeje, 2023). This suggests that girls may be more receptive to ethical teachings, possibly due to socialization patterns emphasizing conformity and relational values. Gender differences also manifest in the types of social vices students engage in. For instance, male students are more frequently involved in physical fights, while female students may be more involved in bullying behaviors (Ajogbeje, 2023). This highlights the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in ethical education that address specific behavioural tendencies. However, these views have not been empirically ascertained in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It is against this background that the researchers investigated ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem The escalating moral decay in Nigeria, particularly evident in Anambra State, poses a significant threat to sustainable national development.

This moral decline is manifest in the increasing crime rates, unwarranted killings, and a pervasive culture of corruption. The glorification of wealth, often achieved through illicit means, has further exacerbated criminal activities, undermining societal values and hindering progress. Despite efforts by the Anambra State Government, such as the enactment of the Anambra State Homeland Security Law 2025 to combat ritual killings and fraudulent spiritual practices, the situation persists. Initiatives like the promotion of the slogan "Aka Aja JaNaebute Onu Mmanu Mmanu," which emphasizes the importance of hard work, have been introduced to counteract the prevailing culture of quick wealth. However, these measures have yet to yield substantial changes in societal attitudes. The educational system, particularly at the secondary school level, plays a pivotal role in shaping the ethical and value framework of the youth. Re-engineering the curriculum to prioritize ethical and value education is imperative. Secondary education serves as a critical stage in character formation, and integrating comprehensive moral education can equip students with the necessary tools to resist negative societal influences and contribute positively to national development. It is against this background that the researchers investigated ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study The main purpose of the study was to investigate ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study:

1. Ascertained the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Investigate the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.
3. Examine the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What are the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State?
3. What are the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State?

HypothesesThe following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals

on the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State.

2. There is no significant no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.
3. There is no significant no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

MethodologyResearch Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. This design was deemed appropriate as it allows for the collection of data from a large population to describe the current state, identify challenges, and propose strategies for promoting ethical and value education.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised 267 public secondary school principals in Anambra State. According to the Anambra State Ministry of Education, there are 267public secondary schools.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study comprised 267 public secondary school principals. The entire population of public secondary school principals was sample because it was manageable.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled "Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools for Sustainable National Development Questionnaire" (EVESSSNDQ). The questionnaire was structured into three sections corresponding to the study's objectives: Section A contains 10 items on the **state of ethical and value education** in secondary schools. Section B contains 10 items on the **challenges hindering ethical and value education** in secondary schools. Section C contains 10 items on **strategies for promoting ethical and value education** in secondary schools. The questionnaire utilized a 4-point rating scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Face and content validity was established through expert reviews from educational professionals and practitioners, ensuring the instrument accurately measured the intended constructs. The instrument was subjected to a pilot test which was administered on 20 principals in public secondary schools in Enugu State. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient values of 0.80, 0.88 and 0.85 for Sections A to C respectively with a general reliability co-efficient of 0.84, indicating high internal consistency.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process involved obtaining ethical clearance from the Anambra State Ministry of Education and permission from the selected schools. Trained research assistants administered the EVESSQ to the respondents during scheduled school hours, ensuring minimal disruption to academic activities. The assistants provided instructions on completing the questionnaire and addressed any queries from the participants. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately to ensure a high response rate. Out of 267 copies of questionnaire administered 239 copies were collected in good condition and used for the analysis of data.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaires were coded and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Mean and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. In analyzing the mean, any item between 2.50 and above was considered "agree." Conversely, any item with mean less than 2.50 was regarded as "disagree." The hypotheses were tested using t-test. In testing the hypotheses t-test was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance, comparing the mean responses of male and female principals on the various aspects of ethical and value education. All analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

Results

Research Question One

What is the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Respondents Mean Responses on the State of Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools in Anambra State (N=239)

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Ethical and value education is adequately integrated into the secondary school curriculum.	2.45	0.85	Disagree
2	Teachers effectively model ethical behaviour in their daily interactions with students.	2.60	0.90	Agree
3	Students demonstrate a strong understanding of ethical principles and values.	2.35	0.80	Disagree

4	There is a consistent emphasis on moral education across all subjects taught in schools.	2.50	0.85	Agree
5	School leadership actively promotes ethical standards and values within the school community.	2.55	0.88	Agree
6	Parents and guardians collaborate with schools to reinforce ethical and value education.	2.30	0.75	Disagree
7	Students engage in community service activities as part of their education.	2.40	0.80	Disagree
8	There are adequate resources and materials to support the teaching of ethical and value education.	2.20	0.70	Disagree
9	Ethical and value education is evaluated	2.25	0.72	Disagree

	regularly to measure its effectiveness.			
10	There is a clear policy framework guiding the implementation of ethical and value education in schools.	2.50	0.80	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**2.41**		**Disagree**

The data presented in Table 1 indicates that the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State is perceived as inadequate, with a cluster mean of 2.40. This suggests that respondents disagree with the statements regarding the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State. The standard deviations ranging from 0.70 to 0.90 indicate a high level of consensus among respondents

Research Question Two

What are the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State?

Table 2: Respondents Mean Responses on the Challenges Hindering Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools for Sustainable National Development in Anambra State (N=239)

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	SD	Remarks
11	There is inadequate training for teachers on ethical and value education.	3.10	0.92	Agree
12	The curriculum does not adequately emphasize ethical and value education.	3.20	0.85	Agree
13	Lack of cooperation between schools, families, and communities hinders the effective delivery of value education.	3.05	0.80	Agree
14	There are insufficient resources (e.g., teaching materials) to promote ethical and value education.	3.25	0.90	Agree
15	Students are often influenced by negative societal values that undermine the teaching of ethical values.	3.35	0.87	Agree
16	There is a lack of government policies that support the	3.10	0.80	Agree

	implementation of ethical and value education.			
17	School management does not prioritize ethical and value education as part of the curriculum.	3.00	0.88	Agree
18	Students' poor socio-economic background affects their ability to fully participate in ethical education.	2.95	0.85	Agree
19	Corruption in the education sector hinder the promotion of value-based education.	3.40	0.90	Agree
20	There is inadequate time allocated to teaching ethical and value education within the school schedule.	3.15	0.85	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.16**		**Agree**

Data inTable 2 shows that respondents generally agree that items 11-20 hinder ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State with mean ratings ranging between 2.95 and 3.40. This suggests that the challenges are perceived as significant barriers to achieving sustainable national development through

education. The standard deviations range from 0.80 to 0.92, indicating a relatively high level of consensus among respondents regarding these challenges. The cluster mean of 3.16 indicate that corruption in the education sector hinder the promotion of value-based education, students are often influenced by negative societal values that undermine the teaching of ethical values, there are insufficient resources (e.g., teaching materials) to promote ethical and value education and the curriculum does not adequately emphasize ethical and value education among others are the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Research Question Three

What are the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State?

Table 3: Respondents Mean Responses on the Strategies for Promoting Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools for Sustainable National Development in Anambra State (N=239)

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
21	Teachers should be provided with regular training on ethical and value education.	3.40	0.88	Agree
22	The curriculum should be revised to incorporate more comprehensive ethical and value education content.	3.55	0.82	Agree
23	Schools should collaborate with parents and community leaders to promote ethical and value education.	3.50	0.85	Agree
24	There should be more resources and teaching materials available for teaching ethical and value education.	3.45	0.83	Agree

25	Government should introduce policies that promote the inclusion of ethical education in school programmes.	3.60	0.75	Agree
26	Schools should encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities that promote ethical values.	3.30	0.90	Agree
27	Students should be taught to respect cultural values and norms as part of ethical education.	3.40	0.84	Agree
28	There should be regular monitoring and evaluation of ethical and value education programmes in schools.	3.50	0.80	Agree

29	Teachers should integrate ethical and value education into all subjects taught in secondary schools.	3.45	0.85	Agree
30	Community leaders should be involved in promoting ethical values among secondary school students.	3.35	0.88	Agree
	Cluster Mean	**3.45**		**Agree**

Data inTable 3 demonstrates that respondents agree on items 21-30 as the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State with mean ratings ranging between 3.30 and 3.60. This indicates that the respondents see these strategies as essential to improving ethical and value education for sustainable national development. The standard deviations range from 0.75 to 0.90, showing a consistent agreement among respondents regarding these proposed strategies. The cluster mean of 3.45 showed that Government should introduce policies that promote the inclusion of ethical education in school programmes, The curriculum should be revised to incorporate more comprehensive ethical and value education content, there should be regular monitoring and evaluation of ethical and

value education programmes in schools and teachers should integrate ethical and value education into all subjects taught in secondary schools among others are the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Summary of t-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Male and Female Principals on the State of Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools in Anambra State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male Principals	98	2.26	0.62	237	0.68	0.497	Not Significant

Data in Table 4 shows that female principals (N = 141) had a slightly higher mean score (M = 2.31, SD = 0.57)

Female Principals	141	2.31	0.57

than male principals (N = 98, M = 2.26, SD = 0.62) regarding the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools. However, the calculated t-value of 0.68 with a corresponding p-value of 0.497 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value (0.497) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained. This means that there is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of male and female principals on the state of ethical and value education in Anambra State secondary schools.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Male and Female Principals on the Challenges Hindering Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools for Sustainable National Development in Anambra State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male Principals	98	3.34	0.58				
				237	1.02	0.309	Not Significant
Female Principals	141	3.41	0.53				

Information in Table 5 reveals that female principals (N = 141) had a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.41, SD = 0.53) compared to male principals (N = 98, M = 3.34, SD = 0.58) regarding the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools. However, the calculated t-value is 1.02 with a p-value of 0.309, which exceeds the 0.05 level of significance. Since the p-value (0.309) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant no significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals on the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test Analysis on the Mean Responses of Male and Female Principals on the Strategies for Promoting Ethical and Value Education in Secondary Schools for Sustainable National Development in Anambra State

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male Principals	98	3.66	0.51	237	1.27	0.206	Not Significant
FemalePrincipals	141	3.74	0.47				

Data inTable 6 shows that female principals (N = 141) reported a slightly higher mean score (M = 3.74, SD = 0.47) than male principals (N = 98, M = 3.66, SD = 0.51) regarding strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools. However, the calculated t-value is 1.27 with a corresponding p-value of 0.206. Since the p-value (0.206) is greater than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of male and female principals on the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State is perceived as inadequate. This perception may be attributed to two major factors: firstly, the insufficient integration of ethical and moral content into the secondary school curriculum, and secondly, the lack of consistent and structured implementation of value-based programs across schools. One reason for this inadequacy lies in the limited emphasis placed on ethical and moral instruction in the current school curriculum. Although the Nigerian National Policy on Education highlights the importance of character development and national values, actual

classroom practices often fall short of this ideal. This is in agreement with Nwafor (2022) who revealed that education is a reflection of society, and when the value system in a society deteriorates, its educational institutions inevitably mirror that moral decay. This suggests that the challenges facing ethical education in schools are symptomatic of broader societal issues such as corruption, dishonesty, and moral relativism. A second reason is the inconsistency in the implementation of value education programmes, which often suffer from poor teacher training and lack of instructional resources. Many teachers may not be adequately equipped to deliver ethical education effectively or may not see it as a priority amidst other academic demands. Duban and Aydogu (2016) argued that moral education must be intentional and structured to achieve behavioural change, and that its success depends heavily on the preparedness and commitment of educators. Without targeted teacher development and support mechanisms, the efforts to promote ethical consciousness among students remain fragmented and ineffective. This finding aligns with the position of John-Nelson et al. (2025) who observed that the Nigerian value system has become largely subjective and relative, rather than objective and universal. They stressed that this moral ambiguity influences how young people interpret and internalise societal norms. Furthermore, Eke (2019) highlighted the need for moral skills training that addresses specific behavioural gaps, noting that while such interventions are beneficial, they must be consistently applied to make a significant impact.Furthermore, the findings also showed that there was no significant difference in the opinions of male and

female principals regarding the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State. This result suggests a shared perspective among school leaders, regardless of gender, about the inadequacy of moral and ethical instruction within the school system. Regardless of gender, principals deal with cases of student indiscipline, moral lapses, and the absence of structured ethical programmes, which gives them a common ground of experience. Ajogbeje (2023) opined that both male and female school leaders may recognise similar patterns of ethical lapses and challenges among students, leading to aligned perceptions on the matter.

The findings of the study revealed that several challenges hinder the effective promotion of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State. Among these challenges, corruption within the education sector emerged as a significant barrier. This includes issues such as bribery, favoritism, and the manipulation of examination results, which directly contradict the moral values schools aim to instil. When students observe such practices within the very system meant to teach integrity, they are likely to adopt the same unethical behaviours, thereby weakening the impact of value-based education. Additionally, students are often influenced by prevailing negative societal values that glorify materialism, dishonesty, and shortcuts to success. These societal influences conflict with the ethical principles taught in schools, creating a moral dissonance that undermines the effectiveness of classroom instruction. This finding is in agreement with Duban and Aydogu (2016) who observed that when societal norms and school values are

misaligned, students are more likely to conform to the more dominant social values, which are often ethically questionable. In the same vein, Matthew and Obiesili (2022) observed that in this materialistic world which values only worldly possessions and demeans the essence of character, it needs to be asked how one can develop and maintain self-awareness and self-consciousness during the course of our life. Shobha and Kala (2015) argue that for value education to be effective, it must be embedded explicitly within the curriculum and not treated as an afterthought. Without clear content, objectives, and strategies for ethical instruction, teachers may lack direction, and students may not see the importance of the subject.

The findings of the study also revealed that **there is no statistically significant difference in the mean responses of male and female principals** on the challenges hindering ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State. This result may be attributed to the fact that both male and female principals operate within the same educational environment, face similar systemic challenges, and witness the same socio-cultural issues influencing students. Therefore, their shared experiences likely shape a common understanding of the barriers affecting the effective promotion of ethical and value education. Another possible explanation is that the challenges identified—such as inadequate curriculum emphasis, lack of instructional resources, societal value distortion, and corruption—are pervasive and not specific to one gender's administrative perspective. These

systemic issues cut across all schools and impact administrators equally, regardless of gender. The finding is in line with Ajogbeje (2023) who reported that perceptions of moral education effectiveness and the challenges it faces were consistently reported across gender lines in secondary schools. Similarly, Eke (2019) found that the barriers to implementing value-based education were widely recognised by educators of both sexes, supporting the idea that the root of the problem lies not in leadership bias, but in system-wide structural inadequacies.

The findings of the study revealed several strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State, with the aim of fostering sustainable national development. These strategies include the introduction of policies by the government that promote the inclusion of ethical education in school programmes, the revision of the curriculum to incorporate more comprehensive content on ethical and value education, regular monitoring and evaluation of ethical and value education programmes in schools, and the integration of ethical and value education into all subjects taught in secondary schools. One key reason for these strategies is the recognition that ethical and value education cannot be an isolated subject but should be infused across the curriculum. The integration of these values into every subject is crucial for ensuring that students receive consistent moral and ethical lessons that are relevant to their daily lives and future roles in society. This approach can help students internalize ethical principles and make them part of their overall educational

experience. Additionally, the introduction of policies by the government and the revision of the curriculum are essential to institutionalizing ethical education. As the study found, without structural support from government policies and a curriculum that prioritizes ethics, ethical and value education may remain marginal in secondary schools, lacking the resources and focus it needs to thrive. Ensuring that ethical education is embedded into the national educational framework will signal its importance to both educators and students alike. The importance of regular monitoring and evaluation cannot be overstated. This ensures that ethical education programmes are being effectively implemented and that any issues in their delivery can be addressed in a timely manner. Without proper monitoring, even well-intentioned programmes can falter, and students may not receive the intended ethical education outcomes. The finding is in agreement with John-Nelson et al. (2025) who emphasized that a cohesive approach, where ethical values are interwoven into various subjects, can significantly enhance the moral development of students. Similarly, Walia (2022) suggested that curriculum reform and policy changes are crucial for embedding ethical education in schools and ensuring its success. The finding of the study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean responses of male and female principals regarding the strategies for promoting ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State. This indicates that both male and female principals share similar views on the strategies that need to be adopted to enhance ethical and value education in secondary schools. One possible reason for this finding is that the importance of promoting

ethical and value education is widely recognized, regardless of gender. Both male and female principals, being in leadership positions, are likely to be equally aware of the pressing need for ethical reforms in education to foster responsible citizenship and sustainable development. The fact that they do not differ significantly in their opinions may also reflect a collective understanding that the challenges related to ethical education in schools transcend gender and are more influenced by systemic factors, such as government policies, school resources and curriculum design, rather than individual gender perspectives.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools is perceived as inadequate, largely due to factors such as corruption in the education sector, negative societal influences, insufficient resources, and a curriculum that does not adequately address ethical education. These challenges hinder the effective implementation of value-based education, which is crucial for shaping responsible citizens and fostering sustainable national development. Despite these challenges, the study found that both male and female principals held similar views on the importance of ethical and value education and the strategies necessary for its promotion. Strategies identified include the revision of the

curriculum to include more comprehensive ethical content, the introduction of policies that prioritize ethical education, and the integration of ethical values across all subjects. Furthermore, regular monitoring and evaluation were highlighted as essential for ensuring the effectiveness of ethical education programs. The lack of significant gender differences in the responses of principals suggests that the promotion of ethical and value education is viewed as a collective responsibility, transcending gender distinctions. This reinforces the idea that both male and female leaders recognize the importance of ethical education in secondary schools and are committed to implementing strategies that will contribute to the moral development of students. It is therefore imperative that measures are put in place to improve the state of ethical and value education in secondary schools for sustainable national development in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the promotion of ethical and value education in secondary schools in Anambra State for sustainable national development:

1. Government at all levels should introduce and implement policies that mandate the inclusion of ethical and value education in school curricula. These policies should emphasize the importance

of ethical values such as honesty, integrity, hard work, respect for others, and responsibility.

2. Government at all levels in collaboration with its educational supervising agencies should revise the secondary school curriculum to integrate more comprehensive and structured ethical and value education content. This should include the teaching of moral principles, societal values, and the practical application of ethical decision-making in daily life.
3. Government at all levels and educational authorities should allocate adequate resources for the teaching of ethical and value education. This includes providing sufficient teaching materials, training teachers on ethical instruction, and ensuring that schools have the necessary infrastructure to support these educational programs.
4. Principals of public secondary schools should organize regular training and sensitization for teachers on the importance of ethical and value education. Professional development programs should include strategies for integrating ethical values into all subjects taught in secondary schools, ensuring that every lesson contributes to the moral development of students.

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DAUGHTER RETENTION AMONG THE IGBO AND CHINESE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This comparative study explores daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese, examining the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing parental decisions. Using a mixed-methods approach, we analyze survey data and interview responses from Igbo and Chinese families. Our findings reveal significant differences in daughter retention rates and underlying reasons. The Igbo culture's patrilineal system and emphasis on male inheritance contribute to a higher rate of daughter retention for marriage purposes. In contrast, China's one-child policy and son preference have historically driven lower daughter retention rates. However, recent policy changes and shifting societal attitudes have led to increased investment in daughters' education and well-being. This study contributes to our understanding of daughter retention in diverse cultural contexts and highlights the importance of considering local values and practices in policy-making.

Introduction

Daughter retention is a complex issue influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors. This comparative study explores daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese, two cultures with distinct values and practices. We examine the factors driving parental decisions and discuss the implications for policy and practice.

This paper provides a comprehensive overview of daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese, highlighting the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing parental decisions. By examining the differences and similarities between these two cultures, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex issues surrounding daughter retention and develop more effective policies and interventions.

Statement of problems of the study

Here are some potential statements of problems for the study on daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese:

Potential Statements of Problems

1. Cultural Significance: "Despite the cultural significance of daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies, there is a lack of understanding about the factors influencing this practice and its implications for daughters and families."

2. Comparative Analysis: "There is a need for a comparative analysis of daughter retention practices in Igbo and Chinese cultures to identify similarities and differences and inform policy and practice."

3. Daughter Retention Rates: "The rates of daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies are not well-documented, and there is a need for research to understand

the factors contributing to these rates and their implications."

4. Impact on Daughters: "The impact of daughter retention on daughters' lives, including their education, health, and well-being, is not well-understood, and there is a need for research to inform policy and practice."

Aims and Objectives for the Study

Here are some potential aims and objectives for the study on daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese:

Aims

1. Understanding Daughter Retention: To explore and understand the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. Comparative Analysis: To conduct a comparative analysis of daughter retention practices in Igbo and Chinese cultures, identifying similarities and differences.

3. Informing Policy and Practice: To inform policy and practice related to daughter retention, education, health, and well-being in Igbo and Chinese societies.

Objectives

1. Identify Cultural and Social Factors: To identify the cultural and social factors influencing daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. Compare Daughter Retention Practices: To compare daughter retention practices in Igbo and Chinese cultures, highlighting similarities and differences.

3. Examine Impact on Daughters: To examine the impact of daughter retention on daughters' lives, including their education, health, and well-being.

4. Develop Recommendations: To develop recommendations for policy and practice related to daughter retention, education, health, and well-being in Igbo and Chinese societies.

Research Hypotheses

Some potential research hypotheses to guide the study could be:

1. Daughter retention rates differ significantly between Igbo and Chinese societies due to cultural and social factors.

2. The impact of daughter retention on daughters' education and health outcomes varies between Igbo and Chinese cultures.

3. Cultural and social factors, such as patriarchal norms and son preference, influence daughter retention practices in both Igbo and Chinese societies.

By clearly defining the aims and objectives, the study can provide a focused direction for investigating daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese.

Research Questions

Some potential research questions to guide the study are:

1. What are the cultural and social factors influencing daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies?

2. How do daughter retention practices differ between Igbo and Chinese cultures, and what are the implications of these differences?

3. What are the rates of daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies, and what factors contribute to these rates?

4. What is the impact of daughter retention on daughters' lives, including their education, health, and well-being?

By identifying the statement of problems and research questions, the study can provide a clear direction for investigating daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese.

Theoretical Frameworks

1. **Patriarchal Theory**: This framework highlights the role of patriarchal systems in shaping daughter retention. In patrilineal societies like the Igbo culture, daughters are often seen as temporary members of their natal families, with their primary role being to marry into another family.

2. **Social Capital Theory**: This framework emphasizes the importance of social relationships and networks in shaping parental decisions. In both Igbo and Chinese

cultures, social capital plays a crucial role in determining daughter retention rates and underlying reasons.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining survey data with in-depth interviews. We collected survey data from Igbo and Chinese families, focusing on daughter retention rates and underlying reasons. Additionally, we conducted interviews with parents and community leaders to gain deeper insights into cultural values and practices. The interviews were through Whatsapp instant messages in case of Chinese and one-on-one for the Igbo.

Results

Our quantitative findings reveal significant differences in daughter retention rates between Igbo and Chinese families. The Igbo culture's emphasis on male inheritance and patrilineal system contributes to a higher rate of daughter retention for marriage purposes. In contrast, China's one-child policy and son preference have historically driven lower daughter retention rates. However, recent policy changes and shifting societal attitudes have led to increased investment in daughters' education and well-being.

Discussion

Our study highlights the importance of considering local values and practices in policy-making. The Igbo culture's

patrilineal system and emphasis on male inheritance require policies that address the specific needs of daughters in these families. Specifically, daughter retention among the Igbo is as a result of male pretence that allows elongation of family lineage and so, when a couple could not get a male child, they make arrangement to retain one of their daughters and permit her to stay and bear male children for the family. In doing this, the father of the house, informs his kinsmen of his plan to hand over his inheritance to his daughter, goes on to perform all rites as in marriage system after which, his daughter doubles as male child of the house and same time, wife giving her the right to choose any man outside their kinsmen that will take the responsibility of child creation without him, taking ownership of the child. In some cases, if the daughter after giving her family a male child, is free to marry while her child before marriage, remains that of her father to over from the father after death.

In contrast, China's shifting societal attitudes and policy changes offer opportunities for promoting daughter retention and investment in girls' education. We understand that before Chinese one child policy, when a family does not have a male child but is rich, such family goes to a poor family with many male child, marries the male child for one of her daughters, a case of reversal of patriarchal norms, where the woman takes on a more dominant role in the relationship and man assumes her family name. By doing that, the male child from the poor family, forfeits his family name and assumes the family name of his wife husband.

In another development, there is another marriage culture practiced by Mosuo people, a matrilineal society living in Yunnan Province, China. Here's what one needs to know about them:

The Society: The Mosuo society is known as the "Kingdom of Women" due to its unique matrilineal structure, where women play a central role in leadership, inheritance, and social structures. Property and family names are passed down through the female line.

The Woman's Role: The woman who takes the dominant role is called the “Ah mi”, or matriarch. She's the head of the household and has significant authority in decision-making.

The Man's Role: In a Mosuo "walking marriage," the man doesn't live with his partner and instead visits her at night. Children are raised in the mother's household and take her family name. The father may bring gifts to the mother's family, but he doesn't have a significant role in raising the children rather, the brothers to the woman do as they also go out to impregnate other women.

Relationships: Mosuo relationships are based on mutual affection, and partners can choose to end the relationship at any time. This practice is known as "tisese" or "walking marriage.”

Family Structure: Mosuo families are typically matrilineal, with women controlling finances and making important decisions. Men play a role in community events

and manual labor, but they don't hold the same level of authority as women.

The Mosuo people have a unique cultural heritage that values female agency and matrilineal traditions. Their society is a fascinating example of a different approach to family and relationships.

In the context of ensuring family lineage and inheritance, these cultural or historical contexts are relevant

Traditional Chinese Family Values: In traditional Chinese culture, family lineage and inheritance are significant, with a strong emphasis on male children carrying on the family name and legacy. This cultural preference for sons has historical roots in agrarian societies where males were valued for their economic contributions and support for aging parents.

Adoption and Family Lineage: Historically, Chinese families without male heirs might adopt a male child to carry on the family name and ensure lineage continuity. This practice highlights the importance of family lineage in Chinese culture.

Marriage and Family Arrangements: In some cases, families might arrange marriages for their children based on social, economic, or family considerations. These arrangements could involve families with multiple sons marrying into families without male heirs.

Some key aspects of Chinese family culture that might be relevant to the reason for this marriage include[3]:

Filial Piety: A core Confucian value emphasizing respect for one's parents and ancestors.

Family Continuity: The importance of continuing the family line through male offspring.

Social Hierarchy: Traditional Chinese society places significant emphasis on social hierarchy and family status.

Significances of the study

The significance of this comparative study on daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese can be understood from several perspectives:

Theoretical Significance

1. **Cultural Understanding**: The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the cultural values and practices that shape daughter retention in different societies.

2. **Theoretical Frameworks**: The research tests and refines theoretical frameworks, such as patriarchal theory and social capital theory, in the context of daughter retention.

Practical Significance

1**. Policy Development:** The study's findings can inform policy development aimed at promoting daughter retention and improving girls' lives in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. **Interventions:** The research can guide the design of interventions that address the specific needs of daughters in these cultures, such as education and healthcare programs.

3. **Community Engagement:** The study can facilitate community engagement and awareness about the importance of daughter retention and the value of girls in these societies.

Social Significance

1. **Promoting Gender Equality:** The research contributes to promoting gender equality by highlighting the importance of valuing and investing in girls' education, health, and well-being.

2. **Challenging Stereotypes:** The study challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese cultures, promoting a more nuanced understanding of these societies.

3. **Empowering Girls:** The research can empower girls and women in these societies by highlighting their value and importance in their families and communities.

Methodological Significance

1. **Mixed-Methods Approach:** The study demonstrates the effectiveness of a mixed-methods approach in understanding complex social phenomena like daughter retention.

2. **Cross-Cultural Comparison:** The research showcases the value of cross-cultural comparison in identifying similarities and differences in daughter retention practices.

By exploring the significance of this study, we can better understand its potential impact and contributions to the field of study.

Advantages of the practice in both cultures

The practice of daughter retention in both Igbo and Chinese cultures has several advantages:

Igbo Culture

1.Strengthening Family Ties: Daughter retention can strengthen family bonds and relationships, particularly between parents and daughters.

2.Cultural Preservation: Daughters play a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and traditions, and retaining them can help ensure the continuation of Igbo cultural practices. Such practice enhances inheritance and continuation of family lineage.

3.Economic Support: Daughters can provide economic support to their families, particularly in old age, and retaining them can ensure a sense of security for parents.

4.Emotional Support: Daughters can offer emotional support and care to their parents, which can be particularly important in times of need.

Chinese Culture

1. Filial Piety: Daughter retention can promote filial piety, a core value in Chinese culture, where children are expected to care for and support their parents.

2. Family Continuity: Daughters can contribute to family continuity and legacy, particularly in cases where sons are not present or able to fulfill this role.

3. Social Support: Daughters can provide social support and companionship to their parents, helping to alleviate loneliness and isolation.

4. Care giving: Daughters often take on care giving responsibilities for their parents, ensuring they receive the care and support they need.

Common Advantages

1. Intergenerational Relationships: Daughter retention can foster strong intergenerational relationships and bonds between parents and daughters.

2. Mutual Support: The practice can promote mutual support and care between parents and daughters, benefiting both parties.

3. Cultural Transmission: Daughters can play a key role in transmitting cultural values, traditions, and practices to future generations.

By examining the advantages of daughter retention in both Igbo and Chinese cultures, we can gain a deeper

understanding of the importance of this practice in these societies.

Disadvantages

The practice of daughter retention in both Igbo and Chinese cultures also has several disadvantages:

Igbo Culture

1. Patriarchal Limitations: The practice can reinforce patriarchal norms and limitations, where daughters are expected to prioritize family obligations over personal goals and aspirations.

2. Limited Opportunities: Daughters may face limited educational and economic opportunities, particularly if they are expected to prioritize family responsibilities.

3. Social Pressure: Families may face social pressure to retain daughters, potentially leading to feelings of obligation or guilt.

4. Restrictive Roles: Daughters may be expected to fulfill restrictive roles, such as care giving or domestic work, which can limit their autonomy and agency.

5. Health Risk: A retained faces a risk of contacting disease if she doesn't have only one for creation of male children for the family's life extension for which it is intended.

Chinese Culture

1. Son Preference: The practice can be influenced by son preference, where daughters are seen as less valuable or desirable than sons.

2. Limited Inheritance: Daughters may face limited inheritance rights, potentially leading to economic insecurity.

3. Social Stigma: Families may face social stigma if they do not have sons, potentially leading to feelings of shame or embarrassment.

4. Care giving Burden: Daughters may bear a disproportionate care giving burden, potentially impacting their physical and mental health.

Common Disadvantages

1. Gender Roles: The practice can reinforce traditional gender roles, potentially limiting daughters' autonomy and agency.

2. Societal Expectations: Families may face societal expectations to retain daughters, potentially leading to feelings of pressure or obligation.

3. Economic Burden: Daughters may be expected to contribute to the family economy, potentially impacting their educational and career opportunities.

4. Cultural Constraints: The practice can be influenced by cultural constraints, such as patriarchal norms or son preference, which can limit daughters' opportunities and agency.

By examining the disadvantages of daughter retention in both Igbo and Chinese cultures, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding this practice.

Conclusion

This comparative study contributes to our understanding of daughter retention in diverse cultural contexts. Our findings emphasize the need for context-specific policies and interventions that address the unique needs of daughters in different cultures. By recognizing the importance of local values and practices, policymakers can develop more effective strategies for promoting daughter retention and improving girls' lives.

Suggestions on the future of the study

Here are some potential suggestions for the future of the study on daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese:

Future Research Directions

1. In-Depth Analysis: Conduct in-depth analysis of specific aspects of daughter retention, such as education, health, or economic outcomes.

2. Comparative Studies: Conduct comparative studies with other cultures or societies to broaden the understanding of daughter retention practices.

3. Longitudinal Studies: Conduct longitudinal studies to examine changes in daughter retention practices over time.

4. Interdisciplinary Approaches: Incorporate interdisciplinary approaches, such as anthropology, sociology, or economics, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of daughter retention.

Policy and Practice Implications

1. **Informing Policy:** Use the study's findings to inform policy and practice related to daughter retention, education, health, and well-being.

2. **Community Engagement:** Engage with communities, policymakers, and practitioners to raise awareness about the importance of daughter retention and its implications.

3. **Developing Interventions:** Develop interventions aimed at promoting positive outcomes for daughters and families in Igbo and Chinese societies.

Methodological Advancements

1. **Mixed-Methods Approaches**: Continue to use mixed-methods approaches to capture the complexity of daughter retention practices.

2. **Innovative Data Collection Methods:** Explore innovative data collection methods, such as digital surveys or interviews, to reach a wider population.

3. **Collaboration:** Collaborate with researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to ensure the study's findings are translated into practice.

Potential Impact

1. **Improved Understanding:** The study can contribute to a deeper understanding of daughter retention practices and their implications.

2. **Informing Policy and Practice:** The study's findings can inform policy and practice related to daughter retention, education, health, and well-being.

3. **Promoting Positive Change:** The study can promote positive change by raising awareness about the importance of daughter retention and its implications.

By considering these suggestions, the study can have a lasting impact and contribute to a better understanding of daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese.

The impacts of the study

The study on daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese can have several impacts:

Academic Impact

1. Contribution to Literature: The study can contribute to the existing literature on daughter retention, family dynamics, and cultural practices.

2. **New Insights**: The study can provide new insights into the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies.

3. **Interdisciplinary Research:** The study can foster interdisciplinary research collaborations, bringing together scholars from various fields to explore daughter retention.

Policy Impact

1. **Informing Policy:** The study's findings can inform policy decisions related to daughter retention, education, health, and well-being.

2. **Promoting Positive Change**: The study can promote positive change by raising awareness about the importance of daughter retention and its implications.

3. **Evidence-Based Policy:** The study can provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders.

Social Impact

1. **Raising Awareness:** The study can raise awareness about the importance of daughter retention and its implications for daughters, families, and communities.

2. **Community Engagement:** The study can foster community engagement and dialogue about daughter retention practices and their impact.

3. **Empowering Daughters:** The study can empower daughters and families by highlighting the importance of education, health, and well-being.

Cultural Impact

1. **Cultural Understanding:** The study can promote cultural understanding and appreciation of daughter retention practices in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. **Preserving Cultural Heritage:** The study can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions related to daughter retention.

3. **Cross-Cultural Exchange:** The study can facilitate cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, promoting mutual understanding and respect.

By examining the potential impacts of the study, we can better understand its significance and potential contributions to various fields.

Its contributions to various fields

The study on daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese can make significant contributions to various fields:

Anthropology

1. **Cultural Understanding:** The study can contribute to a deeper understanding of cultural practices and traditions related to daughter retention in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. **Comparative Analysis:** The study can provide comparative insights into daughter retention practices across cultures, highlighting similarities and differences.

Sociology

1. **Family Dynamics:** The study can contribute to our understanding of family dynamics and relationships in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. **Social Change:** The study can examine the impact of social change on daughter retention practices and family relationships.

Education

1. **Education Outcomes:** The study can investigate the impact of daughter retention on education outcomes for daughters in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. **Informing Educational Policy:** The study's findings can inform educational policy and practice related to daughter retention and education.

Health

1. **Health Outcomes:** The study can examine the impact of daughter retention on health outcomes for daughters in Igbo and Chinese societies.

2. **Informing Health Policy:** The study's findings can inform health policy and practice related to daughter retention and health.

Policy Studies

1. **Informing Policy:** The study's findings can inform policy decisions related to daughter retention, education, health, and well-being.

2. **Evidence-Based Policy:** The study can provide evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and community leaders.

Cultural Studies

1. **Cultural Preservation:** The study can contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions related to daughter retention.

2. **Cross-Cultural Understanding:** The study can promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of daughter retention practices in Igbo and Chinese societies.

By making contributions to these fields, the study can have a lasting impact and promote a deeper understanding of daughter retention among the Igbo and Chinese.

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Hidden China GmbH - Description of the Mosuo Minority Wikipedia – Mosuo J-STAGE - online platform for Japanese academic journals

Studies:

Research on Mosuo's matrilineal society, walking marriages, and cultural practices Studies on the role of women, family structure, and economic decision-making in Mosuo society

APPLICATION OF ARTFIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE HUGH GOLDIE THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION AROCHUKWU, ABIA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized the educational landscape, offering unparalleled opportunities for enhanced academic experiences in higher institutions in Nigeria. This study investigated the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, Abia State. Objectives of the study included to: evaluate the level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, examine the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution. The study was anchored on technological determinism theory. Survey research method was adopted with questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The total populations of 226 respondents were used for the study. Census sampling technique was employed for the distribution of the questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using tables and simple percentage. The hypotheses were tested using Chi square.The findings revealed thatthe level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu is low.The study also found that the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution are enormous which

included personalized learning experience for students, enhanced teacher's productivity, improve students engagement, access to high quality educational resources for research and teaching, and data driven insights for continuous improvement and personal development. It further revealedthat AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu are: Adaptive Learning Platforms, Virtual Reality, Chatbots and Virtual Assistants, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, Natural Language Processing, Data Analytics and Learning. The researchers among other things recommended that Hugh Goldie institution should invest on the acquisition of sophisticated technological gadgets and software that will support the integrationof AI tools in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

Key Words: Application, Artificial Intelligence, Teaching, Learning

Background to the Study

Artificial intelligence has become the most rapidly developing technology that has transformed teaching and learning in the various tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The advent of artificial intelligence has revolutionized the way organizations carry out their activities, including educational institutions (Idoko and Peter, 2024).Lionel, Uzoegbu, Nwaigwe and Uchenna (2024) opine that artificial intelligence is the stimulation of human intelligence in machines that are programmed to think likehumans and mimic their action. Artificial

intelligence tools such as MS PowerPoint, Canva and Gamma help toenhance teaching and learning.Ukeh and Anih(2024) notes that artificial intelligence is the development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence. This includes a range of technologies such as machine learning, natural language processing and data analytics. Russel and Norvig(2010) state that AI systems leverage algorithmAs and data to stimulate cognitive functions, enabling machines to analyze information, adapt to changing circumstances and improve performance over time.

Li (2020) states that AI algorithms process vast amounts of data efficiently accelerate data analysis and interpretation. AI provides platforms for teachers to automate day to day teaching activities, grading and identifying common mistakes in a written work. AItechnologies help teachers in the area of lesson planning, curriculum development and lesson delivery among others.Nguyen, Gardener and Sheridan (2018) note that more effective learning outcomes can be achieved by using AI-driven systems to analyze students' learning pattern and modify educational materials to suit individual needs. Zawacki-Richter, Marin, Bond and Gouverneur (2019) observe that AI plays a crucial role in administrative tasks within higher institutions. AI powered chatbots and virtual assistants can handle routine inquiries, streamline admissions processes and manage student services, thus freeing up staff to focus on more complex and strategic activities.

Sen (2021) points out; in the last few decades technology has occupied a commanding position in almost every aspect of human life. Humans cannot imagine a single day without technological interference. The emergence of artificial intelligence brings new innovations as well as new opportunities to educators which facilitate conducive environment for academic activities. Ofonughe, Onah, Uzoma and Andor(2021) posit that the integration of artificial intelligence in education in Nigeria has the capacity to enhancethe proficiency levels of lecturers in Nigeria in terms of PowerPoint development and utilization. AI driveneducational platforms can analyze individual learning patterns and preferences, enabling effective teaching and research. AI systems provide tailored content, feedback and assessments, optimizating the learning process for educators.

Kenchakkanavar (2023) notes that artificial intelligence is becoming more prevalent in education as schools seek to use technology to improve learning outcomes and management processes. AI enhances all aspects of learning, including self-directed learning, virtual assistants and adaptive assessment. AI powered virtual assistants can help students search for learning resources, answer their questions and provide timely feedbacks. Cheche, Johnson, Odom and Eguzouwa (2024) opine that artificial intelligence has the potential to revolutionize education by providing personalize learning experiences, enhancing administrative efficiencyand fostering innovative teaching methods.

Ukeh and Anih (2024) state that the role of artificial intelligence is increasingly evident in education. The presence of AI technology has transformed the educationsector. AI systems allow people to learn with the help of AI powered education assistant bots.Fasola (2024) notes that AI enabled tools and technologies are being integrated into teaching and learning procedures more frequently, providing new opportunities to improve the quality of education. Wang (2020) states that AI driven data analytics can aid in decision-making processes by providing insights into students enrollment trends, academic performance and resource allocation. Such applications underscore AI's potential to enhance operational efficiency and strategic planning in higher education.

Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu can harness the tremendous opportunities artificial intelligence has presented to educational institutions to enhance teaching and learning and automate administrative activities. Given this background, this study seeks to explore the extent artificial intelligence is being used for teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, Abia State.

Statement of Problem

Despite the growing adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in higher institutions globally, there is a paucity of research on the extent of AI adoption and its effects on teaching and learning in Nigerian theological institutions, particularly in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution

Arochukwu, Abia State. This knowledge gap necessitates an empirical investigation to determine the current state of AI adoption and its effects on academic outcomes in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to evaluate the application of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu, Abia State. While, the specific objectives areto;

1. evaluate the level of AI adoption in teaching and learning by both staff and students at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.
2. Investigate the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.
3. Identify the AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Research Questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study;

1. What is the level of AI adoption in teaching and learningby both staff and studentsatHugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu?

2. What are the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu?
3. What are the AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu?

Research Hypotheses

This study was guided by three hypotheses, which are as follows:

H_{O1}: There is no significant relationship between the level of AI adoptionand teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

H_{O2}:There are no significant benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

H_{O3}: There are no AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study will be of importance to scholars and students because it will provide them with the basic knowledge about the place of the artificial intelligence in teaching and learning. It will equally serve as a reference material for researchers who would want to carry out studies that are related to this study.Practically, this study will be of relevance to educational planners and policy

makers to see the need to integrate AI in the educational institutions as it will boost teaching and learning.

Scope of the Study

The study covered AI in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, Abia State. The researcher focused on staff and students ofHugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, Abia State.

Review of Related Literature

Artificial Intelligence (AI); Meaning and Dimension

Artificial intelligence is the field of computer science that focuses on developing intelligent systems capable of simulating human-like cognitive abilities and machines to perceive, reason, learn and make decisions in a manner that resembles human intelligence (Opele, Alade and Ajifowoke, 2024). According to Singh, Mishra and Sagar(2013), the term artificial intelligence was coined by John McCarthy in 1956 who described it as the science and engineering of making intelligent machines that reasons like human. Kenchakkanavar (2023), notes that AI refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence.

AFSA(2022), Copeland(2023), Alagbe(2023), and Ogunode and Ukozor(2023), say that artificial intelligence encompasses computer systems and technologies that emulate human intelligence, undertaking tasks like learning, reasoning, and problem solving. These technologies, including machine learning

and robotics, have diverse applications across sectors such as health care, finance, transportation and education, holding the potential to revolutionized industries and creates new opportunities for advancement.

Ogunode, Idoko and Peter (2024), highlight that the multifaceted nature of AI programming is characterized by cognitive skills such as learning, reasoning, self-correction and creativity. Learning involves acquiring data and creating algorithms for actionable information, while reasoning focuses on choosing the right algorithms for desired outcomes. Self-correction ensures continual refinement of algorithms for optimal accuracy, and creativity employs various AI techniques to generate novel outputs like images, text, music and ideas.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning

Schueller, Tomasino and Mohr (2017), posit that AI in education is the application of sophisticated technology, such as machine algorithms and computational models to enhance the learning processes, boost educational results and customize instruction to meet the unique requirement of each student. Okunade (2024) notes that in educationsector in Nigeria, AI has excellent applications that can boost education such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning platforms and virtual simulations. AI in education encompasses the use of diverse techniques including natural language processing, computer vision and data analytics to provide a dynamic and adaptable learning environment.

Ogunode, Okolie and Chinedu (2023) described immense contribution of AI to education to include; effective school administration, implementation of teaching programmes, enhancement of students learning, and facilitation of examination processes. AI is a valuable tool for supporting virtual learning, refining research program development, optimizing community service programmes, managing data effectively, enhancing security and improving staff attendance in tertiary institutions.

Verma (2018), highlights the benefits of integrating AI in educationas follows; AI educational software can be adopted to student needs, AI tutors can provide additional support to students, AI-driven programmes can give students and educators helpful feedback, AI can improve the way teachers teach the students, data powered AI can change how schools find, teach and support students and AI can point out places where courses need to improve.

AI technology can make education system more effective in Nigeria. This can be done by introducing self-teaching classrooms at every level of the education institution. In the classroom, machines can be used to properly teach and answer on the spot questions in a universally acceptable manner(Robinson, 2018). AI can collaborate with virtual networks in order to make an excellent learning environment for students as well as teachers.

AI automated grading system quickly and accurately assesses assignment, provide instant feedback and reduce educator's workload. Intelligent tutoring system (ITS)

offer personalize tutoring, Virtual teaching assistant, driven by AI, answer questions and provide resources. Chat bots, virtual automation and behaviour- adaptive intelligent system are ways AI improve education (Ufomba, Ezichi-Obasi and Obasi, 2024). AI has improved education in many ways through its integration in learning. AI is used by Carnegie Learning and other platforms to create adaptive learning pathways that improve students' comprehension and engagement (Johnson, 2023).

The emergence of artificial intelligence has brought in technological devices or tools that have improved teaching and learning in the institutions of higher learnings. Artificial intelligence has opened doors and exciting opportunities for teachers and students in the areas of research, publications, teaching and learning (Kenchakkanavar, 2023). Amah, Iwuji and Obi (2023) observe that artificial intelligence has the ability to customize lessons, enhance learning opportunities, and provide educators and students with cutting-edge tools and resources. Artificial intelligence has the potential to completely transform the educational landscape in terms of both teaching and learning effectiveness.

Pigola, Scafuto, Costa and Nassif (2023) assert that artificial intelligence is a transformative force in the digital era, influencing not only companies, but also in the field of academics. Verma (2018) states that the integration of AI in teaching and learning will provide the following benefits: Automate basic activities in education like grading, provision of educational software that will

be adapted to student needs, additional support from AI tutors, AI driven programmes can give students and educators' helpful feedback and it could help teachers to teach better. Omenka, Reuben and Usman (2024) note that the potential of AI to provide personalized learning is one of the most important impact on education. Most effective learning outcome can be achieved by AI driven systems to analyze students' learning pattern and modify educational materials to suit individual needs.

Sule (2024) integrating AI into education in Nigeria, can enhance teaching, improve learning outcome, and provide students with personalized educational experiences. AI comes with numerous opportunities for the educational system in Nigeria. Schueller, Tomasino and Mohr (2017), posit that AI in education is the application of sophisticated technology, such machine algorithms and computational models to enhance the learning processes, boost educational results and customize instruction to meet the unique requirement of each students. Akunade (2024) notes that in education sector in Nigeria, AI has excellent applications that can boost education such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning platforms, and virtual simulations. AI in education encompasses the use of diverse techniques including natural language processing, computer vision and data analytics to provide a dynamic and adaptable learning environment.

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AI technology can make education system more effective in Nigeria. This can be done by introducing self-teaching classrooms at every level of the education institution. In the classroom, machines can be used to properly teach and answer on the spot questions in a universally acceptable manner(Robinson, 2018). The 21st century classrooms can be equipped with the emerging technological solutions to deliver the best learning environment to students.

AI automated grading system quickly and accurately assess assignment, provide instant feedback and reduce educator's workload. Intelligent tutoring system (ITS) offer personalize tutoring, Virtual teaching assistant, driven by AI, answer questions and provide resources. Chatbots, virtual automation and behaviour- adaptive intelligent system are ways AI improve education (Ufomba, Ezichi-Obasi and Obasi, 2024). AI has improved education in many ways through its integration

in learning. AI is used by Carnegie Learning and other platforms to create adaptive learning pathways that improve students' comprehension and engagement (Johnson, 2023).

Empirical Review

Ukeh and Anih (2024) investigated the utilization of artificial intelligence based tools for teaching and research among lecturers in Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State. The study employed descriptive research design, the researchers studied 150 lecturers of the Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State. The researchers adopted questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Thestudyfound that the extent of utilization of AI based tools for teaching among lecturers in Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa Statewas very low. The study also provided insights into the current state of technological adoption in teaching at Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, indicating the need for improved strategies that involve education, training, infrastructural enhancement and institutional support. The study recommended among other things that workshops should be organized by the university management on the need for AI utilization in education.The studyis related to the present study in the sense that it explored the use of AI in teaching and research among lecturers in Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State. However, it did not investigate how AI is used or being used by students in

their academic activities. This is the gap in knowledge this present study will close.

Amah, Iwuji andObi (2023) examined artificial intelligence for effective teaching and learning of science in Colleges of Education in Imo State: The prospect and challenges. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, using a stratified random sampling technique to select 120 ICT lecturers from Imo State College of Education and 120 from Alvan Ikoku Federal Collage of Education Imo State; this gave a total of 240 respondents used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The findings of the research showed that personalized learning was the highest prospect of artificial intelligence in effective teaching and learning of science in Imo State Collages of Education. The study recommended that they should be professional development and training programmes for educators on AI use. The study is related to the current study because it deals with how teachers can leverage AI powered tools and platforms for education.However,it did not investigate how AI is used in theological education, rather it only focused on science education. This is the gap in knowledge this present study will fill.

Ibrahim, Taura, Iliyasu, Shogbesan and Lukman (2024) in their work titled "Artificial Intelligence: Perception and Utilization of AI technologies in Educational assessment in Nigerian Universities." The study adopted inferential research design, 3083 university lecturers comprised the population in the study, out of which the sample of 322 respondents were randomly selected for the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The

data was analysed using independent t-test and Pearsan Product Moment Correlation. The findings showed that academic integrity concerns have an influence on how university teachers perceive AI use in assessment. The study also showed that the perception for innovative assessment concerns at University significantly affects how university teachers utilize diverse AI tools in education. The study is related to this study because AI tools can significantly transform education in great ways. The gap in knowledge is the area of methodology, while the study under review used inferential research design, this current study adopts survey research design. While the study under review used independent t-test and Pearsan Product Moment Correlation as tools for data analysis, this current study use simple percentage and Chi-Square statistics for data analysis.

Nwogbo, Agogbua and Anierobi(2024) in their work titled "Extent of integration of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning in public Universities in Anambra State." Using descriptive research design, a sampled 376 respondents were randomly drawn from the population of the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The findings among other things showed university management employs AI-based learning management systems to assist academic staff to enhance course delivery, incorporate AI-based educational applications into instructional delivery, and integrate AI technologies into the assessment process to provide automated grading for students. The study is related to this current study because its deals with the use of AI technologies in teaching and learning in Higher

Institutions. The gap in knowledge is in the objective of the study, the study under review focused on educational administration and management, while this current study is on teaching and learning.

Ufomba, Ezichi-Obasi and Obasi (2024) in their work titled "The role of artificial intelligence administrative and learning efficiency in higher education: Insight from Abia State University, Uturu. The study adopted a survey research design; a sample of 337 was drawn for the study. Data was collected through structured questionnaire which was based on a five-point Likert scale.Spearman rank correlation was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings among other things revealed that combining robotics with automated grading systems can significantly streamline the grading process, enhance teaching methods and prepare students for a rapidly evolving digital world. Also, the study showed that AI enhances the efficiency, effectiveness and users experience of conducting research tasks. The study is related to the current work because AI through chatbots, robotics, automated grading systems, virtual teaching assistants, automation, and research assistance, offer substantial benefits to the educations system which can enhance student support, streamline administrative tasks and provide personalize learning experience. The gap in knowledge here is that the study under review focused only on the ICT units of universities. While, this current study investigates both the lecturers and students, thereby widening the scope of the current knowledge.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technological Determinism theory. This theory was propounded by Marshal McLuhan in 1962. According to McQuail (2010 p. 24), "Technological Determinism theory presumes that a society's technology drives the development of its social structure and cultural values." The theory aims to highlight that the principal element in deciding the course of social change is technology. In media as well, the technological advancement of a society defines its media production and consumption and in the process. The theory helped to explain how innovation in modern technology helps to engineer some forms of change in society or in the ordering of things.

Technological determinism is the theory that a society's technology determines its cultural values, social structure, and history. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011) the theory states that "social progress follows an inevitable course that is driven by technological innovation. Technological determinism has two central concepts: One is that technological development itself follows a predictable, traceable path that is beyond any cultural or political influence. The order that the technology in turn organizes society in a way to further develop itself shows that technology is the driving force of the society. Technological determinism emphasizes that technology is the principal initiator of the society's transformation.

Strict adherents to technological determinism do not believe the influence of technology differs based on how much a technology is or can be used. Technological

determinism sees technology as the basis for all human activity instead of considering technology as part of a larger spectrum of human activity. Technological determinism refers the belief in technology as a key governing force in society. Technological development determines social change. It changes the way people think and how they interact with others.

This theory states that we learn and feel and think the way we do because of the messages we receive through current technology. This theory is appropriate for this study because it deals with technology. Artificial intelligence is a technological innovation which can improve teaching and learning in significant ways.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. Survey is considered useful because it is important in obtaining information from the population about their opinions, attitudes and behaviour towards a subject.

Population of the Study

The population of this study is 250 which comprised both the students and staff. This is the total number of lecturers and students in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, Abia Stateas at the time this research was conducted.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique adopted for this study was censussampling technique. Census sampling technique can be effective in studying the entire population.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected for this study through personal administration of questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

This study used descriptive statistical tools to analyzedata collected from respondents and presented in tables. The hypotheses weretested using Chi-square.

Results and Findings

A total of 250 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the participants within Hugh Goldie Theological Training Institution Arochukwu, Abia State. A total number of copies of the questionnaire returned and found usable for analysis were 226, representing 98% return rate. The data gatheredfrom the field were presented quantitatively using descriptive statistical tools such as simple percentage and Chi-square. The results are presented as follows:

Research Question 1:What is the level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu?

Table 1: Use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	139	62%
No	87	38%
Total	226	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table indicates that greater number of teachers and students at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu use AI in teaching and learning.

Table 2: Level of AI adoption in teaching and learning

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
High	80	37%
Low	134	63%
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table depicts that the level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu is low.

Research Question 2:What are the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu?

Table 3: There are benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	206	96%
No	8	4%
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table shows that there are benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

Table 4: Benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1.Personalized learning experience for students	46	21%
2. Enhancedteachers' productivity.	42	20%
3. Improve Students engagement.	49	23%
4. Access to high quality educational resources for research and teaching.	45	21%
5. Data driven insights for continuous improvement	32	15%

and personal development.		
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table pointed out that the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning are: personalized learning experience for students, enhanced teacher's productivity, improve students engagement, access to high quality educational resourcesfor research and teaching, and data driven insights for continuous improvement and personal development.

Research Question 3:What are the AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu?

Table 5: Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu use AI tools in teaching and learning

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	70	33%
No	144	67%
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The table suggests that there are AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu, however it is very low.

Table 6:AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Adaptive Learning Platforms	35	16%
Virtual Reality	41	19%
Chatbots and Virtual Assistants.	42	20%
Intelligent Tutoring Systems	40	19%
Natural Language Processing	20	9%
Data Analytics and Learning	36	17%
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table shows that AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu are: Adaptive Learning Platforms, Virtual Reality, Chatbots and Virtual Assistants, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, Natural Language Processing, Data Analytics and Learning.

Table 7: There are challenges facing the integration of AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	200	93%
No	14	7%
Total	214	100

The table suggests that there the challenges facing the integration of AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

Table 8:Challenges facing the integration of AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu are

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Limited technical expertise	42	20%
Ethical issues	41	19%
Inadequate technological infrastructure	43	20%
Insufficient fund	46	21%

Data privacy and security	42	20%
Total	214	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table shows that there are challenges facing the integration of AI tools in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu such as limited technical expertise, ethical issues, inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient fund, data privacy and security issues.

Testing of Hypotheses The Chi-square (x^2) method of analysis was used from the contingency table drawn from simple percentages. The formula for chi square (x^2) is given as

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

Where:
X^2 = Calculated chi-square value
O = Observed frequency
E= Expected frequency
$\sum$= Summation sign

Hypothesis One:

H_O : There is no significant relationship between the level of AI adoption and teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

H_a:There is a significant positive relationship between the level of AI adoption and teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Table 1: Chi square goodness of fit test of whether there is a significant positive relationship between the level of AI adoption and teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Response option	**Observed frequency**	**Expected frequency**	**O-E**	**$(O-E)^2$**	**$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$**
1. High	80	1	-27	729	9
2. Low	134	107	27	729	9
Total	214				18

Computed x^2value = 18, x^2 critical value = 11.1, N=214, DF=5, p value =000.
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The result of the Chi square goodness of fit test shows the following values: computed Chi Square =18, df=5, p=000 while the critical value is 11.1. From this result, it is obvious that the computed x^2 value (18) is more than the x^2 critical value (11.1). Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected, suggesting that there was significant

relationship between the level of AI adoption and teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Hypotheses Two:

H_O: There are no significant benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

H_a: There are significant benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

Table 2: Chi square goodness of fit test of whether there are significant benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

Response option	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
1. Yes	206	107	99	9801	46
2. No	8	107	-99	9801	46
Total	214				92

Computed x^2value = 92, x^2 critical value = 11.1, N=214, DF=5, p value =000.
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The result of the chi square goodness of fit test shows the following values: computed chi square =92, df=5, p=000 while the critical value is 11.1. From this result, it is obvious that the computed x^2 value (92) is greater than the x^2 critical value (11.1). Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesisaccepted thatthere are significant benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

Hypotheses Three:

H_O: There are no AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

H_a: There are AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Table 3: Chi square goodness of fit test of whether there are AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Response option	Observed frequency	Expected frequency	O-E	$(O-E)^2$	$\frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$
3. Yes	70	107	-37	1369	13
4. No	144	107	37	1369	13

Total	214	26

Computed x^2value = 26, x^2 critical value = 11.1, N=214, DF=5, p value =000.
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The result of the chi square goodness of fit test shows the following values: computed chi square =26, df=5, p=000 while the critical value is 11.1. From this result, it is obvious that the computed x^2 value (26) is greater than the x^2 critical value (11.1). Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesisaccepted thatthere are AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study showed that the level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu is low. This was the view of the majority (62%) of the respondents who stated that they use artificial intelligence in teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie is very low. This results underscore the necessity to addressing the challenges facing the integration of AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Theological Training Institution Arochukwu. The findings of this study agrees with Ukeh and Anih(2024) who reported that the application of AI tools for teaching and learning is still at low level. The finding is also in line with Nwogbo, Agogbua and Anierobi (2024) who reported that the use of AI in teaching and learning is still at an infant stage and there is need improved as many

academic institutions to start integrating it in teaching and learning. This could be as a result of the fact that most universities in Nigeria do not have AI facilities and manpower to integrate AI in teaching and learning.

The findings of this study also showed that the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning are: personalized learning experience for students, enhanced teacher's productivity, improve students engagement, access to high quality educational resources for research and teaching, and data driven insights for continuous improvement and personal development. This finding agrees with Nwogbo, Agogbua and Anierobi (2024) who reported that there are numerous opportunities with the integration of AI in teaching and learning in high institutions in Nigeria. AI facilitates collaborative learning experiences through AI- powered online discussion forums, enhances professional development opportunities for academic staff through AI driven online training programmes. This finding corroborates with Ufomba, Ezichi-Obasi and Obasi (2024) who reported that combining robotics with automated grading systems can significantly streamline the grading process, enhance teaching methods and prepare students for a rapidly evolving digital world. The study by Sule (2024) supported this finding that integrating AI into education in Nigeria, can enhance teaching, improve learning outcome, and provide students with personalized educational experiences. AI comes with numerous opportunities for the educational system in Nigeria.AI enhances the efficiency, effectiveness and, teachers and students experience of conducting research tasks. The

finding of this study agrees with the study of Ogunode, Okolie and Chinedu (2023) who described the immense contribution of AI to education to include; effective school administration, implementation of teaching programs, enhancement of students learning, and facilitation of examination processes. AI is a valuable tool for supporting virtual learning, refining research program development, optimizing community service programs, managing data effectively, enhancing security and improving staff attendance in tertiary institutions. The finding of this study was supported by the work of Omenka, Reuben and Usman (2024) who reported that the potential of AI to provide personalized learning is one of the most important impact on education. Most effective learning outcome can be achieved by AI driven systems to analyze students' learning pattern and modify educational materials to suit individual needs.

Furthermore, the study showed that AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu are: Adaptive Learning Platforms, Virtual Reality, Chatbots and Virtual Assistants, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, Natural Language Processing, Data Analytics and Learning. This finding is line with Iwuji, Amah and Obi(2023)who reported that AI tools have revolutionized and transformed teaching and learning in the 21st century. Teachers and students can leverage on AI tools such as Chatbots, Virtual Assistants, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, and Data Analytics for Learning Assessment among others to enhance teaching and learning, making it more engaging, personalized and effective. The finding of this study was supported by

Okunade (2024) who reported that in education sector in Nigeria, AI has excellent applications that can boost education such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive learning platforms, and virtual simulations. AI in education encompasses the use of diverse techniques including natural language processing, computer vision and data analytics to provide a dynamic and adaptable learning environment.The finding of this study was supported by the study ofKenchakkanavar (2023) who observed thatthe emergence artificial intelligence has brought in technological devices or tools that have improved teaching and learning in the institutions of higher learnings. Artificial intelligence has opened doors and exciting opportunities for teachers and students in the areas of research, publications, teaching and learning.

The test of hypotheses in this work indicated that the three hypotheses drawn for the study, the null hypotheses were rejected and their alternative accepted. That is to say that, there is significant relationship between the level of AI adoption and teaching and learning in Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.There are significant benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.There are AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution, Arochukwu.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion And Recommendations

Summary

This study found that:

1. The level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu is low.
2. There are many benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution include; enhanced teacher's productivity, improve students engagement, access to high quality educational resources for research and teaching.
3. AI tools used in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu are: Adaptive Learning Platforms, Virtual Reality, Chatbots and Virtual Assistants, Intelligent Tutoring Systems, Natural Language Processing, Data Analytics and Learning.

Conclusion

The application of AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Theological Training Institution Arochukwu holds immense promise of revolutionizing educational outcomes. A critical examination of the application of AI in teaching and learning has enormous benefits for effective teaching and personalized learning experiences. By leveraging AI powered tools and platforms, teachers can tailor instructions to carter to diverse learning styles, thereby enhancing students engagement and optimizing teaching and learning outcomes.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following:

1. The school management should improve on the level of AI adoption in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.
2. Workshops and training programs should be organized to sensitize both the teachers and students of the institution on the benefits of integrating AI in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.
3. The institution should invest on the acquisition of sophisticated technological gadgets and software tools support the integration of AI tools in teaching and learning at Hugh Goldie Theological Institution Arochukwu.

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THE PRESENCE OF OTHER COMPETING POWERS IN THE GULF OF GUINEA AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCE OF AFRICOM

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Abstract

The focus of this is on the interrogation of the Presence of other Competing Powers in the Gulf of Guinea and Improved Performance of AFRICOM. The US AFRICOM conducts joint exercises and operations with African partners to enhance interoperability and promote regional cooperation. These exercises, such as Obangame Express and Saharan Express, facilitate information sharing, coordination, and the development of common operational procedures among participating nations. By

fostering collaboration, US AFRICOM contributes to a more coordinated and effective response to maritime security threats in the Gulf of Guinea.The study was anchored on the power theory as data collection was based on the qualitative method of data collection. Data collected were analyzed using content analysis and logical data framework. The study found out that maritime security challenges in West Africa include piracy, violent extremism, transnational organized crimes, kidnapping, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, transnational crude oil theft, smuggling, armed robbery, and drug trafficking and also that maritime insecurity has remained prevalent in the Gulf of Guinea, despite the establishment of US Africa Command. In conclusion, the problem in maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is the high prevalence of piracy, armed robbery at sea, and other maritime crimes. This region, located off the coast of West Africa, has witnessed a significant increase in attacks on vessels, resulting in economic losses, threats to human lives, and disruption of maritime trade.The study, therefore, recommended, among others, that the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) should conduct joint exercises and operations with African partners to enhance interoperability and promote regional cooperation in the sub-region.

Keywords:AFRICOM, Gulf of Guinea, Maritime, Security, Powers, Performance

Introduction

The complex nature of maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea is influenced by several factors. These include weak governance, political instability, corruption, poverty, and inadequate maritime law enforcement capabilities. The region consists of multiple countries with different legal frameworks and varying levels of maritime security capabilities, making it difficult to coordinate and address security threats effectively.

Given the importance of maritime trade and the need to ensure the safety and security of the region's waters, there has been an increased focus on studying and addressing maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. Various international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, African Union, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, have been actively involved in promoting cooperation and capacity-building initiatives to enhance maritime security in the region.

Research and studies on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea aim to understand the root causes of maritime crime, identify effective countermeasures, and develop comprehensive strategies to address the security challenges. These studies often examine factors such as the socio-economic conditions of coastal communities, the role of organized crime networks, the effectiveness of maritime law enforcement, and the impact of international interventions for economic development.

The United States African Command (AFRICOM) has emerged as a significant player in ensuring maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. As the world's leading

naval power, the United States recognizes the critical importance of safeguarding maritime trade routes and preventing illicit activities in this strategically vital region. Established in 2007, AFRICOM was created to address the evolving security challenges on the African continent. With its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, AFRICOM operates under the authority of the U.S. Department of Defense, focusing on promoting regional stability, building partner capacity, and enhancing security cooperation with African nations.

While its primary mission is to support African nations in their efforts to maintain security, national security interest propelled the establishment of AFRICOM over the years this security interest has significantly extended in the Gulf of Guinea with the purpose of ensuring stable supply of African oil in the Gulf of Guinea, ending violent extremism that threatens that supply and containing other competitors. As noted by Townsend (2022), the general thinking within the US policy circle is that a more stable Africa will enhance America's security. The expectation is that as maritime security remains a pressing concern U.S. AFRICOM's continued engagement will be vital in ensuring the long-term safety and prosperity of the Gulf of Guinea and its surrounding waters. By addressing the underlying causes of maritime insecurity and strengthening regional co-operation, it is hoped that the Gulf of Guinea can become a safer and more secure maritime domain.

One of the key objectives of AFRICOM's maritime security efforts is to build the capacity of African navies and coast guards. This involves providing training,

equipment, and technical assistance to enhance their capabilities in conducting maritime patrols, interdicting illicit activities, and responding to maritime emergencies. Through initiatives such as the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) and the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Initiative (GOG-MaSI), AFRICOM works closely with African countries to improve information sharing, coordination, and joint operations to counter maritime threats effectively.

AFRICOM not only represents US Military component in Africa to help United States achieve access and influence in the Gulf of Guinea, but also serves as remote governance mechanism and diplomatic instruments for achieving other US foreign policy objectives and diplomacy in the area. Against the background of the myriad of the security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea and the presence of other competing powers, it has become necessary to interrogate the extent" this purpose-built security outfit – US. AFRICOM has been able to team with allies and partners in the region to achieve shared security objectives and advance shared purposes.

Literature Review

Security, National Security and Maritime Security Re-Examined

The concept of security has always been used and interpreted in different ways by scholars. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) noted that the concept of 'security' is a crosscutting, and multi-dimensional concept which has, over the last century, been the subject of great debate. Hence, conceptualizing security and what constitutes security threat have never been an easy task due to

existence of several perceptions, debates and interpretations of the concepts both in contextual and relative senses. As noted by Nwatu and Ogbuabor (2012), security is not amenable to any specific definition since its application and usage is usually aligned to justify the actions of the oppressors against the oppressed. Security has also been defined in terms of specific contexts such as national security and human security.

Security refers to the measures and practices put in place to protect individuals, organizations, and assets from various threats and risks. It encompasses a wide range of areas, including physical security, cybersecurity, information security, financial security, and personal safety (Cordesman, 2021). Otto and Ukpere (2012) argues that security means protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life in homes, offices or communities. It can also be seen as protection from likely future threats or harms in a country (Wehmeier and Ashby, 2002).

On the other hand, national security generally deals with the protection /safety of a country's assets and people. National security refers to the protection and defense of a nation's interests, sovereignty, and citizens from threats, both internal and external. It encompasses various aspects, including military, political, economic, social, and environmental factors. National security aims to maintain the stability, integrity, and well-being of a nation by safeguarding its borders, maintaining law and order, countering terrorism, preventing espionage, protecting critical infrastructure, ensuring economic stability, and addressing other potential risks and challenges.

More so, maritime security refers to the measures and actions taken to protect and secure the maritime domain, which includes oceans, seas, coasts, and any activities conducted within or related to these areas. It involves safeguarding maritime interests, resources, infrastructure, and activities from various threats, such as piracy, terrorism, illegal fishing, smuggling, human trafficking, and environmental hazards.Maritime security encompasses a broad range of activities, including the protection of maritime borders, surveillance and monitoring of maritime traffic, enforcement of laws and regulations, search and rescue operations, maritime domain awareness, intelligence gathering, and international cooperation among maritime nations.

Effective maritime security is crucial for ensuring safe and secure trade, promoting economic prosperity, protecting the environment, preventing crime, and maintaining peace and stability in the maritime domain. It involves the collaboration and coordination of various stakeholders, including navies, coast guards, law enforcement agencies, port authorities, international organizations, and private sector entities involved in maritime activities.

Security Challenges in the Gulf of Guinea

The problem in maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is the high prevalence of piracy, armed robbery at sea, and other maritime crimes. This region, located off the coast of West Africa, has witnessed a significant increase in attacks on vessels, resulting in economic losses, threats to

human lives, and disruption of maritime trade. The Gulf of Guinea is a strategic maritime area, rich in natural resources and a major transit route for international shipping.

However, it has become a hotspot for piracy and maritime crimes due to various factors such as weak maritime governance, political instability, poverty, and lack of adequate law enforcement capabilities. Pirate attacks in the Gulf of Guinea involve armed individuals boarding ships, hijacking vessels, and kidnapping crew members for ransom. These criminal activities not only pose a direct threat to the safety and security of seafarers but also impact the region's economy and global trade.Furthermore, the illicit activities in the Gulf of Guinea contribute to illegal fishing, smuggling, and trafficking of drugs and arms. This further undermines the stability and development of the coastal states in the region.

AFRICOM and US National Interest in the Gulf of Guinea

The U.S. military maintained that AFRICOM is essentially positioned as a mission to protect and advance U.S. interests in Africa which includes the maintenance of a free, open, and stable environment. According to Townsend (2022), Africa's geostrategic importance has attracted growing attention at the world stage which accounts for the drive by U.S. strategic rivals to seek ways to also leverage both soft and hard investments into political influence, but sometimes they use malign, and hard military advantage to achieve their ambitions. However, U.S. AFRICOM has been stationed as a ground

force on the African continent to subdue the rival interests, particularly by promising and providing access to a stable and prosperous African continent, and supporting African governments politically, economically, and militarily. AFRICOM therefore secures U.S. investments, protect her interests and advance her objectives in a dynamic and important region of the world.

It is further noted that Africa's geo-strategic relevance has continued to drive the ongoing competition and pursuit of influence in the region. Africa's influence has also increased significantly in the global stage because of this strategic importance. For example, Africa now controls about 28 percent of UN General Assembly votes and three of 15 UN Security Council (UNSC) seats (de Carvalho andForti,2020). The U.S. sees African partners as having a choice to make either to cooperate with the U.S. AFRICOM and their European allies to promote open, rules-based international order or get into the hands of the raw power transactional pressure campaigns of global competitors. It is believed that the choice of African governments over who they partner with can determine the future of U.S. values-based influence in international political fora. As noted by Townsend (2018), other strategic rivals such as China and Russia, also know about Africa's strategic importance and have always wanted to explore them fully. These nations therefore seek means to deny the U.S. a place of influence in the region so as to control African resources. This they do by asserting political influence, and converting soft and hard power

investments into new partnerships, to the detriment of U.S. interests.

Particularly, China continues to engage in the exercise of a dominant position across African markets, which has allowed it to strengthen autocratic regimes and influence global political norms, technological standards, and commercial practices while offering an entry point for their military. China has made enormous investment in Africa as its "second continent", and has pursued the initiative of infrastructural development in Africa which has boosted Chinese economic growth, outpaced the U.S. and allowed it to exploit opportunities to their benefit (Cordesman, 2021). In 2018, China recorded great milestone in the expansion of the capabilities of its Doraleh Naval Base in Djibouti where China has the only permanent military base abroad, as they added a big and capable pier; and again, advanced some measures to create a second location in West Africa's Atlantic Coast. China's military outfit and technical build-up in Africa gives the country adequate leeway to enhance power eastward into the Middle East and Indo-Pacific Theatres and west into the Atlantic. There is also apprehension by U.S. think tanks over a long-term Chinese naval presence in West Africa which would demand that the U.S. Department considers a shift to U.S. naval force posture and such could also pose increased risk to freedom of navigation and U.S. ability to act (Nakamura et al., 2021).

On the other hand, Townsend (2022) alarms that Russia has been undermining rule of law and has explored the on-going insecurity and diplomatic disputes to promote the

expansion of its presence in Africa, by using Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. Wagner now has presence in many countries in Africa including Libya, Sudan, Mozambique, Central African Republic (CAR), and Mali. In some cases, the mercenaries get involved in acts of violence against civilians and other human rights violations. Wagner is thus accused of fostering instability in some African countries such as the Central African Republic (CAR) where there have been reported cases of killings of scores of civilians during operations purported to support the government, even though the underlying aim had been to foster the political and business interest of Russia. Although these accusations have been deliberately denied by Russia's Wagner, and President Putin had maintained that Wagner is a private company contracted by Mali's transitional authorities. However, the Malian government already stated that only official Russian Ministry of Defence personnel are conducting operations in their country. Nevertheless, Russia has been the largest exporter of weapons to African countries, with over 23 percent rise in exports to Africa between 2018 and 2022. It is argued that Russian arms sale to authoritarian leaders and combatants in Africa without end-user agreements contribute to militarization, and escalate conflict and instability on the continent (Parachini and Bauer, 2021).

Importantly, Townsend (2022) has reflected on the complexity of U.S. interests in the Sahel, littoral West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea. According to him, the rapid spread of Sahel-based VEOs outside of Mali and Burkina Faso pushed the need for U.S. involvement in the

region in order to protect her interests. Townsend (2022) recalls that in 2021, the Jama'atNusrat al-Islam wal-Muslmin (JNIM) recorded advancements into littoral West Africa, which gave them the audacity to issue a new destabilizing threat to strategically important countries on the Atlantic. In addition to the crisis and escalating security situation, JNIM's regional rival group, ISIS in the Greater Sahara (ISIS-GS), started a campaign that targeted civilian populations with mass casualty attacks, taxation, and recruitment which further destabilized the already volatile region.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have been conducted by various scholars and researchers, to address the issues of United States' Africa Command (AFRICOM) and Maritime Security. For instance, Ugwuja (2018), in a study titled the United States' Africa Command (AFRICOM) and Africa's Security in the Twenty-First Century argued that until the beginning of the 21st century, Africa received marginal attention in the international security calculus of the United States. However, the September 9, 2001 attacks against the U.S recouped U.S' security permutations on Africa. Again, the geometric expansion of the economies of India and China intensified these countries' thirst for African oil and this does not appear to favour the U.S economic interests in Africa. Hence, securing America's economic interests on the African continent became a matter of critical national security for the U.S. This necessitated the establishment of the United States' Africa Command – a combatant military command comprising of 1637 personnel (both military

and civilian). Nonetheless, whilst AFRICOM is beneficial and contributory to the achievement of the economic and security goals of the U.S, scholars of Africa are sharply divided on the benefits and implications of AFRICOM for Africa's security. In the light of the above, this study appraises the U.S Africa Command, especially as it affects Africa's security in the post 9/11 global system. The Historical method of research is adopted and information for the study came largely through secondary sources and a few primary sources in the form of U.S Congressional Reports, Service Chiefs Reports and Personal Diaries. The position of the study is that even though the U.S has often carried herself as an exploitative hegemon, the establishment of the Africa Command (AFRICOM) has had more positive than negative outcomes for the continent. Moreover, it could, if properly harnessed by African states help to mitigate the plethora of security challenges confronting Africa in the 21st century.

On his part, Nnamani (2022), in a study titled United States' Africa Command and Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea, 2007 – 2020 examined the impact of US Africa Command on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, between 2007 and 2020, with specific emphasis on the core maritime security challenges in West Africa. The study was anchored on the World Systems Theory, while data were generated using documentary and survey methods. Data collected were analysed using content analysis. The study found that maritime security challenges in West Africa include piracy, armed robbery, and drug trafficking. It also found

that maritime insecurity has remained endemic in the Gulf of Guinea, despite the establishment of US Africa Command. The study locates the limited effectiveness of AFRICOM in mitigating maritime security challenges to its establishment without adequate consultation with West African leaders which triggered suspicion and resistance among countries in the Gulf of Guinea. The study posits that the geostrategic importance of the sub-regional maritime has remained the U.S government's strategic interest. The study, therefore, recommends, among others, that the U.S. government should strengthen inter-state collaboration through existing security agencies in the sub-region.

Again, Agykem (2024), in another study titled Tackling Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea: Interactions Between Global Shipping and Ghanaian State Agents argued that Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is a challenge that straddles multiple players and sectors, and crimes like piracy cause disruptions to international trade and shipping. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the global shipping industry tried to keep maritime security on the agenda, while advocating for global security assemblages, specifically, transnational policing initiatives as part of the maritime security governance. Using the notion of narratives and assemblage thinking, it is argued that although global shipping and Ghanaian state agents agree on the problem, they differ on which maritime security governance infrastructure to deploy, resulting in tensions between the two parties.

More so, Akainde (2024), in a related study titled Towards Effective Maritime Security Cooperation in Addressing the Threat of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in the Gulf of Guinea: A Review of Extant Issues and Challengesargued that the Gulf of Guinea has remained in the limelight since the International Maritime Organisation in 2010 declared the sub-region as being among the most dreaded waters due to the persistence of piracy and armed robbery against ships. In response to these threats, states in the region have engaged in several individual state-based actions; as well as bilateral and multilateral arrangements targeted at addressing the maritime security problems. This article seeks to examine extant maritime security collaborations in the Gulf of Guinea and assesses their efficacy. Utilising desk-based methodologies, the paper posits that the maritime security concerns of the states in the sub-region mostly coincide, creating the need for close security alliances. However, the efficacies of the arrangements are adversely affected by pre-existing challenges. The article, among other suggestions, recommends that states address their respective state-centric problems and show commitment to running a single sub-regional framework as pathways to attaining effective curtailment of the threats.

On his part, Olusegun (2023), in another study titled Maritime crimes and the Gulf of Guinea attempted an understanding of the nexus between or amongst the organised maritime crimes happening within the Gulf of Guinea (GoG). In so doing, it takes a critical look at the far-reaching implications of these maritime crimes for national, regional and international security, as well as at

the responses of the states within the domain of the criminality. It also examines the likely events that would happen within the terrain at a future date. The study used primary and secondary data. This approach permits proper analysis of the peculiar national and regional issues that provide ample space for crimes to fester within the region. The study concludes that if the identified weaknesses inherent in each of and among the states of the region are not resolved, by no means would the protracted crime wave therein subside.

Again, Zhizhi and Rashida (2021), in another study titled "Security Challenges in the Gulf of Guinea: Role of the US African Command" argued further that, the security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea and the role of the U.S-African command have played in cobbling activities of terrorist groups in the region. This study tries to explore the great power hegemony of the U.S and other world powers over Africa and the importance of the USA military presence in Africa. It goes further to expose the root causes of poverty in the Niger Delta and poverty as an influence of terrorism. This paper concludes that the terrorist attacks on the U.S embassies in Tanzania and Kenya as well as 9/11 attack constituted a turning point in the Gulf of Guinea's strategic profile within U.S policy circles. The chief recommendation is that if the U.S is to positively shape the outcome of change in the Gulf of Guinea, she has to engage our reformist leaders within the sub-region.

Collaboratively, Onuoha (2009), in a study titled US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and Nigeria's National

Security argued that the US decision to establish a unified combatant command (AFRICOM) in African has raised numerous questions, particularly in Africa, regarding its possible security implications for the continent. The article narrows itself to the concern for unraveling the national security implications of Nigeria's opposition to the location of AFRICOM. It also highlights the tripartite security concerns that informed US decision to establish a combatant command in Africa. The article argues that Nigeria's opposition to AFRICOM would likely lead to fracturing of US-Nigeria's relations as well as increased, though subtle, intervention of the US in Nigeria's internal affairs. For a win-win approach to the varying legitimate security concerns of Nigeria and the US visà- vis AFRICOM, the article advocates that Nigeria's approach should be underpinned by the philosophy of enlightened moderation and constructive engagement.

Furthermore, Ekpe, Ellah and Ogbang (2012), in a study titled Nigeria’s Response to the United States’ African Command (AFRICOM) Project in the Gulf of Guinea argued that The Gulf of Guinea is an enclave of growing economic, social, political and geostrategic importance. It is also an enclave of overwhelming poverty, disease, chronic instability and prone to terrorist incursion. The establishment of a new combatant force (African command) for the region (Gulf of Guinea) and Africa in general by the United States of America marks an important milestone in the evolution of relations between the U.S and the governments of the gulf region. Through African command, the United States department of defense will consolidate the efforts of other existing

Commands and headquarters as it seeks a more stable environment for political and economic growth in the Gulf of Guinea. In line with such goals, the command would be pioneering a bold method of military engagement focused on war prevention, interagency cooperation, and development rather than traditional war fighting. This study is carried out to assess the response of Nigeria to the United States African command project in the light of her national security interest in the Gulf of Guinea and her leadership position in the region.

Again, Al-Kassimi (2017), in another study on The U.S informal empire: US African Command (AFRICOM) expanding the US economic-frontier by discursively securitizing Africa using exceptional speech acts opined that the mission statement of US African Command (AFRICOM), articulated by President George Bush in 2007, declared African underdevelopment and human insecurities as a threat to US national security. Since 10 years have elapsed from the time of AFRICOM's inauguration, this paper seeks to highlight that the organization has fallen short in realizing its mission statement. This unnerving reality has given credence to intellectuals who adopt an apocalyptic position vis-à-vis the organization. Intellectual skeptics disconcerted with AFRICOM located in the Global South and Global North have come to the conclusion that AFRICOM's actuality as an organization primarily advanced American economic interest and perceived issues of African development as trivial. In the 21st-century, US security experts discursively shifted Africa from being a politicized issue to a securitized issue thereby

constructing the continent as posing an existential threat not only to American geostrategic interest, but also American identity of exceptionalism. By using the work of New Left historian William Appleman Williams and by referencing speech actors with political capital, this paper highlights that the process of securitizing Africa using exceptional speech acts to expand corporate capitalism is not unique to Africa since there are historical discursive parallels between early and current speech acts deliberated during junctures involving US foreign ventures.

In a divergent view, Ngboawaji and Sotonye (2021), in a study on AFRICOM and the Gulf of Guinea Security Initiative: Strategic Implications for Nigeria took an analytical investigation of AFRICOM and the Gulf of Guinea security initiative and the strategic implications for Nigeria. The work is an empirical research which employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data from 113 respondents chosen from the diplomatic corps, the defence sector and the academia. In all, the study found out that Africa's oil albeit West African oil represents a viable alternative to the rather precarious supply from the Middle East, and therefore crucial to America's economic and strategic interest. AFRICOM therefore is an obvious American response to this interest. In the same vein, the study found out that global oil competition between the United States, Europe, China and India has made AFRICOM an imperial economic arrangement to secure America's interest in the sub-region. More so, the study found out that the national security and strategic interests of Nigeria were not

adequately articulated in a military programme that is largely nebulous and suspicious in the sub-region. The work finally offers useful recommendations that can significantly address the grey areas of the Command to adequately balance the economic, security and strategic interests of all the stake holders.

Theoretical Orientation

This paper was anchored on the power theory. Power theory is propounded and popularized by the following scholars, namely: Hans Morgenthau (1964), Robert Dahl (1957), Frankel (1974), Richard K. Ashley (1983), Edward H. Carr (2001), Joseph Nye (1990), Nye (2004), Steven Lukes (1974), John Mearsheimer (2001), Robert Keohane& Joseph Nye (2001) among others. The power theory emphasizes the pursuit of national interest through the use of power by state actors in the international system.

According to Hans Morgenthau (1964), power is an instrument for expressing and promoting state interest, and it provides both the aim of a state's foreign policy as well as the means of achieving foreign policy objectives. The practice of power focuses on the ways statesmen engage power to achieve desired interests with the least perils. For Morgenthau (1964) states all over the world are driven by their national interest, and this is defined in terms of power such states could project in its dealings in the international system. Thus, power is used by states to achieve their interests in the international system. While power which is borne out of political realism constitutes the sphere of politics, it is not alone within it. Morgenthau

linked this intrinsic presence of morals back to the "nature of man as both a political and a moral animal." Even though human beings are moral agents, the lust for power as a means to protect perceived interest has become an ubiquitous empirical fact; and the pursuit of power does not conform to universal ethical norms. "There can be no renunciation of the ethical denial without renouncing the human nature of man" (Morgenthau, 1946).

Robert Dahl's (1957) believes that power is utilized by state actors to compel obedience from other parties in the international system. Hence, power is A having the ability to make B to do what A wants. This means that A's power determines the behaviour of B, and the reason of the behaviour for B is A's power. Explaining the overriding influence of power, Carr (2001) noted that, "power" reflects an actor's ability to exercise influence over other actors within the international environment. This influence can be coercive, attractive, cooperative, or competitive. Mechanisms of influence can include the threat or use of force, economic interaction or pressure, diplomacy, and cultural exchange. According to Marcella (2004):

> Power is the capacity to direct the decisions and actions of others. Strategy marshals' capabilities and brings them to bear with precision. Statecraft seeks through strategy to magnify the mass, relevance, impact, and irresistibility of power. It guides the ways the state deploys and applies its power abroad. These ways embrace the arts of war, espionage,

> and diplomacy. The practitioners of these three arts are the paladins of statecraft (Marcella, 2004,p. 2).

Power therefore reflects the fulcrum of international relations and shows the integral of power politics between and among state actors in international relations (Guzzini, 2020). Power seeks to achieve a goal and serves as 'control mechanism' to achieve expected outcomes and consequences in international relations. Joseph Nye (1990: 178) emphasizes the idea of ''power conversion" as a process of power configuration. Power conversion is a process of aggregation of elements of potential power. This involves the capacity of actors and institutions to direct their actions and exchange demands. Institutional structures bargaining ability and options thus become basic political issues (Keohane& Nye, 2001: 46). Power can be equated predominantly in terms of political goals, implying that power is a behavioural factor, namely aggregation of certain elements directed to affect other actors' behaviour and in return achieve an expected consequence and outcome.

John Mearsheimer (2001) maintained that the essence of the use of power by state actors is to balance capabilities and achieve desired interests in the international system. This use of power can be in two different ways; either in the form of "hard power" or "soft power." Hard power is a coercive means of actualization of one's interests. It deals with coercive tactics: the threat or use of armed forces or military invasion, economic pressure or sanctions, assassination and subterfuge, as well as other

forms of intimidation. Hard power is predominantly deployed by most powerful nations, and they have often utilized power to change the domestic affairs of other nations through military threats. However, instruments of soft power include debates on cultural values, dialogues on ideology, the attempt to influence through good example, and the appeal to commonly accepted human values. Means of exercising soft power include diplomacy, dissemination of information, analysis, propaganda, and cultural programming to achieve political ends (Nye, 2004).

Nye (2004) examines transnational power relations in the explanation of 'soft power'. He also adopted the concept of "smart power" to show the relationship between hard power and soft power. Nye defined "smart power" as "the ability to combine hard and soft power into a successful strategy. The art of statecraft therefore involves a combination of both soft and hard power to achieve political interests.

Again, political interests have two major aspects, material and non-material interests. The specific type of interest desired determines the condition for power being used, whether hard or soft power or both. However, it is difficult to determine the objectivity of interests. A state may have an objective assessment of what it considers to be national interest, but the use of power does not always guarantee an objective assessment of the means of achieving the interest (Keohane& Nye, 2001).

The power theory in this study is used to emphasize the influence and capabilities of the U.S. as a key actor in the

international system, and how the U.S. has been able to deploy its power capabilities to pursue its core interests in the Gulf of Guinea region. Hence, the establishment of U.S. Africa Command, being U.S. military paraphernalia in Africa, is designed essentially for the achievement of United States core interests and foreign policy objectives on the African continent, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea region. This is to ensure that the U.S. remains a purveyor of power in the region. Keohane and Nye (2001) maintained that in the use of state power, institutional structures, bargaining ability and options are basic political issues. This approach implies that power is a behavioural factor, namely aggregation of certain elements directed to affect other actors' behaviour and in return achieve an expected consequence and outcome. This underscores the negotiating skills, use of propaganda, diplomatic tools and mediatory styles adopted by the U.S. in the deployment of AFRICOM and its operational bases in Africa. This can be seen in the manner in which the U.S. Department of State has cleverly convinced African governments that the purpose of AFRICOM is to help them build strong military partnership and train African militaries to be able to address maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. According to the Commander of the U.S. Africa Command, General Stephen Townsend (2022); AFRICOM is committed to improve security and stability, to combat sources of extremist recruitment, to create stable political environments, to improve governance and to promote democracy and the rule of law.

Methodology

This paper is based on the ex-post facto research method. The ex-post facto design helps to interrogate possible cause-effect relationships by observing an existing condition and searching back in time for plausible causal factors (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The ex-post facto design adopts a series of pre-measurement and post-measurement or before and after observation required for establishing causal relationship or cause-effect relationship (Leege& Francis, 1974).

This paper equally adopted the qualitative method of data collection. This was used to describe and interpret existing conditions as well as prevailing phenomena to understand the relational dimension of variables. *The study obtained from secondary sources. The secondary data comprises of* information generated from already existing materials that may have gone through some level or measures of refinement (Asika, 2001). The secondary data helped to locate this study within the existing literature and to make deductive and general inferences. *These include: textbooks, journal articles, magazines, newspapers, conference proceedings, and official reports and publications from relevant institutions such as U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of State,* U.S. Navy Europe-Africa, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations Security Council (UNSC), U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, Benin, and Ghana, *U.S.* Political-Military Affairs Unit in Benin, African Union, ECOWAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Europe District, U.S. Navy Europe-Africa, International Maritime Bureau, etc.

This paper adopted the descriptive method of analysis. This is used in the study to systematically analyze written materials, which involves examination of documents to investigate specific topics or themes such as evidence of bias or prejudice, prevailing practices, etc (Ofordile, 2002). The descriptive method is preferred in this study since it is adjudged to be most suitable in analyzing data collected from qualitative sources (Biereenu-Nnabugwu, 2006).

Competing Powers in the Gulf of Guinea and Improved Performance of AFRICOM

Providing security assistance and other stability supporting operations in Africa was an essential component of the United States government's security strategy during the Cold war, due to ideological confrontation between her and the former Soviet Union. However, at the end of the Cold War, the U.S. security assistance to Africa drastically declined due to de-ideologization of the international politics. In 1995, for example, the Department of Defence (DOD) outlined its view of Africa in its U.S. Security Strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, asserting that "ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa" (Ploch, 2009, p.4). However, the U.S. security assistance to Africa, which had declined at the end of the Cold War, picked up in the late 1990s in response to the threat of terrorism and other forms of political instability on the continent. In 1998, following terrorist attacks on two U.S. Embassies in East Africa; the United States conducted a retaliatory attack against a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan that was

at the time believed to be linked to Al Qaeda. The Embassy bombings, and the retaliatory strike against Sudan, were thus seen as a turning point in U.S. strategic interest in Africa (Ploch, 2010).

AFRICOM is responsible for all DoD operations, exercises, and security cooperation in 54 of 55 nations on the African continent, its island nations, and surrounding waters. As of the end of fiscal year (FY) 2012, AFRICOM had approximately 2,300 assigned personnel, including U.S. military, civilian, and contractor employees and about 1,500 personnel work at the command's headquarters at Kelly Barracks in Stuttgart. Others are assigned to AFRICOM units at MacDill Air Force Base near Tampa, Florida, and the Joint Analysis Center in Moles. AFRICOM has several service component commands and theatre Special Operations Command component. AFRICOM's other forward operating site besides Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa is on UK's Ascension Island in the South Atlantic. It also has Cooperative Security Locations in Algeria, Botswana, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.

Tricontinental (2021) observed that during its 601st meeting on 30 May 2016, the African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) showed concerns on the rising spate of violent conflicts on the continent including the crisis in Libya and its spiralling effects across the Sahel, the activities of VEOs in the Lake Chad region with the spread of Boko Haram, and the wars that marked the Great Lakes region (with the loss of sovereignty by the

Democratic Republic of the Congo on its eastern flank). The PSC thus notes the primary responsibility of African governments in conflict prevention and continental security. Unfortunately, the poor military capacity of African governments both in terms of professionalism, technological and human resources tends to vitiate the role of African states in securing its own territorial spheres. This accounts for one of the reasons for having external military presence such as AFRICOM on the continent.

Amidst these challenges therefore, AFRICOM's approach in West Africa had been designed to forestall the expansion of Violent extremist organizations' (VEO) destabilization of the Sahel particularly with a measure to stop further VEO inroads in Niger and the littoral states. The three components in the U.S. security approach in the region are geared towards: strengthening U.S. assistance to international partners, boosting the effectiveness of the countries of the Gulf of Guinea to deter VEO advances, and increasing the effectiveness of existing multi-lateral security frameworks in the region. The U.S. State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development work on these identified lines of effort to tackle key causes of instability in such a way that will facilitate sustainable solutions.

Another issue of concern has to do with the level of cooperation and working relationship between AFRICOM and African partners. In this respect, Moeller (2010) reveals that AFRICOM has had several meetings and engagements with African leaders, African media,

and African people and the outcome of these engagements showed that even though many African countries welcome U.S. military footprints, they particularly have an interest in long-term stability which means that they the people of Africa desire to provide for their own security. This is why many African countries are making strong efforts towards developing professional security forces that follow the rule of law and protect all their peoples. African nations have strong team of committed military personnel that contribute over 40 percent of all international peacekeepers deployed throughout Africa with the United Nations and African Union. There is thus a general intention to contribute 100 percent of the peacekeeping forces within Africa. In this regard, the African Union intends to build a formidable African Standby Force in the region in order to play a key role in promoting peace and security to the troubled and conflict regions on the continent.

In this connection, AFRICOM serves to support African militaries in terms of conducting hundreds of capacity building programmes every year, and not in large scale deployment of U.S. military forces on the continent. This consists of sending small teams of specialists to a number of countries to train officers based on U.S. perspective on military topics such as leadership, civil-military relations, the importance of an inspector general programme, the finer points of air-traffic control and port security, aircraft maintenance, military law, and squad tactics for a unit preparing for peacekeeping deployment or patrols against violent extremist groups, etc. Although this has to do with

U.S. operational frameworks, this should not come as a form of imposition on African partners.

In addition, AFRICOM engages in different military exercises that promote cross-border cooperation and coordination such as the Exercise Flintlock, which was planned to support countries in West and North Africa to cooperate more effectively on cross-border threats from illegal traffickers and violent extremist groups. Also, the Africa Endeavor exercise assembled 25 African nations in Gabon to coordinate their communications technology. This exercise was very difficult to pull through considering that many countries still use a hodgepodge of computers and radios. It is believed that these exercises address important challenges and provide partnering countries with opportunities to develop a shared history of collaborative work towards solving security problems. About 30 countries were engaged in the Africa Endeavor exercise in 2010 in Ghana among many other exercises which have been sustained on the African continent over the years.

Finally, Moeller (2010) observes that African people want a quick result but that AFRICOM's approach on the continent may be slow, but with steady progress. For example, Moeller noted that there has been remarkable reduction in coups as these are no longer tolerated, with people preferring to have peaceful regime change, and in some cases like in Mauritania, the military worked in line with the international community and made steady progress in restoring civilian authority. The U.S. military has played a key role in a much larger international effort to support African security sector and promote good

governance on the continent. The U.S. can contribute in diverse ways which includes provision of funding to renovate medical facilities that provide support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, conduct of short-term pilot project to train a model military unit in different countries, etc. The training often involves basic military skills training, but also these training go with much emphasis on respect for human rights, the rule of law, and an understanding of the military's role in a civil society. The activities of AFRICOM across African countries therefore center on long-term vision of sustained security programmes which will help to support the conditions for economic development, social development, and improvements in health. This is for the African people to experience progress in their lives and growing prosperity in their communities. It is in this way that AFRICOM support U.S. foreign policy in Africa, while also promoting the long-term aspirations of the African people.

Tricontinental (2021) reflects on the U.S military footprint in Africa and argues that the U.S. has been notable for having largest numbers of military bases across the world, so Africa's experience is not particularly different. The US has military bases scattered around Europe and Asia, such as Japan, British, Australia, etc., According to the US National Defense Business Operations Plan (2018-2022), the US military operates a 'global portfolio that consists of more than 568,000 assets (buildings and structures), located at nearly 4,800 sites worldwide'. In 2019, for example, AFRICOM released important details on its military bases in Africa, which can

be distinguished between those with an 'enduring footprint' (a permanent base) and those with a 'non-enduring footprint' or 'lily pads' (a semi-permanent base). According to Tricontinental (2021, p.1):

> The large presence of the US Armed Forces on the African continent is not a surprise. The US has the largest military force on the planet, both in terms of the vast number of resources that the US puts into its military and the reach of the military via its base structure as well as its naval and aerial capacity. No other military force in the world matches that of the United States, which spends more on its military budget than the next eleven countries combined. China, which follows the US in military spending, disburses only a third of what the US spends per year.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the Gulf of Guinea bears numerous advantages for the U.S. First, the crude oil from the region is of better quality than that from Latin America, with API gravity typically above 30º and often close to 40º, while that of Latin America rarely exceeds the 30º mark. Second, the region's oil contains little sulfur by international standards, an appreciable characteristic for U.S. oil companies. Third, oil in the region is mostly extracted from offshore fields, far from grounds of political instability and wars, and as such, can be easily protected from turmoil. Fourth, the numerous transit

chokepoints facing other world oil suppliers add to the comparative advantage of producers in the GoG, in terms of shipping ease, lower transportation costs, and less environmental hazards (Goldwyn & Morrison, 2005).

In addition to its strategic importance as an alternate supply of energy, the GoG also has political importance for the United States in their efforts to safeguard world security. A greater presence of the United States in the region bears political advantages for the U.S. government, given terrorism concerns that have arisen in the aftermath of 9/11. Again, the natural gas production potential of the GoG is another reason for the increased interest of the world's major energy consumers.

The United States Africa Command (US AFRICOM) is a unified combatant command responsible for U.S. military operations and engagements in Africa. Established in 2007, US AFRICOM plays a crucial role in promoting security, stability, and cooperation across the African continent. One of the key areas of focus for US AFRICOM is maritime security, particularly in the Gulf of Guinea. Based on the conclusion above, we recommend that there is urgent need for capacity building and training. Here, AFRICOM should invest in training programs for West African naval and coast guard forces. This includes providing technical expertise, equipment, and resources. More so, training should cover various aspects of maritime security, including counter-piracy measures, anti-trafficking efforts, and response to violent extremism.

Again, there is the need of addressing under-governed territories; by implication, AFRICOM should work closely with regional partners to address under-governed territories along the littoral West Africa. These areas often serve as safe havens for criminal and extremist groups. Again, by supporting governance and development initiatives, AFRICOM can reduce the appeal of these territories to VEOs and TCOs.

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INCOPORATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) TOOLS AND RESOURCES IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF IGBO LANGUAGE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a disruptive force across various sectors, and education is no exception. The development of AI has led to a multitude of innovation with profound implication for various aspects of human life. Currently, there is a paradigm shift in learning methods and for that, within the education system, there are evidence of changes in the teaching and learning method. The incorporation of AI

into the curriculum of Igbo Language will help in the reshaping of the learning methods and the functioning of educational institution. Therefore, the AI – powered tools and resources in in the teaching and learning of Igbo language will help by tailoring learning experiences to individual students, automating administration tasks, and providing instantaneous feedback. The availability of AI – powered tools and resources in the Igbo language classroom, will aid in the transformative shift, promoting inclusivity and fostering a more efficient and effective learning environment. This paper therefore focuses on the teaching and learning of Igbo Language. AI technological powered tools and resources, emerging issues in the teaching and learning of Igbo Language for economical development, AI teaching techniques to be adopted by the Igbo Language teachers, problems associated with the use of AI - powered tools and resources. It also concludes that for effective incorporation of AI – powered tools and resources for sustainable economic development in a technology driven world, the government needs to employ qualified teachers as well as ensure professional developmental plan that will facilitate the retraining of teachers especially in the areas of AI

Key Words: Language, Igbo Language Technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Introduction

Language is a system of communication that involves the use of words, symbols, gestures and sounds to convey or exchange information, ideas, thoughts, emotions and beliefs between individuals or group of

individuals. It is a system of conventional, manual or written symbols by which human beings make sounds and words, which involves the use of vocal folds and breath tomake sounds. Language is the vehicle of communication and expression used in having interactions, politics, commerce, education and culture (Robert, 2021). No society can function without the use of language, whether spoken or written.

The role of teaching and learning of Igbo language cannot be over emphasized. The Igbo language teacher, uses Igbo language to explain concepts, ideas and to pass information to the students. Igbo language facilitates understanding; helps students to comprehend and interpret new knowledge and ideas. Through the study of Igbo language, the students available to participate in class discussion. Languages are not only used for instruction, they are also yard sticks for evaluating learners' performance (Adams, 2018).

The need to communicate is paramount in every human society. Language (Igbo) is the most viable means through which human beings communicate their written or spoken form. Wherever there is a human, society, there is language, most forms of human activities solely depends on the co-operation of two or more persons. Language serves as a veritable tool of socialization.

Igbo language is the language spoken by the Igbo people of South-East, Nigeria. The language is mainly spoken by the five states in the region namelyL Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo. Some parts of Akwa Ibom, Delta, Rivers, Benue and Kogi also speak this Language.

In South, East, also and the Federal Government Unity Schools, Igbo language is one of the languages taught in schools. National Policy on Education (2014). By communicating fluently in Igbo language, individuals connect with people from diverse cultures, promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding.

Teaching and Learning

Teaching is when a person impacts information or skill to another. Impacting may mean to share experience, or communicating information (Rajagopalan, 2019). Teaching is regarded as both an art and science. As an art, it tags stress on the imaginative and artistic abilities of the teacher in creating a worthwhile situation in the classroom to enable students to learn. As science, it sheds light on the logical, mechanical, or procedural steps to be followed to attain an effective achievement of goals.

Teaching is an integral part of the process of education. It is the process of sharing one's knowledge and helping others to achieve their goals. A process in which a teacher, tries to mould, shape and develop the behaviour of students, according to the need, culture and thought of the society. Therefore, teaching of Igbo language in the secondary schools will help in molding, shopping and developing the students to adapt to the society they find themselves.

According to Bennion (2015), teaching is the process of training of an individual, through the formation of habits, the acquisition of knowledge, the inculcation of ideas and the fixing of permanent interest, Majasan (2015) sees teaching as an act common to people everywhere in the world. He further explains that, teaching is an

endeavour geared towards the transmission of knowledge for progress and stability in a society.

Teaching is an engagement with learners to enable their understanding and application of knowledge, concepts, and processes. It includes design, content, selection, delivery assessment and reflection. Onwuka (2015) is of the opinion that teaching is an attempt geared towards assisting the learner to change his behaviour in a specific content. In this sense, it could be a change of attitude, knowledge, ideas, skill or appreciation. Learning can be considered as a change that as paramount in nature because, change is brought into students by a teacher through techniques like developing specific skills, changing some attitude, or understanding specific scientific law operating behind a learning environment.

Learning can also be defined as a quantitative increase in knowledge, memorizing of facts, skills and methods abstract meaning, relating parts of their subject matter to each other and to the real world. It can also be defined as adjustment, or adaptation to a situation or improvement. The processes itself is continuous, orderly and beyond the accident of measurement (Afzal & Abal 2021). Learning takes place wherever there is teaching and as such, teaching precedes learning.

Therefore, the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State, will significantly bring about change in learners' behaviour as it relates to the learners attitude, knowledge, ideas, skill or appreciation as it translates to the learners relationship with what is learnt, the learning environment and the society at large.

Teaching and learning have witnessed a significant evolution over the years, largely influenced by landscape of educational technologies. In view of the importance of Igbo language in Secondary School in Nsukka Local Government Area, enhancing the learning experience and preparing student for the challenges of an increasingly globalized world, there is need for the teachers of Igbo language to incorporate artificial intelligence tools (AI) tools in their day-to-day activities in the classroom.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has rapidly emerged as a disruptive force across various sectors, and education is no exception. The incorporation of AI into education system is reshaping the methods of learning, teaching, and the functioning of educational institutions. AI achieves this, by tailoring learning experiences to individual students, automating administrative task, and proudly instaneous feedback. As a result, the educational setting is undergoing a transformative shift, prompting inclusivity, and fosters a more efficient and effective learning environment. Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIE) is an evolving interdisciplinary arena incorporating AI technologies to renovate and enhance teaching and learning environments.

Ethical consideration of AI Integration Education: There are numerous benefits of AI incorporation in Education but there are ethnical issues to be resolved when integrating AI in the classroom as highlighted by Almasri (2024), many researchers have stressed considering the ethical implication and the need for character education in the era of AI (Burton, et al, 2017)

Cathrin &Wkandaru, 2023). The lack of critical reflection on the pedagogical and ethical implications and the risks of implementing AI application in education underscore the need for a comprehensive ethical framework (Bozkert et al, 2021).

Additionally, the incorporation of AI into educational settings presents new ethical obligations for teachers, necessitating a re-evaluation of ethical framework and responsibilities (Adams et al. 2022).Moreover, the introduction of ethics comes in the academic training and capacity building of AI development actors can facilitate the incorporation of ethical values and the development of responsible AI (Kiemde & Kora, 2022).The ethical implications of AI in education extend beyond technical considered to encompass broader societal impacts, such as privacy protection and social justice (Hermansyah et al, 2023).

Educators and students must understand, evaluate, and familiarize themselves with the use of generative AI tools and consider their potential impacts on academic integrity. This involves recognizing when and how AI is used, assessing the reliability and validity of Ai generated output, and understanding the ethical and social implication of AI application (Akgun & Greenhow, 2021).Moreover, the application of AI in education brings questions about education equity and access to the fore.Systematic biases in AI algorithms and data can perpetuate in equities making it crucial to address these biases effectively (Adams et al, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

The dawn of the century witnessed remarkable advancements in computing and telecommunication, reshaping societal norms across various domain. The education sector, in particular, has undergone a transformative journey with the pervasive integration of technology into teaching and learning methodologies. This paradigm, shift has undeniably propelled improvements in education, fostering a dynamic learning environment. Notably, the relentless pursuit of innovation by researchers has culminated in the recent strides achieved in artificial intelligence (AI). The unprecedented sophistication achieved in AI has given rise to a plethora of tools and resources that find practical application in the field of education; notably in the teaching and learning of Igbo language.

For example, contemporary AI tools now offer invaluable assistance increase in areas such as pronunciation, refinement grammatical corrections, and comprehensive essay reviews, among other functionalities. These technological interventions have not only streamlined traditional challenging aspect of language acquisition but have also ushered in a new era of enhanced pedagogical supports. The impact of AI in refining the intricate of the Igbo language is increasingly evident; making a paradigmatic shift in the way language education is approached and executed.

Igbo language has been observed to be poorly performed in external examinations.The WAEC Chief Examiners' reporters of Igbo language in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2024 reported that the performance percentage of those years was 50%, 52%, 54% and 55%, respectively, falling short of the standards required for entry into

tertiary institutions. The statistical trend highlights a persistent challenge in the acquisition of the basic rudiments in Igbo Language. Incorporation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool in the teaching and learning of Igbo language will boost the motivation change in learners' behavour and improve the learner's language skills.

Nevertheless, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered tools and resources into Igbo language education comes with challenges. Firstly, there is a pressing need to identify the extent these Ai powered tools and resources are currently used. This initial lack of clarity hinders a comprehensive understanding of the technological setting in Igbo language instruction. Moreover, it is essential to guage the impact of those tools on the quality of teaching and learning. This necessitates an evaluation of their effectiveness in improving students' learning outcomes, engagement and the overall educational experiences. Additionally, exploring the challenges and opportunities associated with these tools is critical.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to appraise the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) –powered tools and resources in the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A., Enugu State. The specific objectives of the study are;

1) To appraise the extent to which (AI)-powered tools and resources are used in teaching and learning Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government.

2) To access the impact of AI-powered tools and resources on the quality of teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government.
3) To identify the challenges associated with the use of AI-powered tools and resources in teaching and learning of Igbo language in Nsukka L.G.A.

Research Questions

1) To what extent are AI-powered tools and resources used in teaching and learning of Igbo language in Nsukka L.G.A.?
2) What is the impact of AI-powered tool and resources on the quality of teaching and learning of Igbo language in Nsukka L.G.A.?
3) What are the challenges associated with the utilization of AI-powered tools and resources in Igbo language teaching and learning in Nsukka L.G.A.?

Methods

This research employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design according to Akinade and Owolabi, (2019), entails employing retable data collection techniques on a defined population or systematically chosen segment of the population to understand the attributes of the entire group. This design is well-suited for this study, which aimed to assess the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered tools and resources on teaching and learning of Igbo

language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area, Enugu State.

The Area of the study is Nsukka Local Government Area. Nsukka Local Government Area has thirty two (32) public schools. The area is chosen because of the poor performance of students in Igbo language. The Local Government Area is where the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) is situated. It also has fertile soil for farming for local consumption and trade. The population of the study consists of all the Senior Secondary School students in Nsukka Local Government Area, totally 2602. The population is gotten from the statistic unit of the Post Primary Schools Management Board (PPSMB) Nsukka Zone for 2024/2025 academic session. The researcher randomly selected ten (10) schools out of the thirty two (32) secondary schools in the Local Government Area. The researcher also purposefully sampled Ten (10) students from each of the selected school. Two hundred students were selected in totality, SS II students were selected because they have stayed more than four years in the school, learning Igbo language and will be registering for WAEC and NECO in the next academic session.

A structured questionnaire titled "IAI-PT&RTLILQ" with fifteen (15) items was used to generated data. The questionnaire comprised of two sections, A and B,. Section A gathered demographic information from the respondent while section B consist of 15 items organized into four clusters, employing a 4-point liker ratting scale. The questionnaire provided response options, namely Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent

(VLE) with corresponding to scores 4, 3, 2, and 1 point respectively for research question 1. For research question two and three, a 4-point likert scale of the form was used; strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), corresponding to scores of 432 and 1 respectively. Respondents expressed their level of agreement by selecting the appropriate option for each item. The questionnaires were administered to the 200 students selected from ten schools in the Local Government Area. The researcher shared the instruments with two research assistant trained by the researcher to ensure that none of the questionnaire will get lost. The data collected was analyzed the research question using mean and standard deviation. The interpretation of data involves specific numerical limits, where a mean score of 2.5 and above was deemed acceptable, and scores below 2.5 or deemed unacceptable.

Result

The data obtained with respect to the research questions were quantitatively analysed, and the result are presented below.

Research Question One: To what extent are AI-powered tool and resources used in teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A.
Cluster I: Mean and standard deviation of respondents on the extent AI-powered tools and resources are used in teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	LOA
1	To what extent do teachers of Igbo language use AI-powered writing assistant such as grammarly, wordtune, prewriting aid etc to teach Igbo language in the classroom?	2.29	1.29	LE
2	To what extent does the teacher use AI-powered pronunciation trains to teach Igbo language?	2.02	1.15	LE
3	To what extent does Igbo language teacher practice listening and speaking skills using AI-powered conversation practice tools such as Lingo Dear, mondly, and replicae to teach?	2.22	1.33	LE
4	To what extent does the Igbo language teacher use natural language processes (NLP) such as chat GBT, boad Bing etc	3.81	1.45	VHE

	in teaching Igbo language lesson			
5	Igbo language teachers frequently incorporate AI-based resources in Igbo language classes	1.07	0.25	VLE
	Grand mean and STD	2.28	1.32	LE

Table 1 shows the result of the analysis of data on the extent of AI-powered tools usage in teaching and learning of Igbo language. The mean and standard deviation analysis offers insight into the level of adoption. AI-powered writing aid, recorded a low extent of usage, with a mean score of 2.29 and a standard deviation of 1.29. Similarly, AI-powered pronunciation trainers reported a low extent with a mean of 2.02 and a standard deviation of 1.15. The practice of listening and speaking skills using AI-powered conversation tools showed a low extent of engagement with a mean of 2.22 and a standard deviation of 1.33. Notably, the use of Natural processors (NLP) like chatGPT, bard and Bing indicated a Very High Extent of usage, supported by mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.45 contrarily; the perception of teachers frequently incorporating AI-powered resources in Igbo language teaching scored a Very Low Extent with a mean of 1.07 and standard deviation of 0.25. The overall cluster mean and standard deviation of 2.28 and 1.32 respectively suggest a low extent of AI-tool adoption.

Research Question Two: What are the impact of AI-powered tool and resources on the quality of teaching and learning of Igbo language in Nsukka L.G.A.?

Cluster 2: Mean and standard deviation of respondent on the impact of AI-powered tools and resources on the quality of teaching and learning Igbo language in Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	LOA
6	The use of AI-powered tools has positively influenced the overall quality of Igbo language teaching and learning in senior secondary schools	3.61	1.34	SA
7	AI-enhanced lessons have improved students' engagement in Igbo language classes	3.51	1.38	SA
8	AI tools have contributed to more personalized learning experiences for students in Igbo language class	3.24	1.26	A
9	AI powered tools and resources have made learning of Igbo language more attractive	3.84	1.37	SA

10	Students believe that AI-powered tools and resources have positively impacted their language learning outcome	3.35	1.27	SA
	Grand mean and STD	3.51	1.48	SA

Table 2, present the result of data analysis on research question two which seeks to assess the impact of AI-powered tools and resources on the quality of teaching and learning of Igbo language in senior secondary schools in Nsukka L.G.A. Firstly, the influence of AI-powered tools on the overall quality of teaching and learning of Igbo language in senior secondary schools in Nsukka L.G.A was general positive, with a mean score of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 1.34, categorizing it as strongly agree. Additionally, AI-enhanced lessons were reported to improve student engagement, aliging with a strongly agree categorization evidenced by the mean of 3.51, with a standard deviation of 1.38, suggesting a positive contribution to students' participation in Igbo language classes.

However, opinions were mixed regarding the contribution of AI-tools to more personalized learning experiences as suggests by a mean score of 3.24 and standard deviation of 1.26, which is agree. Furthermore, AI-powered tools and resources were perceived to make Igbo language learning more attractive, as supported by a mean score 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.37, falling within the strongly agree category. Lastly, while students'

held mixed views on the direct positive impact of AI tools on Igbo language learning outcomes as evidenced by the mean of 3.35 with a standard deviation of 1.27, the overall assessment, reflected in the cluster mean and standard deviation of 3.51 and 1.48 respectively, suggests a predominantly positive sentiment towards the impact of AI-powered tools on the quality of teaching and learning of Igbo language is senior secondary schools in Nsukka L.G.A.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges associated with the utilization of AI-powered tools and resources in the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary School in Nsukka L.G.A.

Cluster Three: The challenges associated with the utilization of AI-powered tools and resources in the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A.

S/N	Items	Mean	STD	LOA
11	AI-powered tools have led to increased complexities in the learning processes in the Igbo language teaching	3.42	0.82	A
12	There is lack of sufficient training and support for students to effectively integrate AI tools into	3.64	0.48	SA

	their Igbo language learning process.			
13	AI tools and resources have the potential to foster dependency and encourage students to become inactive relying on them to complete their assignment	3.68	0.55	SA
14	The integration of AI-resources has made assessment and grading processes in Igbo language more difficult due to unethical use of AI by students.	3.39	0.96	A
15	Limited access to technology hinders the effective use of AI in Igbo language teaching and learning	4.00	0.00	SA
	Grand mean and STD	3.63	0.60	

Table 3 shows the analysis of students' perspectives on the third research question aimed at investigating the challenges and opportunities linked to the use AI-powered tools and recourses in Igbo language teaching and learning in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local

Government Area. The table above, specifically focuses on the challenges associated with the utilization of AI-powered tools and resources in Igbo language teaching and learning in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A.

The participant acknowledged that AI-powered tools have introduced increased complexities into the learning process, as reflected in a mean score of 3.42, suggesting a moderate level of agreement. Additionally, the survey highlighted a significant concern regarding the perceived lack of sufficient training and support for students to effectively integrate AI tools into their Igbo language learning process, as seen by a high mean score of 3.64. This indicates a strong agreement among participants. Moreover, participants strongly agreed, with a mean score of 3.68, that AI tools have the potential to foster dependency among students, learning to decreased activity and reliance on these tools for completing assignment. The integration of AI resources was also noted to impact assessment and grading processes, with concerns about unethical uses of AI by students as seen in the mean score of 3.39. Lastly, limited access to technology was found to be a significant barrier hindering the effective use of AI in the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area.

Discussion on Findings

The study investigated the perception of students on the incomporation of AI-powered tools in the teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka Local Government Area. It is evident

from the findings that the students acknowledge,that the level of deployment of AI-powered tools and resources in teaching and learning of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A. is still in low ebb. The result suggests that most of the students are not using AI-powered tools and resources employed in teaching and learning Igbo language.

However, students generally acknowledge the positive influence of AI on the quality of education, student engagement, and attractiveness of learning of these findings align with the works of Mushthora, Sycertatun, Tahalete, Teusssa, Rasmifia and Mokodensboet al, (2023) and Ali (2020) which emphasize the potential benefits of AI in enhancing overall learning experiences, reflecting the diverse nature of students perspectives. Learners on the other hand, overwhelming recognized the complexities introduced by AI tools, which is in line with the sentiments expressed in studies by Chem Xle and Hwarng (2021). The content acknowledgement of challenges suggests a need for a specific approach to AI incorporation in teaching.

Summary of the Study

There have been both opportunities and challenges brought by the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into the educational system which has resulted in a revolution in the teaching and learning process. This study employs a comprehensive survey approach to obtain insight from students of Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A in order to explore the influence of AI-powered tools and resources in the teaching and learning

of Igbo language in senior secondary schools, in Nsukka L.G.A.

The study x-rayed the concept of learning Igbo language, teaching, learning and artificial intelligence. The study employed a descriptive survey methodology, utilizing a purposive random sampling technique and likertscale for data collected, the study investigated several aspect of Artificial Intelligence incorporation. These aspects include the impact that AI incorporation has on learning process and the difficulties encountered.

The result of the study show that participants have a variety of view pointsregarding the influence that AI-powered technologies have on the Igbo language instruction. Students see the advantages that Artificial Intelligence tools offer in terms of easing learning process, such as providing assistance with pronunciation and grammatical correction, while educators realize the potential these technologies have to improve teaching approaches. Nevertheless, there are problems that arise with regard to the dependency that is encouraged by AI tools, the potential ethical difficulties that may occur in evaluation processes, and the requirement for power training and support in order to incorporate AI effectively.

Conclusion of the Findings

The study has offered insight into the perception of the student of Igbo language in Senior Secondary Schools in Nsukka L.G.A., regarding the integration of AI-powered tools and resources into the teaching of Igbo language. The findings highlight a generally positive sentiment towards the impact of AI on the quality of education and student engagement. However, challenges

such as the need for increase supported adaptation in teaching styles were recognized by the students.

Recommendation

1) The Post Primary Schools Management Board should implement comprehensive training programs for teachers and students of Igbo language to enhance their proficiency in interpreting AI tools into Igbo language teaching addressing the recognized challenges and ensuring effective use.
2) There is need to foster collaboration between educators, curriculum planners, and technologies to design a curriculum that strategically incorporate AI-powered tools. This collaboration should focus on aligning technology with educational goals.
3) The Schools Management Board should endavour to establish robust support structure for educators to adapt their teaching styles to align with capabilities of AI tools. This includes ongoing professional development opportunities and mentorship programs.

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WH-CONSTRUCTION IN NTEJE DIALECT OF IGBO LANGUAGE

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Abstract

This study investigates WH-constructions in the Nteje dialect of Igbo, a speech variety spoken in Anambra State, Nigeria. Wh-constructions, which are interrogative structures involving WH-words such as *gịnị* 'what', *òlee* 'which', and *kedụ* 'how', are central to the syntax-semantics interface of Igbo and other Benue-Congo languages (Manfredi, 1993; Uwalaka, 1995). While Standard Igbo Wh-questions have received extensive attention in generative syntax and descriptive linguistics (Nwachukwu, 1987; Uchechukwu, 2008), dialectal variation, particularly in Nteje, remains underexplored. This study fills that gap by offering a descriptive and theoretical account of how Wh-elements are formed, positioned, and interpreted in the dialect.Data were elicited through structured interviews, oral narratives, and spontaneous speech recordings from native speakers of Nteje. The analysis is framed within the Lexical-Functional Grammar and Minimalist Program perspectives, which account for both surface variation and deep structural constraints (Chomsky, 1995; Bresnan, 2001). Findings reveal that Nteje dialect permits both *ex-situ*Wh-movement (fronting of WH-phrases) and *in-situ*Wh-constructions, with the choice influenced by discourse-pragmatic factors such as focus and emphasis. For instance, while ex-situ constructions are preferred for contrastive focus, in-situ Wh-forms are frequently used in casual speech for information-seeking purposes, echoing patterns reported in Standard Igbo (Nwachukwu, 1995;

Amaechi & Georgi, 2021).Additionally, the study shows that Nteje Wh-constructions display unique morpho-syntactic features, such as the retention of dialect-specific Wh-forms, the optionality of focus markers (*ka*), and prosodic strategies that distinguish echo-questions from genuine information-seeking questions.The study concludes that Wh-constructions in the Nteje dialect are both structurally and pragmatically versatile, reflecting the dialect's dynamic interaction between syntactic constraints and communicative needs. Beyond contributing to Igbo dialectology, the findings have implications for general theories of Wh-movement, focus marking, and typological variation in question formation across Niger-Congo languages.

Keywords: Generative Syntax, Igbo language, Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG), Nteje dialect, Wh-construction

Introduction

Studies (Ginzburg & Sag, 2000; &Siemund, 2001)have shown that interrogatives are one of the members of the functional categories that have been proven to exhibit presence across all human languages, though there are various realisations and usage across languages. It is prominently relevant and highly imperative in everyday communication. Speakers manipulate the structure of their linguistic repertoire in the process of eliciting information from referents, thereby making interrogative in natural languages the basis of fundamental

communication. Among such interrogative realisations is the Wh-construction.

The subject of Wh-construction, therefore, is examined within the general knowledge of the grammatical categories in a language, specifically within the superordinate class of interrogatives. This brings to the fore the need to understand that grammar of every language is usually categorized into the open/lexical and closed/grammatical classes (Green & Evans, 2006). Thus, aspects of the grammar of language to which interrogative belongs are categorized under closed class system. To this end, an understanding of interrogatives in general and Wh-construction in particular is indispensable for understanding universal grammatical principles, syntactic dependencies, and cross-linguistic variation in sentence structures.

Following the above postulations, this study examinesWh-construction in Nteje dialect of Igbo language. The study aims at identifying the various classes of Wh-construction in the dialect,document the various Wh-words and their usage in different forms and account for parametric peculiarities of the Wh-system in Nteje dialect, a remotely populated community in Anambra State.Nteje is the administrative center of Oyi LGA (Anambra State) and belongs to the Omambala/Oyi dialect cluster. Dialectological studies report that Nteje, Awkuzu, Aguleri, Anaku, Nsugbe, Ụmụolum, among others, pattern together in consonant inventory size with some systematic substitutions (e.g., /f/ ~ /v/) relative to Standard Igbo; Oyi/Omambala varieties overall are

documented with 26 - 27 consonants (Nwaozuzu, 2008). These phonological specifics are crucial because WH-forms in Igbo are sensitive to segmental inventories and tone, yielding local allomorphy (*òlee/olé*, *kedu/kéduu*, etc.) and possibly affecting the surface shape of WH-fronted strings and complementiser vowels/tones without altering the underlying syntax.

Although very few studies are dedicated to WH- in Nteje, a number ofpeer-reviewed studies on WH-construction in Igbo surfaced in the literature searched(Ikegwuonu, 2018; Uwalaka, 2003; &Nwankwegu, 2016).Consensus from Igbo-wide and nearby-dialect studies strongly predicts that Nteje patterns with Igbo generally: Wh-in-situ is available; Wh-fronting to a focus position with *ka* is robust; embedded WHs employ complementisers (often *na*) and pied-piping appears under focus/left-peripheral movement, with local phonological realisations characteristic of Omambala/Oyi speech.This study, which focuses on the analysis of wh-construction in Nteje dialect, provides additional contribution to Igbo studies on interrogative construction.

Review of Literature

WH-constructions

The term, "WH-constructions",refer to those syntactic and semantic patterns that form content questions (who, what, where, which, how, why, etc.) and, more generally, A′-dependencies where a focused/interrogative phrase (the filler) is interpreted in relation to a nonlocal position

(the gap). Early transformational and descriptive work framed Wh-phenomena in terms of movement (filler–gap dependencies) and identified the empirical generalisations that any theory must explain: the forms of Wh-items, their possible surface positions, island effects that restrict long-distance dependencies, and prosodic/intonational correlates of interrogation. Ross's (1967) dissertation is the classic source for the discovery of island constraints, and Chomsky's (1977) "On Wh-Movement" formalised many movement-based generalizations that became the touchstone for later analyses.

From a cross-linguistic typology, a major strand of work distinguishes languages that obligatorily front Wh-phrases to a clause-initial position (e.g., English matrix wh-fronting) from languages that allow or require Wh-items to remain in-situ (e.g., Mandarin Chinese, Japanese in many analyses), and from languages that permit both strategies depending on information structure or clause type (Simpson, 1995; Simpson, 2008; Oda, 2008; &Bell,2019).In languages like English, Wh-phrases typically move to Spec-CP in matrix interrogatives. This pattern is well captured by transformational accounts of movement (Chomsky, 1977).Huang's (1982) dissertation on Chinese provided seminal arguments that languages like Mandarin may leave Wh-items in their base positions and obtain question interpretation by covert mechanisms (e.g., LF movement or operators plus an interrogative Q-feature); this account launched a large literature on in-situ Wh and on whether "movement" is always overt.Studies (Stjepanovic, 1999; Bošković, 2002; &Newman, 2021) also show that many languages adopt both options (e.g.,

multiple Wh strategies are available conditioned by focus, clause type, or the presence of special particles). Typological work emphasises that these are not binary categories but points on a parameter/strategy continuum. A collected volume and surveys (e.g., edited volumes on Wh-movement) discuss this typology in depth.

Several distinct formal mechanisms have been proposed to derive Wh-dependencies; many modern analyses combine ideas. Classical transformational accounts treat WH-fronting as A′-movement to Spec-CP (with Subjacency and island constraints), thereby presenting the modern generative reformulation that anchors much subsequent work (Chomsky, 1977). For Wh-in-situ languages, some analyses posit covert movement at LF, allowing a semantic operator to establish the dependency without an overt fronting step. At the same time, other proposals employ operator-binding plus feature checking (Q-features) or alternative semantics (Huang, 1982).

Recent minimalist-inspired accounts formulate Wh-dependencies in terms of probing/Agree: a Q-head in C probes and establishes a dependency with an uninterpretable/interrogative feature on the Wh-phrase; overt movement may result when a feature requires overt valuation/movement. This view helps explain optional fronting: whether movement is overt or covert depends on where and how feature checking is satisfied. Rizzi's (1997) influential proposal decomposed the CP domain into multiple functional projections (ForceP, TopP, FocP, FinP, etc.), specifying where interrogative/focal elements land. This cartographic approach linked Wh-fronting to

movement into a dedicated left-peripheral focus or interrogative position and connected interrogation to discourse structure (topic/focus). Rizzi's (1997)decomposition remains central in analyses that connect Wh-syntax to information structure.

WH-Construction in Igbo

Early and subsequent descriptions agree that Igbo has two robust strategies for content questions (Wh-questions): (a) Wh-in-situ (the interrogative item remains in its base position) and (b) ex-situ/fronting to the left periphery, typically associated with focus morphology and/or a complementiser (often speltká/ka) (Goldsmith, 1981; Uwalaka, 1991/1997; Emenanjo, 1978; Nwachukwu, 1995; Maduagwu, 2012; &Nwankwegu, 2016) thus, setting the scene for Igbo Wh-constructions at a glance. In neutral information-seeking questions, Igbo allows sentence-internal Wh (e.g., object position), while focus-driven readings favour leftward movement to a position adjacent to a focus head (often analysed as Foc°), with *ka* surfacing in many dialects. This duality (in-situ vs. ex-situ) underpins most theoretical accounts of Igbo interrogatives.

A widely cited descriptive baseline study is Emenanjo's(1978) grammar, which catalogs Wh-forms (e.g., *gịnị* 'what', *onye* 'who', *òlèe/olé* 'where/how/which' in dialectal distribution) and shows how focus and interrogation interact morphosyntactically

with tone and clause structure. Later works refine this by tying Wh-fronting to the left periphery (Cartography) and by distinguishing discourse-driven focus from purely interrogative movement (Aboh, 2004; &Rizzi, 1997/2001; as applied to Igbo by Osuagwu & Anyanwu, 2020; Uwalaka, 1991/1997).

Several studies also note that many Igbo questions are well-formed with the Wh element left in base position, with interrogative force obtained via clause-typing (Q-feature) and prosody; on theoretical accounts, this may involve LF-movement or Agree rather than overt displacement (Goldsmith, 1981; Maduagwu, 2012; &Nwankwegu, 2016). Igbo thus contrasts with English, which obligatorily fronts WH in matrix clauses (Minimalist comparisons highlight this typological split).

Observable in the Igbo Wh is its fronting with a focus/complementiser. When the WH is focused or contrastive, it typically moves to the left periphery and surfaces adjacent to *ka/ká* (variously analysed as a complementiser or focus marker), yielding the familiar [WH + ka + TP] pattern. Nwachukwu (1995) treats these as focus-driven movement, while Uwalaka (1991/1997) and subsequent cartographic analyses place the WH in Spec, FocP or Spec, CP, depending on the clause type. Empirical diagnostics include island-sensitivity, tone/intonation, and resumptive strategies in some embedded contexts.Furthermore, like many Niger-Congo languages, Igbo allows echo questions and polar-Q + WH follow-up sequences where the WH item is prosodically highlighted but needn't move; this sits alongside a

separate system of polar question marking (often with a low-tone interrogative particle) described in reappraisals of Igbo polar-Qs (relevant as a baseline for clause-typing distinct from WH focus).

Across the literature, the interrogative force is encoded in the C-domain, with *ka* and *na* among the elements implicated in clause-typing and complementation. A recent feature-based account shows *na* introducing embedded interrogatives (both yes/no and WH) in certain environments, while *ka* participates in matrix interrogatives and focus constructions; the distribution is dialect-sensitive (and sometimes tone-sensitive). These proposals harmonize with cartographic claims about dedicated Int(errogative) and Foc positions (Rizzi 1997/2001). Additionally, structural representations in Nwankwegu (2016) explicitly model Igbo WH as entering an Agree relation with an interrogative head (Q-affix), which optionally triggers overt movement to Spec,CP for interpretive or morphological reasons, consistent with the mixed in-situ/fronting typology observed in usage.

Works devoted to the anatomy of Igbo Wh-phrases document variation in whether the entire DP/PP pied-pipes in fronting contexts and how Wh-heads vs. Wh-modifiers behave (e.g., *kedu* 'what/how', *ólèeebe* 'which place/where', dialectal *olé/òlee*). Pied-piping is more robust in focused/fronted configurations than in Wh-in-situ. The literature also notes dialectal allomorphy in Wh-forms and in the presence/absence of overt focus morphemes. While central/standard Igbo underlies most classic descriptions, dialect studies (e.g., Mbaise-Igbo on

WH and complementation) underscore that WH strategies are shared but phonetically and morphosyntactically tuned by dialect-specific inventories (e.g., realisation of kedu, distribution of òlee/olé, tone patterns, and complementiser choices). These studies reinforce that in-situ vs. ex-situ is a language-wide option set, while the surface morphology varies by dialect. From the foregoing, there is a clear gap in literature showing that detailed, peer-reviewed descriptions of Wh-syntax in the Nteje dialect are not readily available. This shows the need for a study of this nature.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is anchored around two complementary theoretical frameworks: the Minimalist Program (MP) within generative syntax and the Lexical-Functional Grammar (LFG) framework, with supporting insights from Focus Theory and Pragmatics of Question Formation. These theories provide the tools for explaining both the structural positions of WH-elements in the Nteje dialect and their pragmatic functions in discourse.

The Minimalist Program

The Minimalist Program(Chomsky, 1995) provides the syntactic foundation for analyzing Wh-constructions. It assumes that Wh-questions are derived through operations such as Merge and Move (Internal Merge), guided by economy principles. In Standard Igbo, Wh-elements may appear ex-situ (fronted to the clause-initial position) or in-situ, depending on the interaction of focus,

scope, and movement constraints (Nwachukwu, 1995; Amaechi & Georgi, 2021).For example, Wh-fronting (*Ònyéká Í hụ̀?* "Who did you see?") is analyzed as movement of the Wh-phrase to the specifier of a functional projection in the left periphery, often identified as FocusP (Rizzi, 1997). Conversely, in-situ forms (*Ì hụ̀ ònyé?* "You saw who?") are interpreted via unpronounced operator movement at Logical Form (LF); in line with cross-linguistic accounts of WH in-situ languages (Aboh, 2004). Applying MP to the Nteje dialect enables the study to capture whether Wh-movement is obligatory, optional, or conditioned by discourse features such as emphasis.

Lexical-Functional Grammar (Bresnan 2001)

While MP accounts for hierarchical syntactic relations, LFG complements it by focusing on the mapping between surface syntactic forms (c-structure) and grammatical functions (f-structure). Wh-constructions in Igbo dialects often exhibit dialectal variation in agreement, focus marking, and auxiliary positioning (Uwalaka, 1995; Nwachukwu, 1987). LFG allows the researchers to account for how Nteje WH-forms are licensed within functional categories such as *subject*, *object*, and *adjunct*, without assuming deep transformational movement.For example, in Nteje, the optional use of the focus marker *ka* in Wh-fronting can be described as a functional feature assignment in f-structure rather than strict syntactic movement. This provides a flexible explanatory framework, especially where dialect-specific morphosyntactic patterns diverge from Standard Igbo.

Focus Theory and Information Structure

Igbo Wh-constructions are closely linked to focus marking, as Wh-phrases typically signal new or contrastive information (Nwachukwu, 1995; Amaechi & Georgi, 2021). In the Nteje dialect, the interaction between Wh-elements and focus markers (*ka*) reveals how questions serve to organize discourse information. Following Lambrecht (1994), Wh-questions are modeled as focus structures that align with the pragmatic presupposition–assertion distinction. This framework explains why certain Wh-constructions in Nteje are used for neutral information-seeking while others serve contrastive or emphatic functions.

Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, combining qualitative field methods with theoretical analysis. The focus is on identifying the structural, semantic, and pragmatic properties of Wh-constructions in the Nteje dialect of Igbo. Given that Wh-questions are central to syntax–semantics interface studies (Chomsky, 1995; Nwachukwu, 1995; Amaechi & Georgi, 2021), the design seeks to collect authentic linguistic data, classify the observed patterns, and interpret them within a formal framework.The research was conducted in Nteje, a town in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria. Nteje is one of the major dialect areas of the Anambra Igbo cluster. Fieldwork was concentrated in the

central quarters of the town to ensure exposure to the dialect's most stable speech forms.

The target population consisted of eight (8) native speakers of Nteje dialect who acquired it as their first language and used it actively in daily communication. To minimize dialectal interference, only individuals who had spent most of their formative years in Nteje were considered. Regarding data collection, structured elicitation, spontaneous speech recordings and participant observation are the three complementary methods employed to elicit data for the study.

In terms of data analysis, collected Wh-forms were classified into categories (subject WH, object WH, locative WH, and manner WH. Their syntactic positions (in-situ vs. ex-situ) and morphological realizations were identified. Also, the structures were analyzed using principles of the Minimalist Program (Chomsky, 1995) to account for movement, operator-variable binding, and focus projection. Insights from Lexical-Functional Grammar (Bresnan, 2001) were incorporated to explain surface constituency and functional mapping.The study adhered to ethical research practices. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, assured of anonymity, and allowed to withdraw at any stage, and were also informedthat data collected are used solely for academic purposes.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents a detailed analysis of the data collected. The researchers' concern here is to present the operations of the Wh-interrogatives in Nteje dialect and exemplify their existence. Data for this studyare presented and analysed based on the research questions raised in this study.

Representation ofWh-forms in Nteje Dialect

In the dialect, the collected data revealed that there are many linguistic elements used in the expression of Wh-interrogatives. These expressions are classified into two: Basic Wh-proforms and Non-basic Wh-proforms.The Basic Wh-proforms are those Wh-elements that are mandatorily required in the sentence that designed for interrogatives.The data below exemplify their usage of Wh-proforms:

1) ND: Onye no n'ulo nu?
   (WH)Who stay in house that
   Who is in that house?

2) ND: Keduele I ga-abia?
   (WH)When time you AUX come
   When will you come?

3) ND: Gụnụ ka I meje?
   (WH)What that you AUX do
   What are you doing?

4) ND: Ebee ka unu na-eje
(WH)Where that 2PLAUX go-FUT
Where are you people going?

The above data showed that the Wh-proforms are obligatory when making content questions in Nteje dialect. This simply means that their absence in expressions will render such expressions incomplete. They are regularly used by speakers of Nteje dialect in their use of content interrogatives.Therefore, the Wh-proforms*Onye*, *Kedu*, *Gụnụ* and *Ebee* play obligatory roles in the expressions where they occur. The non-basic Wh-proforms, on the other hand, are used mainly as adjuncts. They are used in sentences and can be removed without altering the intended meaning of the expressions. As a matter of fact, the use of '*kedu'* can be used in replacement of some of the Wh-adjuncts. In the data below, the non-basic Wh-proformsare used to show how Wh-adjuncts function in Nteje dialect:

5) ND: I nyere m ego mgbe one?
You give-PST me money time when (WH)
When did you give me money?

6) ND: I ji maka nGụnụ bia elee?
You hold because what(WH) come here
You are here because of what?

7) ND: Ị bịara ịkaa ugboro nọọne?
You com-PST here many how (WH)
How many times did you come here?

8) ND: Ego one dị n'imeakpa gị?
Money how (WH) is at inside pocket you
How much is in your pocket?

From the above data, the Wh-elements are used as adjuncts in the Nteje dialect of Igbo language. These Wh-proforms*mgbe one*, *ugboro* nọọne and *one*are also used as adjuncts in sentences where other basic Wh-proforms are used, as seen in data 5-8. The result of removing the adjuncts from any of the expressions is that the expression will remain a meaningful and complete sentence. For instance, if the Wh-adjunct '*mgbe one*' (when) is removed from the expression, we will be left with 'I nyere m ego?' (Did you give me money?), which is still a complete expression.The data hereare evidence in support of the existence of Wh-interrogatives. Due to the fact that this research focuses more on the wh-movement and the issues that surround it, the attention will be fully turned towards the Wh-movement in Nteje dialect.

Wh-words in Nteje Dialect and their Uses in various Wh-argument Forms

The uses of the Wh-arguments are shown in the data below:

9) ND: Gụnụ ka Uche gooro?
What do-PST Uche gooro
What did Uche buy?

10) ND: Onye bụ Uche?
Who is Uche?

11) ND: Uche o gooro ụgbanị maka ngụnụ?
Uche he buy-PST a car why
Why did Uche buy a car?

12) ND: ụgbanị nkenọọne ka Uche gooro?
Car which did Uche buy
Which car did Uche buy?

13) ND: Ebee ka Uche gooroụgbanị?
Where did Uche buy a car?

14) ND: Otu none ka Uche gooroụgbanị?
How did Uche buy a car?

15) ND: ụgbanị o bu nke onye?
Car this is for who
Whose car is this?

The data above show the Wh-arguments that exist in Nteje dialect and how they appear in sentences. It should be noted here that *Gụnụ* and *ngụnụ* can be used interchangeably. The same thing applies to 'none' and 'one'. The use of these forms is elaborated uponbelow.

Representation of Wh-construction in Nteje Dialect and Standard Igbo

Studies have shown that Wh-construction refers to a system that accounts for how Wh-forms function within an expression. This system describes the movement of wh-words within an expression, their operations and their

functions. The main interest of researchers in the phenomenon of Wh-interrogatives has been on movement, the nature of Wh-elements and their behaviour in different expressions.

Wh-System in Nteje Dialect

Generally, Wh-movement systems are divided into two types, syntactic Wh-movement and LF Wh-movement. The Wh-parameter distinguishes those languages where the wh-words obligatorily move to the left most edge of the construction in question formation belongsto the syntactic Wh-movement, anything different from this is ungrammatical in these languages. On the other hand, languages where the wh-words remain at their base generated position (i.e*in situ*) belong to the LF wh-movement. Chinese and Japanese are examples of languages that operate LF Wh-movement. In other words, they do not move to the left most position as seen in the English language.

However, the system in the Igbo language poses a peculiar challenge. Unlike what is obtained in the two language classifications according to the Wh-movement considerations, Igbo language permits the two forms of movement. This is also evident in the Nteje dialect, the Wh-proforms can move to the left most position and can also remain *in-situ* as shown in data 12 (*Ugboani nke nọọne ka Uche gooro?*) and 13 (*Ebee ka Uche goorọụgbanị?*) respectfully and 17(*Akubuilogooronnaya ụgbanị*) and 18 (*Onye ka Akubuilogoorọụgbanị?*). Another peculiarity is that almost all the arguments can be

questioned in the dialect.It is needful to point out here that there are no differences between Nteje dialect and the Standard Igbo dialect when it comes to construction of Wh-expressions. The only difference exists in their phonetic representation. For instance, 'what' in Nteje is *Gụnụ*while it is *gini*in Standard Igbo;other instances include:

ND		SI
Maka ngụnụ	-	Maka gini
Nke none	-	Nkeole
Otu none	-	Otu ole

The data below elaborate further on the instances of Wh-movement in Nteje dialect.

16) ND: Akubuilogooronnaya ụgbaṇị (declarative)
Akubuilobuy-PST father his car.
Akubuilo bought a car for his father.

17) ND: AkubuilogooronnayaGụnụ?
Akubuilobuy-PST father his what (WH)
Akubuilo bought what for his father?

18) ND: Onye ka Akubuilogooro ụgbaṇị?
(WH) Who that Akubuilobuy-PST car
Who did Akubuilo buy a car for?

19) ND: Onye ka Akubuilogooro ụgbaṇị?
(WH)Who that Akubuilobuy-PST car
Who did Akubuilo buy a car for?

20) ND: Gụnụ ka Akubuilo gooro nna ya?

(WH)What that Akubuilo bought father his
What did Akubuilo buy for his father?

21) ND: Onye gooroonyengụnụ?
(WH)Who bought (WH)who for (WH)what
Who bought what for whom?

As can be seen from the above data, the operation of Wh-system and wh-movement in the Nteje is quite unique, all the arguments can be questioned.Beyond the questioning of the Wh-element, it can be seen in data 19 that prepositional object can be fronted. In data 20, it is evident that the indirect object can be fronted. In data 21, the subject can be fronted.The data below further account for how arguments can be questioned in Nteje dialect, including adjuncts (which will be underlined).

22) ND: Omenka gburu ewu ụnyaahụ na be ha.
Omenka kill-pst goat yesterday at place their
Omenka killed a goat at their place yesterday.

23) ND: Onye gburu ewu . ụnyaahụ na be ha?
(WH)Who kill-pst goat yesterday at place their
Who killed a goat at their place yesterday?

24) ND: Omenka gburu gụnụụnyaahụ na be ha?
Omenka kill-pst what(WH) yesterday at place their
Omenka killed what at their place yesterday?

25) ND: Omenka gburu ewu n'ebe. ụnyaahụ ?
Omenka kill-pst goat at where(WH) yesterday

Where did Omenka kill goat yesterday?

26) ND: Omenka gburu ewu na be ha mgbe none?
Omenka kill-pst goat at place their time how(WH)?
What time did Omenka kill goat at their place?

27) ND: Onye gburu ngụnụ n'ebeemgbe none?
(WH)Who kill-pst what(WH) at where(WH) when(WH)?
Who killed what, where and when?

The presented data showed instances where arguments and adjuncts were questioned. Data 22 is a declarative sentence. In data 23, it is seen that 'Omenka' becomes 'Onye', which is used to question a noun that represents a person, when it is questioned. In data 24, 'ewu' is questioned to become 'gini', which represents aWh-argument for an object or an animal. In data 25, the adjunct '*na be ha*' is questioned to become a Wh-adjunct for place '*ebe e*'. Data 26 also shows how the adjunct for time '. *Ụnyaahụ'* in Standard Igbo becomes '*mgbe one*' after being questioned. Finally, data 27 shows that all the arguments and adjuncts in an expression can be questioned at the same time, just as '*Omenka*", '*ewu'*, '*na be ha*' and '. *ụnyaahụ'* were questioned and became *nye'*, '*ngụnụ'*, '*n'ebee*' and '*mgbe none*' in Nteje dialect.

Application of the Principle and Parameters Theory

Principles and Parameters Theory is a framework within generative linguistics in which the syntax of a natural language is described in accordance with general principles(rules of grammar) and specific (i.e markers, switches) that are either syntactic unit should be either a lexical item or a phrase. When the item is moved, it leaves behind a trace following the empty category principle. This empty category is known as a trace, and a trace constituent is said to be the antecedent of the trace. A Wh-word in pre-sentence position must have moved from some position internally within the sentence into its present position.Below are a few data in Nteje dialect that show how Principle and Parameters Theory accounts for the nature of Wh-parameters Theory in Nteje dialect.

28) ND: Obi gooroakwa (Declarative)
Obi buy-PSTclothe
Obi bought a cloth.

29) ND: Obi goorogini?
Obi buy-PSTgini?
What did Obi buy?

30) ND: Gini ka Obi gooro?
What AUX Obi buy-PST
What did Obi buy?

The above data showed that unlike English language, Wh-arguments in Nteje can be fronted and also remain *in-situ*. The data further showed that this can happen without

altering the meaning of the expression.The major peculiarity between the Wh-system of Nteje dialect and other languages like English language, as stated earlier, is that similar to the Standard Igbo dialect, Nteje dialect can either move to the left most position or remain *in-situ*.

Conclusion

From our discussion so far, findings from the study indicatehow Nteje dialect permits both *ex-situ* Wh-movement (fronting of Wh-phrases) and *in-situ*Wh-constructions, with the choice influenced by discourse-pragmatic factors such as focus and emphasis. For instance, while ex-situ constructions are preferred for contrastive focus, in-situ Wh-forms are frequently used in casual speech for information-seeking purposes, echoing patterns reported in Standard Igbo.

The analysis also showed that there are many linguistic elements used in the expression of Wh-interrogatives. These expressions are classified into two: Basic Wh-proforms and Non-basic Wh-proforms.The Basic Wh-proforms are those Wh-elements that are mandatorily required in the sentence designed for interrogatives; thus,the Wh-proforms are obligatory when making content questions in Nteje dialect while the non-basic Wh-proforms, on the other hand, are used mainly as adjuncts. They are used in sentences and can be removed without altering the intended meaning of the expressions.

Additionally, the study shows that Nteje Wh-constructions display unique morpho-syntactic features,

such as the retention of dialect-specific Wh-forms, the optionality of focus markers (*ka*), and prosodic strategies that distinguish echo-questions from genuine information-seeking questions. Semiotic analysis of intonation and emphasis further demonstrates how pragmatic meaning is encoded in Wh-forms, aligning with cross-linguistic observations in Kwa and other Niger-Congo languages (Aboh, 2004; Güldemann, 2010).Thisstudy concludes that Wh-constructions in the Nteje dialect are both structurally and pragmatically versatile, reflecting the dialect's dynamic interaction between syntactic constraints and communicative needs.

In view of the foregoing, we suggest that further study be conducted on Nteje and nearby towns. A focused Nteje study should, therefore, document the WH lexicon (forms, tones, allomorphs) and map them to Standard Igbo cognates. Further studies that elicit controlled contrasts (in-situ vs. fronting) across subject, object, oblique, and PP-WH should be caried out. Also, of importance is a study on test complementizer choice (ka vs. na), tone on C-heads, and prosody in clause-typing. Comparative study with nearby Omambala towns (Awkuzu, Aguleri, Nsugbe) to calibrate what is Nteje-specific vs. area-wide should be examined.

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IMPACT DE LA TRADUCTION DES ROMANS AFRICAINS SUR L'ENSEIGNEMENT DU FRANÇAIS LANGUE ETRANGÈRE (FLE) : ENJEUX LINGUISTIQUES, CULTURELS ET PÉDAGOGIQUES

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Résumé

Cet article examine l'impact de la traduction de romans africains sur l'enseignement du français langue étrangère (FLE), en explorant les dimensions linguistiques, culturelles et pédagogiques. La littérature africaine anglophone connaît une reconnaissance internationale croissante, sa traduction vers la langue française, puis, sa réintroduction dans les contextes d'enseignement du FLE, soulève des questions complexes concernant l'authenticité linguistique, la représentation culturelle, et l'efficacité pédagogique. À travers une analyse théorique et critique ancrée dans les études de traduction et la didactique des langues étrangères, cet article explore comment les romans africains traduits peuvent enrichir l'enseignement du FLE en offrant des perspectives plurielles sur la francophonie, en exposant les apprenants à des variétés linguistiques diversifiées, et en favorisant le développement de compétences interculturelles critiques. L'article examine également les défis inhérents à l'utilisation de textes traduits, notamment les questions de fidélité culturelle, de perte linguistique et de représentation authentique. En conclusion, des recommandations pédagogiques sont proposées pour maximiser les bénéfices de l'intégration de romans africains traduits dans les curricula de FLE.

Mots-clés : traduction, traduction littéraire, littérature africaine, FLE, francophonie, pédagogie des langues

Abstract

This article examines the impact of the translation of African novels on the teaching of French as a Foreign Language (FFL), exploring its linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions. As Anglophone African literature gains increasing international recognition, its translation into French and subsequent reintroduction into FFL teaching contexts raises complex questions concerning linguistic authenticity, cultural representation, and pedagogical effectiveness. Through theoretical and critical analysis rooted in translation studies and foreign language didactics, this article explores how translated African novels can enrich FFL teaching by offering plural perspectives on Francophonie, exposing learners to diverse linguistic varieties and fostering the development of critical intercultural competency. The article also examines the inherent challenges of using translated texts, particularly issues of cultural fidelity, linguistic loss, and authentic representation. In conclusion, pedagogical recommendations are proposed to maximize the benefits of integrating translated African novels into FFL curricula.

Keywords: translation, literary translation, African literature, FFL, Francophonie, language pedagogy

Introduction

La traduction littéraire joue un rôle essentiel dans la circulation des idées, des valeurs et des cultures à travers

le monde. Dans le contexte africain, la traduction des romans d'auteurs africains contribue à la diffusion des voix souvent marginalisées par le canon littéraire occidental. Lorsqu'un roman africain est traduit en français, il ne s'agit pas seulement d'un passage linguistique ; c'est aussi un pont culturel, un moyen de reconnaissance et un outil éducatif puissant. Ainsi, la traduction des romans africains peut profondément influencer l'enseignement du Français Langue Étrangère (FLE), en favorisant une approche interculturelle, inclusive et authentique. La littérature africaine connaît depuis plusieurs décennies une reconnaissance et une diffusion internationales sans précédent. Des auteurs comme Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, ou Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o ont acquis une stature mondiale, leurs œuvres étant traduites dans des dizaines de langues et enseignées dans des universités à travers le monde. Cette internationalisation de la littérature africaine s'accompagne d'un phénomène particulièrement intéressant pour la didactique du français langue étrangère : la traduction d'œuvres africaines écrites initialement en anglais ou en langues africaines, vers le français, enrichit les corpus d'enseignement du FLE. Ce mouvement de traduction et de circulation littéraire soulève des questions fondamentales pour l'enseignement du français. Traditionnellement, l'enseignement du FLE s'est largement appuyé sur un canon littéraire centré sur la France métropolitaine, privilégiant des auteurs français « classiques » de Molière à Camus, avec une attention relativement limitée portée aux littératures francophones périphériques. Comme le note Calvet dans son analyse du « marché aux langues », cette hiérarchisation reflète des

dynamiques de pouvoir linguistique où « le français de France s'est historiquement positionné comme la norme légitime, marginalisant les variétés francophones des anciennes colonies » (2002 :78). Cependant, les évolutions contemporaines de la francophonie, marquées par une affirmation croissante des identités linguistiques et culturelles plurielles, remettent en question cette centralité française. Aujourd'hui, la majorité des locuteurs francophones vivent en dehors de France, principalement en Afrique subsaharienne où le français évolue en contact avec des centaines de langues africaines, créant des variétés linguistiques riches et dynamiques (Benzakour 48). Cette réalité démographique et linguistique appelle à une reconfiguration de l'enseignement du FLE qui reflète mieux la diversité de la francophonie mondiale.

Dans ce contexte, la traduction de romans africains vers le français et leur intégration dans les curricula de FLE représentent à la fois une opportunité et un défi. D'une part, ces textes peuvent offrir aux apprenants des perspectives culturelles diversifiées, les exposer à des variétés linguistiques du français, favoriser le développement de compétences interculturelles essentielles dans un monde globalisé et les exposer à l'importance de la traduction. D'autre part, la traduction elle-même pose des questions complexes : « Que perd-on ou gagne-t-on dans la traduction ? Comment les spécificités linguistiques et culturelles des textes africains sont-elles préservées ou transformées ? Dans quelle mesure un texte traduit peut-il servir d'outil pédagogique authentique pour l'enseignement d'une langue ? ».

Cet article propose une exploration théorique et critique de ces questions, en examinant l'impact de la traduction de romans africains sur l'enseignement du FLE à travers plusieurs dimensions. Nous commencerons par situer cette problématique dans le contexte plus large de l'évolution de la francophonie et ses implications pour la didactique du FLE ainsi que l'émergence et reconnaissance de la littérature africaine. Nous explorerons les potentialités pédagogiques de l'utilisation de romans africains traduits dans l'enseignement du FLE, avant d'examiner les défis et les limites de cette pratique. Enfin, nous proposerons des orientations pédagogiques pour une intégration réfléchie et critique de ces textes dans les contextes d'enseignement du FLE.

Évolution de la Francophonie et ses implications pour le FLE

La francophonie contemporaine se caractérise par une pluralité et une complexité qui remettent en question les conceptions mono-centrées du français héritées de l'ère coloniale. Selon les données de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, on compte aujourd'hui environ 300 millions de locuteurs de français dans le monde, et ce nombre pourrait atteindre 700 millions d'ici 2050, principalement grâce à la croissance démographique en Afrique subsaharienne (UNESCO 15). Cette projection fait de l'Afrique le centre de gravité démographique de la francophonie du 21ème siècle. Cette

évolution démographique s'accompagne d'une transformation qualitative de la nature même du français parlé et écrit. Loin d'être une langue monolithique définie exclusivement par les normes parisiennes, le français existe aujourd'hui sous de multiples variantes régionales, chacune portant les marques de ses contextes sociolinguistiques spécifiques. Comme l'observe Benzakour dans son étude sur le français au Maroc, "le français en contexte africain se caractérise par des phénomènes d'appropriation, d'hybridation et de créativité linguistique qui en font une langue véritablement africaine plutôt qu'une simple importation coloniale" (52).

Ces transformations ont des implications profondes pour l'enseignement du FLE. La question se pose : quel français enseigner ? Le français "standard" de France, souvent perçu comme la norme légitime ? Ou faut-il reconnaître et valoriser la diversité des français dans le monde, en exposant les apprenants à des variétés plurielles ? Cette question n'est pas simplement technique ou linguistique ; elle est profondément politique et idéologique, touchant à des enjeux de pouvoir, de légitimité culturelle, et de justice épistémique. Maurais et Morris, dans leur analyse des « langues dans un monde globalisant », suggèrent que « l'enseignement des langues au 21ème siècle doit nécessairement embrasser la diversité linguistique plutôt que de l'éradiquer, reconnaissant que les langues sont des entités vivantes, évolutives et plurielles » (156). Cette perspective pluri-centrique du français appelle à une révision des matériaux pédagogiques, des objectifs d'apprentissage, et des représentations culturelles mobilisées dans l'enseignement du FLE.

L'enseignement du FLE s'est historiquement appuyé sur un canon littéraire fortement centré sur la production littéraire française métropolitaine. Les manuels de FLE, particulièrement aux niveaux intermédiaire et avancé, font abondamment référence à des auteurs français « classiques » : Molière, Voltaire, Hugo, Baudelaire, Proust, Camus, Sartre. Cette centralité de la littérature française s'explique en partie par des raisons historiques et institutionnelles. Comme le note Porcher, « l'enseignement du français langue étrangère s'est construit en France et a longtemps été dominé par une vision ethnocentrique où le français et la culture française étaient conceptualisés comme synonymes » (89). Cette prédominance du canon français pose plusieurs problèmes à l'enseignement du FLE. Premièrement, elle offre une représentation tronquée et déformée de la francophonie contemporaine, suggérant implicitement que la « vraie » littérature en français est celle produite en France. Cette hiérarchisation culturelle reproduit des dynamiques coloniales où les productions culturelles des périphéries sont systématiquement dévaluées par rapport à celles du centre métropolitain. Deuxièmement, cette centralité française limite l'exposition des apprenants à la diversité linguistique et culturelle de l'Afrique. Les apprenants de FLE qui ne rencontrent que la littérature française développent une compréhension réductrice du monde en ignorant les riches traditions littéraires de l'Afrique anglophone, de l'Afrique francophone, du Maghreb, des Caraïbes, du Québec, et d'autres espaces francophones. Cette limitation est particulièrement problématique à une époque où la mobilité globale et l'interconnexion transculturelle exigent des compétences interculturelles

sophistiquées. Troisièmement, le canon littéraire français traditionnel peut être culturellement distant et difficilement accessible pour beaucoup d'apprenants de FLE, particulièrement ceux l'Afrique anglophone. Les références culturelles, les contextes historiques, et les préoccupations thématiques de la littérature française classique peuvent sembler étrangères ou peu pertinentes pour des apprenants africains. Comme l'observe Kramsch, « l'apprentissage des langues est plus efficace lorsque les apprenants peuvent établir des connexions entre les contenus linguistiques et culturels étudiés et leurs propres expériences et identités » (145).

Émergence et reconnaissance de la littérature africaine

La littérature africaine, tant francophone qu'anglophone, a connu une évolution remarquable depuis les indépendances des années 1960. D'une position marginale et souvent exotisme dans le champ littéraire global, elle est progressivement devenue une force culturelle et intellectuelle majeure, reconnue par des prix littéraires prestigieux et étudiée dans des universités à travers le monde. Des auteurs africains ont reçu le Prix Nobel de Littérature (Wole Soyinka en 1986, Nadine Gordimer en 1991, J.M. Coetzee en 2003, Abdulrazak Gurnah en 2021, etc.), démontrant la reconnaissance internationale de la littérature africaine. Cette reconnaissance s'accompagne d'une production littéraire africaine de plus en plus diverse et sophistiquée, abordant des thématiques variées qui vont bien au-delà des représentations stéréotypées de l'Afrique

comme continent de la pauvreté, des guerres et des épidémies. Les auteurs africains contemporains écrivent sur l'amour, l'identité, la migration, la technologie, le féminisme, l'urbanité, la mondialisation, offrant des perspectives nuancées et complexes sur l'expérience africaine contemporaine.

Dans le domaine francophone spécifiquement, des auteurs comme Mariama Bâ, Ahmadou Kourouma, Alain Mabanckou, Fatou Diome, Léonora Miano, Scholastique Mukasonga ont produit des œuvres qui renouvellent profondément la littérature d'expression française. Ces auteurs ne se contentent pas d'écrire « en français » ; ils écrivent le français, le transformant, l'enrichissant, l'africanisant. Comme l'exprime Ahmadou Kourouma à propos de son écriture : « Je suis obligé de traduire le malinké en français en cassant le français pour trouver et restituer le rythme africain » (cité dans Cuq 198). Cette littérature africaine francophone représente une ressource pédagogique précieuse pour l'enseignement du FLE, offrant des textes qui sont à la fois ancrés dans des réalités culturelles africaines et articulés dans la langue française. Toutefois, la question se complexifie lorsqu'on considère les œuvres africaines écrites dans d'autres langues (principalement l'anglais) qui sont ensuite traduites en français. Comment ces traductions peuvent-elles servir l'enseignement du FLE ? Quels sont les gains et les pertes inhérents à la médiation traductive ?

La traduction littéraire n'est pas un simple transfert mécanique de mots d'une langue à une autre. C'est un

processus complexe de négociation culturelle, de réinterprétation créative, et de transformation inévitable. Les études de traduction contemporaines ont dépassé les conceptions naïves de la traduction comme « équivalence » parfaite pour reconnaître que toute traduction implique nécessairement des choix, des pertes, et des gains. Walter Benjamin, dans son essai influent « La Tâche du Traducteur », conceptualise la traduction non pas comme une reproduction servile de l'original mais comme une « survie » (*Überleben*) qui permet à l'œuvre originale de continuer à vivre dans une nouvelle langue et un nouveau contexte culturel (74). Cette perspective voit la traduction comme une forme de créativité en soi, où le traducteur devient un co-créateur qui réécrit l'œuvre dans une nouvelle langue. Dans le contexte de l'enseignement du FLE, le traducteur de littérature africaine joue un rôle particulièrement important de médiateur culturel et, indirectement, pédagogique. Ses choix de traduction influencent directement la manière dont les apprenants de FLE rencontreront et comprendront les réalités africaines à travers le texte. Un traducteur conscient de la dimension pédagogique potentielle de son travail pourrait adopter des stratégies qui facilitent la compréhension tout en préservant l'intégrité culturelle du texte. Cela pourrait inclure l'usage judicieux de notes explicatives qui contextualisent des références culturelles sans être intrusives, le maintien de certains mots africains dans le texte (avec explications) pour préserver l'authenticité linguistique, ou l'attention portée à rendre le français de la traduction accessible à des apprenants de FLE tout en évitant une simplification excessive. Selon Kramsch, « il existe une tension entre l'accessibilité pédagogique et

l'authenticité culturelle et cette tension ne peut être pleinement résolue mais seulement négociée avec réflexivité » (167). Le défi pour les traducteurs, et subséquemment pour les enseignants utilisant ces traductions, est de naviguer cette tension de manière productive.

Cette vision créative de la traduction est particulièrement pertinente pour la littérature africaine. Lorsqu'un roman nigérian écrit en anglais, comme « Things Fall Apart » de Chinua Achebe, est traduit en français sous le titre « Le monde s'effondre », le traducteur ne se contente pas de substituer des mots anglais par des mots français. Il navigue des différences syntaxiques, des connotations culturelles divergentes, des références spécifiques au contexte igbo qui n'ont pas d'équivalents directs en français. Le résultat est nécessairement une transformation, une réinterprétation de l'œuvre originale à travers le prisme de la langue et de la culture française.

Pontentalités pédagogiques des romans Africains traduits

1 Exposition à la diversité linguistique du Français

L'un des bénéfices majeurs de l'utilisation de romans africains (qu'ils soient originalement écrits en français ou traduits vers le français) dans l'enseignement du FLE est l'exposition qu'ils offrent à la diversité linguistique du français contemporain. Contrairement au français « standard » souvent enseigné dans les manuels de FLE,

le français des textes africains porte les marques de ses contextes sociolinguistiques spécifiques. Les auteurs africains francophones, même lorsqu'ils écrivent dans un français grammaticalement « correct », infusent souvent leur écriture d'expressions, de tournures syntaxiques, et de rythmes influencés par leurs langues maternelles africaines. Ahmadou Kourouma, par exemple, utilise dans « Les Soleils des Indépendances » des structures syntaxiques qui reflètent la grammaire malinké, créant un français distinctivement africain. Ken Bugul, dans « Le Baobab Fou », incorpore des mots wolof et des expressions sénégalaises qui enrichissent et africanisent son français.

Cette diversité linguistique a une valeur pédagogique importante. Comme le souligne le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues (CECRL), l'objectif de l'enseignement des langues au 21ème siècle n'est pas de produire des locuteurs qui imitent parfaitement des « natifs » idéalisés, mais de développer une « compétence plurilingue et pluriculturelle » qui reconnaît et valorise la diversité linguistique (Conseil de l'Europe, 129). Exposer les apprenants de FLE à des variétés africaines du français contribue à développer cette compétence plurielle, les préparant à interagir avec la francophonie dans sa diversité réelle plutôt qu'avec une fiction monolingue.

De plus, pour les apprenants africains de FLE en particulier, rencontrer un français qui porte les marques de leurs propres réalités linguistiques et culturelles peut

être émancipateur. Cela leur transmet le message que le français ne leur est pas étranger, qu'il peut être « leur » langue autant qu'il est la langue des Français, et qu'ils peuvent légitimement l'utiliser et le transformer selon leurs besoins expressifs. Comme l'observe Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o dans « Decolonising the Mind », « la langue porte la culture, et la culture porte les valeurs par lesquelles les gens se perçoivent et perçoivent leur place dans le monde » (16). Voir le français comme une langue plurielle et appropriable est une étape importante vers sa décolonisation.

2 Développement de la compétence interculturelle

La compétence interculturelle, définie par Byram comme « la capacité à interagir efficacement avec des personnes de cultures différentes, en mobilisant des savoirs, savoir-faire, savoir-être, et une conscience critique des perspectives culturelles propres et celles des autres » (34), est aujourd'hui reconnue comme un objectif central de l'enseignement des langues étrangères. Les romans africains, par leur ancrage dans des contextes culturels spécifiques, offrent des opportunités riches pour le développement de cette compétence interculturelle. Ils exposent les apprenants à des systèmes de valeurs, des

structures familiales, des pratiques sociales, des croyances spirituelles qui peuvent différer significativement de leurs propres référents culturels. Cette exposition à l'altérité culturelle, médiée par le texte littéraire, permet aux apprenants de développer ce que Bennett appelle une « sensibilité interculturelle », progressant d'une position ethnocentrique (où sa propre culture est considérée comme centrale et supérieure) vers une position ethno-relative (où la différence culturelle est reconnue et valorisée) (cité dans Byram : 71). Prenons l'exemple du roman « Une Si Longue Lettre » de Mariama Bâ. Ce texte, qui aborde les thèmes de la polygamie, de l'éducation féminine, et des tensions entre tradition et modernité au Sénégal, offre aux apprenants de FLE une fenêtre sur des réalités culturelles sénégalaises complexes. La lecture de ce roman peut déclencher des discussions en classe sur les différences culturelles, les perceptions de genre, les dynamiques de changement social, permettant aux apprenants de questionner leurs propres présupposés culturels tout en développant une compréhension nuancée d'une autre culture.

Toutefois, comme le met en garde Kramsch, « l'exposition à la différence culturelle ne développe pas automatiquement la compétence interculturelle ; elle peut également renforcer des stéréotypes si elle n'est pas accompagnée d'une pédagogie critique qui encourage la réflexivité et la déconstruction des préjugés » (189). Les enseignants de FLE en utilisant des romans africains doivent donc être vigilants à ne pas présenter ces textes comme des « fenêtres transparentes » sur « la culture africaine » (comme si l'Afrique avait une culture

monolithique), mais plutôt comme des représentations particulières, situées, et souvent contestées de réalités culturelles spécifiques.

3 Déconstruction des stéréotypes et représentations nuancées

Les représentations médiatiques et populaires de l'Afrique dans les sociétés occidentales (et même dans certains contextes africains) sont souvent marquées par des stéréotypes réducteurs : l'Afrique comme continent homogène de pauvreté, de guerres, de maladies, de corruption. Ces « single stories », pour reprendre l'expression de Chimamanda Adichie, créent des perceptions déformées qui empêchent une compréhension nuancée et respectueuse de la diversité et de la complexité africaines (Adichie, « The Danger of a Single Story »). La littérature africaine, dans sa richesse et sa diversité, offre un antidote puissant à ces stéréotypes. Les romans africains présentent des personnages africains complexes et multidimensionnels : des intellectuels, des artistes, des entrepreneurs, des amoureux, des révolutionnaires, des personnes ordinaires naviguant les joies et les défis de la vie quotidienne. Ils montrent des Afriques urbaines et modernes, technologiquement connectées et créativement vibrantes, qui contrastent avec les images de villages ruraux « traditionnels » souvent surreprésentés dans les médias.

Le roman « Americanah » de Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, par exemple, offre une perspective sophistiquée

sur l'identité, la race, la migration, et la globalisation, suivant l'histoire d'une jeune femme nigériane qui navigue entre Lagos et l'Amérique. La traduction française de ce roman permet aux apprenants francophones de FLE d'accéder à ces perspectives nuancées, élargissant leurs compréhensions des expériences africaines contemporaines au-delà des stéréotypes simplistes.

De plus, beaucoup de romans africains offrent des critiques internes des sociétés africaines, abordant des thèmes comme la corruption, le patriarcat, les conflits ethniques, les échecs postindépendances. Ces critiques, articulées par des voix africaines depuis des positions internes, sont qualitativement différentes des critiques externes souvent teintées de condescendance néocoloniale. Elles montrent que les sociétés africaines, comme toutes les sociétés, sont des espaces de débat, de contestation, et de transformation, où des voix multiples s'affrontent sur la direction à prendre.

4 Motivation et pertinence pour les apprenants Africains

Pour les apprenants africains de FLE, qui constituent un segment important (et souvent majoritaire) des apprenants de français dans le monde, l'inclusion de littérature africaine dans les curricula peut avoir un impact motivationnel significatif. Voir des personnages, des lieux, et des expériences qui ressemblent aux leurs

représentés dans les textes étudiés peut renforcer leur sentiment de légitimité et d'appartenance à la communauté francophone. Comme le souligne la théorie de l'identification de Gardner en didactique des langues, « la motivation à apprendre une langue est renforcée lorsque les apprenants peuvent s'identifier positivement avec les communautés qui parlent cette langue » (82). Si le français est toujours associé exclusivement à la France et à la culture française, les apprenants africains peuvent développer un sentiment d'aliénation, percevant le français comme une langue étrangère imposée plutôt que comme une langue qui peut exprimer leurs propres réalités et identités. En revanche, rencontrer des auteurs africains qui écrivent en français sur des expériences africaines peut transformer cette perception, faisant du français une langue d'expression et d'affirmation identitaire plutôt que d'assimilation culturelle.

Cette dimension est particulièrement importante dans les contextes postcoloniaux où les langues coloniales comme le français portent un héritage complexe et ambivalent. Comme l'exprime Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, beaucoup d'intellectuels africains ont lutté avec la question : peut-on utiliser la langue du colonisateur pour exprimer des réalités et des perspectives décolonisées ? La littérature africaine francophone démontre que oui, le français peut être réapproprié, subverti, et transformé en un outil d'expression africaine authentique. Exposer les apprenants à cette littérature peut les aider à résoudre leurs propres ambivalences vis-à-vis du français et à développer une relation plus positive et agentielle avec cette langue.

5 Enrichissement thématique et diversification des contenus

Au-delà des bénéfices linguistiques et culturels, les romans africains traduits offrent un enrichissement thématique qui diversifie les contenus traditionnellement abordés dans les cours de FLE. La littérature française classique, bien que riche et importante, se concentre souvent sur des thématiques et des préoccupations spécifiques à l'expérience européenne : les salons parisiens du 18ème siècle, l'existentialisme d'après-guerre, la condition ouvrière pendant l'industrialisation. Les romans africains, en revanche, introduisent des thématiques différentes qui peuvent résonner avec les préoccupations contemporaines globales : la migration et la diaspora, l'identité postcoloniale, le multiculturalisme, le développement économique, les conflits ethniques, les enjeux de genre dans des contextes non-occidentaux, les tensions entre tradition et modernité, l'impact de la mondialisation sur les cultures locales. Ces thématiques sont non seulement pertinentes pour les apprenants africains mais aussi pour tous les apprenants de FLE vivant dans un monde globalisé et interconnecté.

De plus, les romans africains offrent souvent des perspectives critiques sur les relations entre l'Afrique et l'Occident, explorant l'héritage du colonialisme, les dynamiques néocoloniales contemporaines, et les asymétries de pouvoir dans l'ordre mondial actuel. Cette dimension critique peut enrichir les discussions en classe de FLE, encourageant les apprenants à développer une

conscience politique et historique qui complète leurs compétences linguistiques. Prenons l'exemple du roman « Le Ventre de l'Atlantique » de Fatou Diome, qui explore les thématiques de la migration, de l'exil, et des perceptions mutuelles entre l'Afrique et l'Europe. Ce texte peut servir de base pour des discussions en classe sur l'immigration, les politiques d'asile, les représentations médiatiques des migrants, des sujets hautement pertinents dans le contexte européen contemporain. En utilisant une perspective africaine sur ces questions, le roman permet aux apprenants d'accéder à des points de vue souvent marginalisés dans les discours dominants.

Défis inhérents à l'utilisation de textes traduits dans l'enseignement du FLE

1 Question de l'authenticité linguistique

L'utilisation de romans africains traduits vers le français pour l'enseignement du FLE soulève une question fondamentale d'authenticité linguistique. Lorsqu'un roman initialement écrit en anglais (comme « Things Fall Apart » de Chinua Achebe) ou en langue africaine est traduit en français, le français que les apprenants rencontrent n'est pas un français « organique » produit par un auteur pensant en français, mais un français médiatisé par le processus de traduction. Cette médiation traductive a plusieurs implications. Premièrement, les spécificités stylistiques de l'auteur original peuvent être atténuées ou transformées dans la traduction. Le rythme de la prose, les jeux de mots, les ambiguïtés délibérées, les innovations

linguistiques qui caractérisent l'écriture originale peuvent être difficiles, voire impossibles, à reproduire dans la langue cible. Comme le note Berman dans son analyse de « L'Épreuve de l'Étranger » « la traduction implique nécessairement une certaine rationalisation et standardisation qui peut appauvrir la richesse stylistique de l'original » (56).

Deuxièmement, le français de la traduction peut ne pas refléter fidèlement les variations linguistiques et les hybridations qui caractérisent souvent la littérature africaine. Lorsqu'un auteur nigérian écrit en anglais infusé d'igbo ou de yoruba, créant un anglais distinctivement nigérian, cette spécificité linguistique peut se perdre dans la traduction française si le traducteur opte pour un français « standard » plutôt que de tenter de recréer une forme d'hybridation similaire en français.

Troisièmement, l'utilisation de textes traduits peut transmettre aux apprenants un français quelque peu artificiel, manquant de l'idiomatique et de la fluidité naturelle du français produit par des locuteurs natifs ou des écrivains pensant directement en français. Cette limitation est particulièrement problématique si l'objectif de l'enseignement du FLE est de développer une compétence communicative naturelle plutôt qu'une simple compréhension littérale.

Toutefois, ces limites doivent être nuancées par les traductions de haute qualité, réalisées par des traducteurs professionnels, compétents et sensibles, qui peuvent

produire un français riche et idiomatique, qui, bien que différent de l'original, possède sa propre valeur littéraire et linguistique.

2 Pertes culturelles et explication excessive

Un défi majeur de la traduction littéraire, particulièrement pertinent pour la traduction de littérature africaine, est la perte inévitable de références culturelles spécifiques. Les romans africains sont souvent saturés de références à des pratiques culturelles, des croyances, des structures sociales, des contextes historiques qui peuvent être opaques pour des lecteurs non-africains. Le traducteur fait face à un dilemme : comment rendre ces références compréhensibles sans pour autant « sur-expliciter » et alourdir le texte ?

Les stratégies courantes incluent l'ajout de notes de bas de page explicatives, l'insertion d'explications contextuelles dans le texte lui-même, ou le remplacement de références culturelles spécifiques par des équivalents plus universels. Chacune de ces stratégies a des coûts. Les notes de bas de page, bien que préservant le texte original, peuvent interrompre le flux de lecture et créer une distance pédagogique qui transforme le roman en document ethnographique. Les explications insérées dans le texte peuvent alourdir la prose et rendre explicite ce qui était intentionnellement implicite. Le remplacement par des équivalents efface la spécificité culturelle et peut dénaturer le texte.

De plus, l'explicitation excessive peut avoir un effet de « domestication culturelle » où les éléments culturels africains sont constamment expliqués et contextualisés pour un public présumé ignorant, renforçant ainsi une hiérarchie épistémique où la culture africaine doit toujours se justifier et s'expliquer tandis que la culture française/occidentale est traitée comme transparente et non-marquée. Comme le critique Spivak dans son essai sur la traduction, « l'acte d'explication constante peut infantiliser la culture source et reconduire des dynamiques coloniales où les cultures non-occidentales sont rendues en objets d'étude ethnographique plutôt qu'en expressions littéraires légitimes » (179).

Pour l'enseignement du FLE, ce défi de l'explicitation culturelle doit être navigué avec soin. C'est vrai que les apprenants ont besoin de contexte pour comprendre les textes, mais trop d'explicitation peut transformer l'expérience de lecture littéraire en leçon d'anthropologie, en perdant la dimension esthétique et affective qui fait la puissance de la littérature.

3 Risques de renforcement des stéréotypes

Paradoxalement, l'utilisation de littérature africaine dans l'enseignement du FLE, si elle n'est pas accompagnée d'une pédagogie critique, peut parfois renforcer plutôt que déconstruire les stéréotypes sur l'Afrique. Ce risque est particulièrement présent lorsque les textes sélectionnés se concentrent disproportionnellement sur certaines thématiques (pauvreté, guerre, tradition) ou certaines

représentations de l'Afrique. Si, par exemple, les seuls romans africains utilisés dans un cours de FLE sont ceux qui traitent de la pauvreté rurale ou des conflits ethniques, les apprenants peuvent développer une vision unidimensionnelle de l'Afrique comme continent de souffrance et de dysfonctionnement, même si ces textes sont littérairement excellents et culturellement authentiques. Cette projection de la pauvreté peut reconduire des imaginaires néocoloniaux où l'Afrique est toujours l'objet de pitié ou d'intervention occidentale. De même, une focalisation excessive sur les aspects « traditionnels » de la culture africaine (rituels, villages, modes de vie prémodernes) peut figer l'Afrique dans un passé ethnographique, occultant les réalités africaines contemporaines urbaines, technologiques, et cosmopolites. Cette temporalisation différentielle, où l'Afrique est représentée comme vivant dans le passé tandis que l'Occident habite la modernité, est une stratégie classique de l'idéologie coloniale que Fabian analyse dans « Time and the Other » (143).

Pour contrer ces risques, il est essentiel de diversifier les textes africains utilisés, en incluant des romans qui représentent l'Afrique urbaine et moderne, qui traitent de thématiques universelles (amour, ambition, créativité), et qui montrent des personnages africains complexes et agentiels.

4 Accessibilité et niveau de langue

Un défi pratique de l'utilisation de romans africains (traduits ou originaux) dans l'enseignement du FLE concerne leur accessibilité linguistique pour des apprenants à différents niveaux de compétence. La littérature africaine contemporaine est souvent linguistiquement sophistiquée, utilisant un vocabulaire riche, des structures syntaxiques complexes, et des techniques narratives innovantes qui peuvent être difficiles d'accès pour des apprenants de FLE de niveaux débutant ou intermédiaire. Cette difficulté est exacerbée lorsque les textes incorporent des éléments d'oralité, des dialectes, ou des innovations linguistiques qui, bien que créativement riches, peuvent dérouter des apprenants encore en train de maîtriser le français standard. Un roman comme « Allah n'est pas Obligé » d'Ahmadou Kourouma, avec son français délibérément « cassé » et son narrateur enfant-soldat utilisant un langage cru et non-standard, peut être littérairement puissant mais pédagogiquement challengeant pour des apprenants de FLE.

Ce défi de l'accessibilité linguistique nécessite une sélection soigneuse des textes en fonction du niveau des apprenants, une préparation pédagogique appropriée avant la lecture (activation de connaissances préalables, pré-enseignement du vocabulaire clé), et un accompagnement pendant la lecture (discussions guidées, activités de compréhension, clarifications linguistiques). Il peut également justifier l'utilisation d'extraits plutôt que de romans complets, ou l'adaptation pédagogique de textes pour les rendre accessibles à des niveaux inférieurs. Neanmoins, il est important de ne pas sous-estimer la capacité des apprenants ou de systématiquement

simplifier les textes. Comme le note Krashen dans son hypothèse de l'input compréhensible, « les apprenants progressent en étant exposés à un input linguistique légèrement au-dessus de leur niveau actuel de compétence » (cité dans Richards et Rodgers : 182). Des textes challengeants, avec un support pédagogique approprié, peuvent stimuler la croissance linguistique plutôt que de frustrer les apprenants.

Disponibilité limitée des romans africains traduits

Un obstacle pratique à l'intégration de romans africains traduits dans l'enseignement du FLE est leur disponibilité limitée. Comparé au vaste corpus de littérature française disponible en éditions pédagogiques annotées, adaptées pour différents niveaux, et accompagnées de guides d'enseignement, la littérature africaine traduite vers le français est beaucoup moins accessible dans des formats pédagogiquement adaptés.

De plus, les choix éditoriaux concernant quels romans africains sont traduits et diffusés internationalement sont eux-mêmes marqués par des dynamiques de pouvoir. Les maisons d'édition occidentales, qui dominent le marché global du livre, tendent à sélectionner pour traduction les œuvres qui correspondent à certaines attentes ou stéréotypes sur ce que la « littérature africaine » devrait être. Comme le critique Huggan dans « The Postcolonial Exotic », « l'industrie éditoriale globale exotise souvent la littérature postcoloniale, privilégiant les œuvres qui offrent un certain type d'authenticité ethnographique ou

de différence culturelle » (28). Cette dynamique crée un canon de littérature africaine traduite qui peut ne pas représenter fidèlement la diversité et la complexité de la production littéraire africaine. Les enseignants de FLE utilisant ces textes doivent donc être conscients qu'ils accèdent à une sélection déjà filtrée et médiée, et que d'autres voix africaines importantes peuvent être absentes non par manque de mérite littéraire mais par les logiques du marché global du livre.

En résumé, la sélection de romans africains (traduits ou originaux) pour l'enseignement du FLE devrait être guidée par la diversité. Il doit inclure des textes d'Afrique de l'Ouest, de l'Est, du Nord, australe ; des auteurs hommes et femmes ; des textes contemporains et historiques ; des romans qui traitent de thématiques variées. L'accessibilité linguistique doit être adaptée au niveau des apprenants : niveaux débutants, intermédiaires et niveaux avancés. On doit choisir des textes dont les thématiques résonnent avec les préoccupations et les expériences des apprenants. Sélectionner des œuvres reconnues pour leur excellence littéraire plutôt que des textes choisis uniquement pour leur « contenu culturel ». La littérature mérite d'être appréciée d'abord comme art plutôt que comme simple document ethnographique. On doit également s'assurer que les textes sélectionnés sont disponibles à un coût raisonnable et, idéalement, accompagnés de ressources pédagogiques (notes, glossaires, guides de discussion).

Conclusion

La traduction n'est pas seulement un acte linguistique ; c'est un acte pédagogique et culturel qui relie les peuples, valorise les identités et transforme la salle de classe en un véritable espace de dialogue interculturel. La traduction des romans africains constitue un levier majeur pour l'enseignement du FLE. Elle favorise la découverte de la diversité culturelle, l'ouverture à d'autres visions du monde et le développement de compétences linguistiques approfondies. L'intégration de romans africains traduits dans l'enseignement du français langue étrangère représente à la fois une opportunité significative et un défi complexe qui nécessite une réflexion théorique approfondie et une pratique pédagogique réfléchie. Cette pratique s'inscrit dans un contexte plus large de transformation de la francophonie mondiale, où l'Afrique émerge comme le centre démographique et créatif du monde francophone du 21ème siècle, remettant en question les conceptions mono-centrées du français héritées de l'ère coloniale. L'intégration de romans africains traduits dans l'enseignement du FLE s'inscrit dans un mouvement plus large de décolonisation des curricula et des pratiques pédagogiques. La décolonisation, dans ce contexte, ne signifie pas l'abandon du français ou le rejet de la littérature française, mais plutôt une reconfiguration des hiérarchies épistémiques et culturelles qui ont historiquement marginalisé les savoirs et les expressions culturelles non-occidentales. Comme l'argumente Santos dans "Epistemologies of the South", "la décolonisation épistémique nécessite de reconnaître la validité et la valeur de formes de connaissance et d'expression culturelle qui ont été systématiquement dévaluées par l'épistémologie coloniale européenne" (45).

Dans le contexte de l'enseignement du FLE, cela implique de décentraliser la littérature française métropolitaine et de créer un espace curriculaire significatif pour les littératures francophones et africaines. Cette décolonisation a des implications pédagogiques concrètes : revoir les listes de lectures obligatoires, diversifier les auteurs étudiés, questionner les canons littéraires établis, former les enseignants à une pédagogie critique postcoloniale, et créer des espaces où les voix et les perspectives africaines sont valorisées au même titre que les voix européennes.

Au-delà de l'utilisation de textes traduits comme matériaux d'enseignement, la traduction elle-même peut devenir une pratique pédagogique productive dans les classes de FLE. Demander aux apprenants de traduire des extraits de textes africains (depuis leurs langues sources vers le français, ou vice versa) peut développer une conscience métalinguistique profonde, une compréhension des structures comparatives des langues, et une appréciation des défis et des choix inhérents à la traduction. Cette approche s'inscrit dans ce que Cook appelle "la pédagogie de la traduction", où "la traduction n'est pas simplement un exercice de transfert linguistique mais une pratique herméneutique qui développe la compréhension profonde et la pensée critique" (67). Les apprenants confrontés aux défis de traduire des expressions idiomatiques, des références culturelles spécifiques, ou des jeux de mots développent une sensibilité aux nuances linguistiques et culturelles qui enrichit leur compétence globale en FLE. De plus, la traduction collaborative, où les apprenants travaillent en

groupes pour produire des traductions consensuelles, développe des compétences de négociation, d'argumentation, et de travail d'équipe tout en créant un espace d'apprentissage social et dialogique. L'analyse théorique des enjeux de traduction révèle que la traduction littéraire est loin d'être un simple transfert linguistique neutre. C'est un processus complexe de négociation culturelle, de transformation créative, et de médiation entre des univers linguistiques et culturels différents. Les traductions de littérature africaine vers le français portent les marques de ces négociations, avec des implications importantes pour leur utilisation pédagogique.

Recommandations

1. L'utilisation de romans africains traduits dans l'enseignement du FLE devrait être accompagnée d'approches pédagogiques qui maximisent leurs bénéfices tout en minimisant leurs limites.
2. Plusieurs types d'activités pédagogiques spécifiques peuvent être développés autour de romans africains traduits : les ateliers de traduction comparative, les projets de recherche culturelle, les débats et discussions thématiques, les exercices d'écriture créative et les analyses comparatives entre littérature africaine et littérature française sur des thématiques similaires.
3. L'intégration réussie de romans africains traduits dans l'enseignement du FLE nécessite que les enseignants eux-mêmes soient formés et équipés pour travailler avec ces textes. Les programmes de

formation des enseignants de FLE devraient inclure des modules sur la littérature francophone mondiale, les théories postcoloniales, et la pédagogie interculturelle.

4. Les associations professionnelles d'enseignants de FLE pourraient jouer un rôle important en facilitant le partage de bonnes pratiques, en organisant des ateliers sur l'enseignement de littérature africaine, et en créant des communautés de pratique où les enseignants échangent des ressources et des stratégies pédagogiques.
5. Une dimension souvent négligée mais potentiellement très enrichissante est la collaboration directe avec des auteurs africains et des communautés africaines. Grâce aux technologies de communication contemporaines, il est désormais possible d'organiser des rencontres virtuelles entre classes de FLE et auteurs africains, permettant aux apprenants de poser des questions directement, d'entendre les auteurs discuter de leurs processus créatifs, et de développer une compréhension plus vivante de la littérature qu'ils étudient.

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