

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

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<b>CONTENTS AND CONTRIBUTORS</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
<b>1. COHESION IN SOME SELECTED IGBO POETRY</b> Dr. Nwanze Petronilla U.	<b>1</b>
<b>2. INTEGRATION DES OUTILS NUMERIQUES DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT ET L'APPRENTISSAGE DU FRANÇAIS AU SECONDAIRE: UNE ETUDE DES ECOLES D'IDEMILI NORTH (NIGERIA)</b> Ubajaka Onyinye D.	<b>14</b>
<b>3. INTERROGATING AND PROMOTING TOLERANCE IN PLURALISTIC SOCIETIES THROUGH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION</b> Chukwuemeka Nwosu Uwadiegwu, Chinedozi. U. I.	<b>36</b>
<b>4. THE <i>UMUNNA</i> AS IGBO TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION: NEED FOR REVIVAL</b> Joy Nwafam	<b>60</b>
<b>5. GREEN ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA: CAPACITY OF GREEN ECONOMY TO SUPPORT AKUMUBA N'ULO CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA</b> Ifegwu-Livingrich, Prince Ezeikpe	<b>85</b>
<b>6. EXPERIENTIAL MEANING AND EXISTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS IN GOODLUCK JONATHAN'S 2011 INAUGURAL SPEECH: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS</b> Bridget Ogechukwu Okeke Chinwe R. Ezeifeke	<b>119</b>

- 7. EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA**  
Dr. AIBANGBE, Mary Oyere **146**
- 8. THE BLUE ECONOMY AND THE SOUTHEAST GEOPOLITICAL ZONE: FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A FUNCTIONAL SEAPORT IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA**  
Ifegwu-Livingrich, Prince Ezeikpe  
Lawi, Rimamchaten Adamu **170**
- 9. OPIOIDS MISUSE, SOCIAL FACTORS, ROLE OF FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA**  
Dr. Okafor, Kelechi Emmanuel **200**
- 10. HATE SPEECH IN NIGERIA AND ITS IMPLICATION TO NATIONAL UNITY**  
Nwaiwu Chidiadi .E. **214**
- 11. ENDING THE MILITANT CRISIS IN THE NIGER DELTA: THE WAY FORWARD**  
Anene Chidi Pensive **247**
- 12. PHILOSOPHY ON HUMAN EXISTENC**  
Dr. Okoloye Andrew **259**
- 13. CHRISTIANITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: TRANSMISSION OF SACRED KNOWLEDGE AND ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**  
Benjamin Chukwunonso Nwokocha  
Alokwu, Cyprain Obiora **265**
- 14. CREATIVE THINKING AND CRITICAL THINKING**  
Dr. Okoloye, Andrew **282**

**15. MMETUTA AKWAMOZU ODINAALA NYE  
AHUIKE: IGBO EZAA DIKA EBE NLERU ANYA**

Ndubuisi Joseph Nwanganga  
Goodluck Chigbo Nwode (Ph.D)  
Prof. Mercy Agha Onu  
Nworie Grace Amarachi

**288**

**16. FEDERALISM AND STATE CREATION IN  
NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS**

Dr. Anokwuru Innocent Chijioko

**305**

**17. THE TEACHING OF PAUL ON THE BIBLICAL  
CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND HOME: THE  
RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH**

Rev Edwin .O. Nwanchor (PhD)

**329**

**18. RAILWAY POLITICS IN NIGERIA; ISSUES  
AND PROSPECTS**

Dr. Anokwuru Innocent Chijioko

**343**

**19. INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' INFORMAL DIGITAL  
LANGUAGE (SOCIAL MEDIA ENGLISH) ON THEIR  
FORMAL ACADEMIC WRITING**

Amadi, Gloria Ukamaka, PhD.  
Onuegwunwoke, Cynthia Adaeze,

**359**

**20. REVENUE ALLOCATION, ELITE POLITICS, AND  
THE CRISIS OF FISCAL FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA:  
ISSUES, TRAJECTORIES, AND PROSPECTS**

Hilary Obike

**392**

## **COHESION IN SOME SELECTED IGBO POETRY**

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### Abstract

Reading and understanding poems possess a daunting task, given its condensed diction that has multiple layers of meaning. It is against this background that the study analysis types of cohesion in some selected Igbo poems. The study adopts Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory by Halliday. Under methodology, the study adopts descriptive research design. The data are excerpts (poems) from six (6) Igbo poetries that portray types of cohesion. The types of cohesion identified in the poems include: phonological, lexical, syntactic, graphology, and rhythm. They described how and why the seven (7) poems from different poetry mean what they do. The results of textual analysis show that cohesion is part and parcel of poem hence, gives meaning to poem. The study concludes that cohesion in poem is reliable in constructing the unity and whole meaning of a poem thereby enhances reader's understanding

**Keywords:** The Igbo, Igbo Poetry, and Cohesion

## **Introduction**

Poetry is an art form using concentrated, rhythmic, and often figurative language to evoke emotion and meanings beyond literary interpretation, differing from prose by its focus on sound, imagery, and unique structure (stanzas and line breaks) rather than straightforward narrative. Poetry has cohesion or internal pattern and repetition far exceeding those of most other non-literary genres. In other words, poetry has repeated refrains, parallelism, regular stanzas, rhymes, meter, rhythm, interactive assonances, alliteration and similar devices. The phenomenon of cohesion in literature and particularly in Igbo poetry shows that literature is an art that the literary texts are constructed to produce in us a kind of experience in art in which symmetry and interplay and differences play a major role. Cohesion is a linguistic technique of creating unity in a discourse readable and meaningful. It is a strategy of enhancing an effective communicative goal. Either in speech or in writing, cohesion plays a prominent role in eliciting meaning in discourse. It explains how meaning is constructed based on the semantic relations that are established between and among lexical and grammatical elements in discourse. Schiffrin (1987:62) writes that "... cohesion has to do with semantic meaning" The paper therefore concerns itself with the task of exposing types of cohesion in poems in some selected Igbo poetry. The Igbo whose poem is discussed in this study are said to be a Nigerian tribe located in Anambra, Imo, Enugu, and Ebonyi States.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **The Igbo**

The Igbo is a major ethnic group in South-eastern Nigeria. According to Slattery (2010) the primary Igbo states in Nigeria are Anambra, Abia, Imo, Ebonyi and Enugu States. They are also more than 25% of the population in some Nigerian states like Delta and Rivers States.

The Igbo are largely blessed with Igbo language which is one of the official languages of Nigeria. It is part of the Benue-Congo group of the Niger-Congo family of languages believed to have originated in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Igbo Poetry**

Poetry applies to many forms in which man has given rhythmic expression to his most imaginative and intense perception of his world, himself and the interrelationship of the two. Only through an examination of its origins and certain aspects of its nature, can anything significant be said about poetry. According to Akporobaro (1994) the origin of poetic expression is concealed in the dim past of man. No literary historian presumes to point out the beginnings of poetry though, the first conscious literary expression took the form of primitive songs. Evidence pointing to this interference comes from early tribal ceremonials; races which have no written literature employ poetic and rhythmic forms in their local ceremonies. Poetry is nature and everything in nature renders itself to poetry. Nnamdi – Eruchalu (2022) poetry is an essential property of all human societies. It dwells in the realm of feelings and emotions and is expressed in specially crafted language. It is deeply embedded in human life and living; tongue, chime, tribe, class, level of literacy, notwithstanding (Maduakor, 2019). Igbo poetry is a rich, multi-faced art deeply embedded in the cultural, social and spiritual life of the Igbo people of Nigeria (Ezikeojiaku, 1993). He added that Igbo poetry exists in two primary forms; traditional or oral poetry, which have been passed down through generations and modern or written poetry, which gained momentum around the time of the Nigerian Civil war.

### **Cohesion**

Every writer wishes to make their points clearly to their readers, with pieces of writing. What is easy to read and have logical links between

the various points made. This coherence of expression is created by grammar and vocabulary (lexis) through cohesion. Cohesion implies to the glue that joins ideas in a text together to form a whole. According to Halliday & Hasan (1976) cohesion is concerned with a relatively neglected part of the linguistic system: its resources for text construction, the range of meanings that are specifically associated with relating what is being spoken or written to its semantic environment. They added that it describes a method for analysing and coding sentences, which is applied to specimen texts. Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang (1981) see cohesion as the way in which the components of the way in which the components of the surface text (the actual words we see or hear) are mutually connected within a sequence. It focuses on grammatical dependencies hence, how syntactic structures, repetition and substitution map onto one another to connect phrases, clauses and sentences. Hoey (1991) defines cohesion as the way in which certain words or grammatical features of a sentence connect that sentence to its predecessors (and successors) in a text. He focuses on lexical which emphasizes on the way texts hold together, prioritizing how words in the same semantic field (collection) create connections across paragraphs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are many theories which identify cohesion in poetry, but this work will limit itself to Systematic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory. It originated in 60's from the work of British Linguist Micheal Alexander Kirkwood Halliday by the Prague school, the anthropologist He expanded on the theories of his mantor, J. R. Firth, and was also influenced by Bronislaw Malinowski, and Louis Hjelmslev. Halliday viewed language as a meaning making resource and a 'network of systems' of choices, rather than just a system of grammar, with the goal of understanding how language functions in social contexts (Martin, 2016). The model of SFL theory affirms that language is a social activity that takes place in a social context. It is

basic tool for coding information, and it only functions effectively if the decoder (listener/ reader) is able to understand and make meaning from the information. Meanwhile, making meaning out of discourse is paramount in the orientation of Systematic Functional Linguistic because as linguistic elements are used in coding information, they are largely understood within the context of their production. The justification for adopting this theoretical framework is the premise on the fact that the entire dimension of the theory centres on functional rather than structural hence, focuses more on eliciting meaning from linguistic elements in the texts.

### **Empirical Studies**

Several studies have been carried out on cohesion in poetry but not much has been carried out by scholars from the perspective of cohesion in some selected Igbo poetry. The study of Chukwu, Ugwuanyi & Amoke (2021) examines texture in Okigbo's poetry, an exploration of cohesion It reveals that Okigbo's poetic language is neither disparate nor deny access to the poetic text. Ebi (2012) examines aspects of textual cohesion in selected poems of Clark Bekederemo. It reveals that cohesive ties have the potentials to combine with other elements of language to unify different parts of a text. Adekemi (2023) examines cohesion as a linguistic-stylistic strategy in the poem IRO by Akinwunmi Isola. The study reveals that cohesive devices are reliable instruments in the text construction, in this case, a poem.

### **Methodology**

The study adopts qualitative research design and descriptive research methods which involves observing and describing the behaviour of the object without influencing it. Appraisal tools form the major sources of data collection while secondary sources of data include other relevant materials relating to poetry and cohesion. The researcher reads poems to identify the different types of cohesion

used in its construction. Pieces of data that illustrates each types of cohesion are extracted and written out for discussion. For ease of reference, poetry, text, stanza (lines where the data were drawn from) are included in the discussion.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Phonological Cohesion**

Phonological cohesion takes the form of alliteration and assonance. It is concerned with the sound, patterns, rhyming scheme, alliteration consonance, assonance, and vocalization words. According to Eze and Olu (2009:147) it occurs where there is textual patterning created by the repetition of similar sounds. Illustration in the excerpt below taken from *Abụ na Egwuregwu Ọdịnaala Igbo* p.70 -71 titled “Onwa na Ifere” by N. Ugonna. Example 1

Nwa nmemereochē nọ n’ọnwā, Child of mother-in-law in the moon,  
Nye m ọnwā, ọnwā na ifere, Give me moon, moon to fly,  
Nye m ifere, ifere nza, Give me fly, nza to fly,  
Nye m nza, nza akwụ ya, Give me bird, bird’s nest,  
Nye m akwụ ya, akwụ ya mbele, Give me its nest, mbele its nest,  
Nye m mbele, mbele Oru, Give me work, work and motor,  
Nye m Oru, Oru na ụgbọ, Give me motor, bamboo boat,  
Nye m achara, achara nsịkọ, Give me bamboo, bamboo and crab etc.  
Nye m Okpu, Okpu na mbe, Give me hat, hat and tortoise etc.

In stanza 1, line 17 of the above poem, the poet showcases a high degree of proficiency in textual patterning of his poem. He makes exuberant use of alliteration and assonance for embellishment

thereby creating more unified and coherent text or poem. Beginning from line 2 through line 19 of the poem, there is reoccurrence of nasal labial velar plosive /ny/ in words such as ‘nye’. In line 2 through 19 as consonants and reoccurrence, there is half closed back vowel [e] for assonance. Also the repetition of the bilabial nasal /m/ in lines 2 through 19 described above as personal pronoun.

### **Lexical Cohesion**

Lexical cohesion refers to the words associated with the text. Ali, Abbas, & Mugair, (2020) describe lexical cohesion as:

the level concerned with the use of vocabulary in language.

It studies the function of direct and figurative meanings and

the way in which the contextual meaning of the word choice

of specific lexical items in a text, their distribution in relation to one another, and their meanings.

The above implies that cohesion can also be achieved by the use of words that belong to the same paradigmatic relation called lexical cohesion. It abounds in lexical matching. Let’s examine the excerpts taken from p.19 of *Akpa Uche* titled “Adamma” by C.W.O. Ajaegbu.

Otu nwunye m hụrụ taa, The woman I saw today,

Aha ya bụ Adamma, Her name is Adamma:

Adamma mara mma nke ukwuu, Adamma is very beautiful,

Guzoro kwekem. Stand straight.

Adamma toro ogologo, Adamma is tall,

Ọ bụ asaawa e ji ama atụ, She is a symbol of animal fur,

Ahụ ya niile na-eme pukopuko, Her whole body is soft,

Agiri isi ya di yoriri. Her hair is curled.  
Imi ya di warawara, Her nose is narrow,  
Anyanya ya na-eke ririri; Her eyes is piercing;  
Eze ya na-enwu Dika ogwa, Her teeth shines like a torch,  
Mkpisi aka ya di sam. Her fingers are fine.  
Adamma bitutu mma aka, Adamma is very beautiful,  
Ekele ya gosiri umeala, Her greeting signified humility,  
Ochi ya Dika ihe, Her smile is like light,  
Nke mumuwawari na-enye n'ochichiri. Which mother-in-law gives  
in dark.

In the above poem, lexical cohesion is achieved by the repeated use of words whose inherent semantic features portray both attributes of Adamma and her beauty. In the poem, Adamma is given the attributes of beauty with the following clauses - “Guzoro kwekem” - line 4, stanza 1; “O bu asaawa e ji ama atu” - line 2, stanza 2; “Ahụ ya niile na-eme pokopoko” - line 3, stanza 2; “Agiri isi ya di yoriri” - line 4, stanza 2; “imi ya di warawara” – line 1, stanza 3; “Anyanya ya na-eke ririri” – line 2, stanza 3; “Eze ya na-enwu Dika ogwa” – line 3, stanza 3; “Mkpisi aka ya di sam” – line 4, stanza 3; “Ekele ya gosiri ume ala” – line 2, stanza 4; “Ochi ya Dika ihe” – line 3, stanza 3; and “Nke mumuwawari na-enye n'ochichiri” – line 4, stanza 4. The lexical cohesion in context adds great meaning to the poem thereby making it readable and decodable.

Example 2 from *Eke-Une* p.12 - 15 by E. Obike. In this poem, certain epithets refer to specific character such as treacherous character. Eke Une is painted as treacherous character and described with these words: “Isirikisi mmuo” – line 145, “Immenkeleime” – line 148,

“Ochịntị-Une isieke” – line 222, and “Obuuruomenike”– line 227 etc. The above words are used to describe one who relishes crisis.

Example 3 from *Nri Uche* p.68 “Ọkụ Nyụọ A Wụsa Ọwa” by I.U. Nwadike.

Ebe esu nwuru bụ ili ya. The grave of millipede is where it died.

Ebe onye dara ka chi ya kwaturu ya Where one falls is where his god pushes him down.

Ebe chi jiri, a wusa ọwa. Where night comes, one stops.

Ije ụwa bụ ndọlị ndọlị. Life is about struggling.

The following words, “nwuru”, “dara”, “kwaturu”, “jiri”, belong to the same paradigmatic relation to emphasize on struggles to one’s destiny.

### **Graphological Cohesion**

Graphological cohesion deals with writing mechanics which help readers to understand the relationship between ideas when used effectively. This level deals with writing mechanics such as full stop, quotation mark, hyphen, comma, semi-colon, colon, capitalization and question mark, exclamation mark etc. It also includes spacing, bold prints, small prints, and italics (Hazim, Aswan and Sarab 2020). In essence, graphological cohesion in poetry is a powerful tool poets use to shape the readers experience, guide their interpretation, create a more profound and memorable poetic effect. Example 1 from *Okebalama (Akwukwo Abụ Igbo)* p.71 “Onye Ma Echi?” by C. C. Ezebube.

Oge m nọ n’okporo Fegge

Nke Otu Ọnịcha

Agbagharị wheel n’okporo *Coal Tar*

Mụ na pantị *seven colours*

Ishi ha ka mbadamba ihu igwe

Ntị ha ka ogbe akwụ

Ebe kwashiorkor ji anyị ete epele

Here, the use of capital letter in stanza 1, line 2, “Otu”, line 3 “Coal Tar” and stanza 2, line 8 “A & B” is used to draw attention to specific phrases hence, reflect a character’s emotional state towards knowing what tomorrow holds. The use of italics in stanza 1 lines 3 and 4 “Coal Tar”, “Seven Colours” helps to create a visual pattern that mirrors the poem’s themes. The absent of punctuation such as comma, full stop, colon, semi-colon etc. in stanza 1 and 2 excerpt at the last stanza emphasizes connections between ideas.

### **Syntactic Cohesion**

In this type of cohesion, a word or sentence is repeated over and over to create emphasis or emotion. This could be illustrated from extract taken from *Utara Ntị p.30* “Aririọ” by E. N. Emenanjo.

Ihe ndị mmadụ chọọọ What people need

abụghị okpokpo bekee na Igbo na-atọ ka ụtụ. it’s not big English and Igbo that is as sweet as a bird

Ihe ndị mmadụ chọọọ What people need

bụ mmiri a ga-añụ añụ na nri a ga-eri. is the water to drink and the food to eat.

In the above poem, the repetition of the sentence, “Ihe ndị mmadụ chọọọ” is to emphasis on the utmost needs of people.

## **Rhythm**

Rhythm is another form of language cohesion. It is so because even if rhythm involves some kind of transformation on the part of the poet, such newness is realized through conforming to what is obtainable in the language that is the established communicative possibilities. Eze & Onu (2009: 146) assert that, rhythm in Igbo is non-metrical. It implies that Igbo rhythm composes of regular recurrence of breath pause which give rise to fast or slow rhythm, the recurrence of equal time duration in consecutive utterances and the recurrence of sense balance, which produce the rhythm that is tied to the sense. Example from *Utara Nti* p.21-22 by Nolue Emenanjo.

Udele si ndi Okenye anwuna Vulture said adult should not die

Maka ndi Okenye nwuo because adults die

Umuka ahurja ya n'oku. Children roast him on fire.

Here, the 2 & 3 sentences in each of the stanza balance or complement the sentence 1 in order to achieve balanced thought. Hence, the above poem features on equal time duration based on regular recurrence of breathe pause.

## **Findings**

It is revealed in the study that cohesion in poetry is a reliable instrument in text construction, in context; a poem hence helps to showcase the poet's intents and makes the poem readable and understandable. Also reveals that cohesion serves as a link that holds poem together and give it meaning.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, attempt has been made to identify the types of cohesion in some selected Igbo poems. In the cause of conducting this research, it was observed that students find it challenging to read and

understand poems without cohesion. The outcome of the study shows that cohesion is part and parcel of poem hence, poet cannot do without it.

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## **INTEGRATION DES OUTILS NUMERIQUES DANS L'ENSEIGNEMENT ET L'APPRENTISSAGE DU FRANÇAIS AU SECONDAIRE: UNE ETUDE DES ECOLES D'IDEMILI NORTH (NIGERIA)**

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### **Résumé**

Cette étude analyse l'intégration des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français dans les écoles secondaires de la zone d'Idemili North, État d'Anambra (Nigeria). En adoptant un devis descriptif, la recherche a porté sur 200 élèves et 25 enseignants issus de cinq établissements secondaires. Les données ont été recueillies à l'aide d'un questionnaire structuré et analysées à l'aide des moyennes statistiques.

Les résultats révèlent que les technologies numériques telles que les ordinateurs, smartphones et projecteurs sont partiellement disponibles, mais insuffisamment exploitées. Les principaux obstacles identifiés incluent le manque d'équipements numériques, l'insuffisance de formation des enseignants et l'instabilité de l'électricité. Malgré ces défis, enseignants et élèves manifestent une attitude positive face au numérique, reconnaissant son rôle dans l'amélioration de la motivation et de la compréhension.

L'étude recommande de renforcer les infrastructures numériques, de former les enseignants à la didactique numérique et d'intégrer

officiellement les outils technologiques dans le programme d'enseignement du français.

**Mots-clés:** technologies numériques, enseignement du français, FLE, compétences numériques, écoles secondaires, Nigeria.

### **Abstract**

This study analyzes the integration of digital technologies in the teaching and learning of French in secondary schools in the Idemili North area of Anambra State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive design, the research focused on 200 students and 25 teachers from five secondary schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using statistical averages. The results reveal that digital technologies such as computers, smartphones, and projectors are partially available but underutilized. The main obstacles identified include a lack of digital equipment, insufficient teacher training, and unreliable electricity. Despite these challenges, both teachers and students demonstrate a positive attitude toward digital technology, recognizing its role in improving motivation and comprehension. The study recommends strengthening digital infrastructure, training teachers in digital pedagogy, and formally integrating technological tools into the French curriculum.

**Keywords:** digital technologies, French language teaching, French as a Foreign Language, digital skills, secondary schools, Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

L'avancement rapide de la technologie a fondamentalement transformé le paysage éducatif, faisant de l'intégration des outils numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français au secondaire une composante essentielle de l'éducation linguistique moderne. Cette intégration est motivée par le potentiel qu'elle offre

de créer un environnement d'apprentissage plus engageant, interactif et personnalisé, permettant de dépasser les méthodes traditionnelles afin de répondre aux besoins et aux attentes des élèves nés à l'ère du numérique. Historiquement, l'enseignement des langues étrangères s'est souvent fortement appuyé sur des manuels, des CD audio et des tableaux noirs, ce qui pouvait engendrer des expériences d'apprentissage passives. Les outils numériques, allant des applications d'apprentissage des langues et des ressources multimédias aux simulations en réalité virtuelle et aux plateformes de collaboration en ligne, offrent un éventail diversifié d'opportunités pour enrichir l'approche pédagogique. Ils permettent notamment aux étudiants d'accéder à des contenus en langue française authentiques et à des interactions avec des locuteurs natifs, qui étaient auparavant difficiles à obtenir dans un environnement géographique donné.

L'objectif central de l'incorporation de ces outils n'est pas la technologie en soi, mais bien l'amélioration de l'efficacité de l'acquisition linguistique en promouvant l'implication active des élèves et en développant la compétence communicative dans des contextes réalistes. La recherche indique que les outils numériques peuvent augmenter significativement la motivation et l'engagement des étudiants, faciliter un retour d'information immédiat sur les performances et s'adapter à une diversité de styles et de rythmes d'apprentissage.

Cependant, le succès de l'intégration des outils numériques n'est pas sans défis. Des problèmes tels que la garantie d'un accès équitable à la technologie, la nécessité d'une formation adéquate des enseignants et la mise en place de stratégies pédagogiques réfléchies pour prévenir la mauvaise utilisation des outils doivent être abordés afin de maximiser leurs avantages.

Cette exploration de l'intégration des outils numériques dans l'enseignement secondaire du français examinera les nombreux

bénéfices, les outils spécifiques utilisés et les défis pratiques qui doivent être surmontés. L'objectif est de fournir une vue d'ensemble complète de la manière dont la littératie numérique peut enrichir l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français langue étrangère, dotant in fine les élèves des compétences essentielles pour un monde globalisé et numérique. » Au Nigeria, pays où le français est considéré comme une seconde langue officielle (SLO) et un atout majeur dans la sphère ouest-africaine, l'adoption des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) dans l'éducation est une priorité gouvernementale. Cependant, l'intégration effective de ces technologies dans l'enseignement des langues, et spécifiquement du Français Langue Étrangère (FLE) reste largement freinée par des défis structurels.

Malgré un consensus sur les bénéfices pédagogiques des outils numériques (multimédia, plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne, applications mobiles) pour l'amélioration de l'écoute, de la prononciation et de la motivation des apprenants, les études révèlent souvent un décalage entre les politiques nationales et la réalité des pratiques en classe. Ce décalage est exacerbé par le manque de ressources matérielles, la formation insuffisante des enseignants et la fiabilité précaire de l'infrastructure électrique et d'accès à Internet.

La majorité des recherches antérieures se concentrent soit sur les institutions d'enseignement supérieur, soit sur des généralités au niveau national, laissant un vide significatif concernant la situation réelle dans les écoles secondaires de zones géographiques spécifiques. Idemili North, dans l'État d'Anambra, représente un contexte où ces défis structurels sont particulièrement aigus et méritent une attention empirique ciblée.

En analysant la situation dans cette zone, cette étude cherche à combler ce fossé dans la littérature en fournissant une évaluation spécifique et quantitative de :

La disponibilité réelle des outils numériques.

Les attitudes et les perceptions des enseignants et des élèves.

Les obstacles spécifiques qui entravent l'utilisation efficace des outils dans le contexte local d'Idemili North.

Objectifs de l'Étude:

L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'analyser l'intégration des outils numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français au secondaire dans les écoles d'Idemili North (Nigeria).

Objectifs spécifiques

1. Identifier les technologies numériques disponibles dans les écoles secondaires d'Idemili North pour l'enseignement du français.
2. Examiner les usages pédagogiques de ces technologies par les enseignants et les apprenants de français.
3. Évaluer l'effet de l'utilisation des technologies numériques sur la motivation et les performances des élèves en français.
4. Identifier les obstacles auxquels les enseignants et les apprenants sont confrontés dans l'intégration du numérique dans les cours de français.
5. Proposer des stratégies et recommandations pour une intégration plus efficace des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement/apprentissage du français au secondaire.

## **Revue littérature**

### **Cadre conceptuel**

Afin d'établir une base solide pour cette étude, il est essentiel de définir les concepts fondamentaux qui en constituent l'ossature. Ces

concepts sont mobilisés tout au long de ce travail et leur clarification contribue à une meilleure compréhension des enjeux de l'intégration des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement/ apprentissage du français langue étrangère (FLE) dans les écoles secondaires d'Idemili North.

### **Technologies numériques:**

Le concept de technologies numériques englobe un vaste ensemble d'outils électroniques, informatiques et en ligne permettant de produire, traiter, stocker, diffuser et partager des informations (UNESCO, 2021). Ces outils incluent notamment les ordinateurs, tablettes, smartphones, tableaux blancs interactifs, logiciels éducatifs, plateformes d'apprentissage à distance (Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams) applications mobiles (Duolingo, Busuu, Quizlet) ainsi que les ressources en ligne telles que les vidéos YouTube, dictionnaires électroniques, podcasts et blogs en français.

Selon Selwyn (2012) les technologies numériques dépassent leur simple rôle d'outils techniques pour devenir de véritables catalyseurs de transformation des pratiques éducatives. Elles favorisent une pédagogie plus interactive et centrée sur l'apprenant, en développant l'autonomie et la motivation. Bawane et Spector (2009) considèrent qu'elles représentent un levier important pour diversifier les modalités d'apprentissage et améliorer l'efficacité des pratiques pédagogiques.

### **Intégration pédagogique des technologies:**

L'intégration pédagogique des technologies désigne le processus par lequel les outils numériques sont incorporés de manière stratégique et intentionnelle dans les pratiques éducatives, en vue d'enrichir l'expérience d'enseignement/apprentissage (Tchameni Ngamo, 2009). Il ne s'agit pas d'une utilisation ponctuelle ou superficielle,

mais d'une démarche planifiée qui vise à répondre aux objectifs pédagogiques.

Mishra et Koehler (2006) à travers le modèle TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) affirment que l'intégration efficace des technologies dépend d'un équilibre entre les connaissances disciplinaires, pédagogiques et technologiques de l'enseignant. De leur côté, Hughes, Thomas et Scharber (2006) insistent sur l'importance d'adapter l'usage des technologies au contexte local, aux réalités sociotechniques des établissements et aux profils des apprenants.

### **Apprentissage du français langue étrangère (FLE):**

L'apprentissage du FLE correspond à l'ensemble des processus cognitifs, affectifs et sociaux par lesquels un individu non francophone développe des compétences linguistiques et communicatives en français (Cuq & Gruca, 2017). Cet apprentissage comprend la compréhension et l'expression, tant orales qu'écrites, ainsi que le développement d'une compétence interculturelle.

Selon Puren (2009) l'enseignement/apprentissage du FLE doit s'appuyer sur des approches communicatives et actionnelles, permettant à l'apprenant de s'approprier la langue dans des contextes authentiques. Les technologies numériques offrent à cet effet des supports variés et authentiques, renforçant la motivation et facilitant l'exposition à des pratiques langagières réelles (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

### **Enseignement du français au Nigeria:**

Au Nigeria, le français est enseigné comme langue étrangère, en particulier dans les écoles secondaires publiques et privées. Les cours, dispensés principalement dans les classes de JSS1 à JSS3, reposent encore souvent sur des approches traditionnelles telles que

l'utilisation de manuels, de dictées, de répétitions et de dialogues (Adegbite, 2015).

Toutefois, certaines écoles ayant accès aux technologies numériques introduisent des pratiques pédagogiques innovantes, telles que l'utilisation de supports audiovisuels, de plateformes interactives et de correspondances en ligne avec des locuteurs francophones. Ces pratiques renforcent l'efficacité de l'enseignement et améliorent la motivation des apprenants.

Dans l'État d'Anambra, et plus particulièrement dans la zone d'Idemili North, les écoles secondaires présentent une forte hétérogénéité en matière d'infrastructures, de disponibilité des ressources numériques, de formation des enseignants et d'accès à Internet (Okoye, 2019). Cette diversité contextuelle constitue un élément central de l'analyse dans le cadre de cette recherche.

### **Idemili North:**

Idemili North est une zone du gouvernement local située dans l'État d'Anambra, au sud-est du Nigeria. Elle se caractérise par une forte densité démographique et une diversité d'établissements scolaires, allant des écoles publiques à faible dotation technologique aux écoles privées mieux équipées (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Certaines écoles secondaires privées disposent de laboratoires informatiques et d'un accès stable à Internet, tandis que de nombreuses écoles publiques peinent à assurer un minimum d'équipements numériques et souffrent de problèmes de maintenance (Okoye, 2019). Ces disparités influencent directement l'efficacité de l'intégration des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement/apprentissage du français dans cette zone.

### **École secondaire:**

L'école secondaire constitue une étape cruciale du système éducatif nigérian, située entre l'éducation de base et l'enseignement supérieur. Elle comprend deux niveaux: le Junior Secondary School (JSS1–JSS3) et le Senior Secondary School (SS1–SS3) conformément à la politique nationale de l'éducation (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Son rôle est non seulement de transmettre des connaissances académiques, mais aussi de préparer les élèves à relever les défis sociaux, technologiques et professionnels du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Ololube, 2013). Dans cette perspective, l'intégration des technologies numériques dans les écoles secondaires revêt une importance stratégique, puisqu'elle permet aux apprenants d'acquérir des compétences transversales et de s'adapter aux évolutions rapides de la société.

### **Compétences numériques:**

Les compétences numériques désignent la capacité d'utiliser de manière efficace, critique et responsable les technologies numériques pour l'apprentissage, la communication et la participation citoyenne (Ferrari, 2013). Elles ne se limitent pas aux habiletés techniques (utiliser un ordinateur, un smartphone ou Internet) mais incluent aussi des dimensions cognitives, informationnelles et socio-affectives.

L'Union européenne (European Commission, 2019) identifie la compétence numérique comme l'une des huit compétences clés pour l'éducation tout au long de la vie. Elle est perçue comme un levier essentiel pour renforcer l'autonomie des apprenants et leur préparation à un monde globalisé.

Dans le contexte nigérian, cependant, le développement des compétences numériques reste limité par des contraintes majeures :

infrastructures insuffisantes, formation incomplète des enseignants et accès irrégulier à Internet (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2005; Yusuf, 2018). Ces obstacles renforcent la nécessité d'élaborer des stratégies contextualisées pour développer les compétences numériques des élèves dans les écoles secondaires.

## **Cadre théorique**

### **Théorie de l'acceptation de la technologie (TAM – Davis, 1989)**

La Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) élaborée par Davis (1989) constitue une référence majeure pour comprendre les facteurs qui influencent l'adoption des technologies. Elle repose sur deux déterminants principaux :

- L'utilité perçue (perceived usefulness) : degré auquel un utilisateur croit que l'utilisation d'une technologie améliorera sa performance.
- La facilité d'utilisation perçue (perceived ease of use) : degré auquel un utilisateur pense que l'usage de la technologie ne nécessitera pas d'effort excessif.

Plusieurs études (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Teo, 2011) confirment que ces deux variables expliquent largement l'acceptation ou le rejet des technologies en contexte éducatif. Si les enseignants perçoivent une valeur ajoutée et une simplicité d'utilisation, ils sont plus enclins à intégrer ces outils dans leurs pratiques pédagogiques.

Dans le cas d'Idemili North, à Community Secondary School Uke, certains enseignants de français expriment leur intérêt pour l'utilisation d'Internet en classe. Cependant, faute de formation adéquate, ils n'ont pas pu l'intégrer de manière effective. Cette situation illustre le rôle déterminant de la perception de compétence et de la formation dans l'adoption des technologies, comme le soulignent Sánchez-Prieto, Olmos-Migueláñez et García-Peñalvo (2017).

### **Théorie de l'apprentissage multimodal (Mayer, 2001):**

La théorie cognitive de l'apprentissage multimédia, développée par Mayer (2001, 2009) affirme que les apprenants comprennent et retiennent mieux l'information lorsqu'elle est présentée simultanément par plusieurs canaux sensoriels (visuel, auditif, kinesthésique). Cette théorie s'appuie sur trois principes:

1. Principe du double codage: l'information est mieux intégrée lorsqu'elle active à la fois le canal visuel et le canal auditif.
2. Principe de charge cognitive: les ressources cognitives étant limitées, une présentation claire et structurée facilite l'apprentissage (Sweller, 1994).
3. Principe de cohérence: les apprenants réussissent mieux lorsque les supports multimédias éliminent les éléments superflus.

Les technologies numériques facilitent précisément la mise en œuvre de cette approche multimodale. Par exemple:

- Les vidéos de conversations en français combinent audio et image, renforçant la compréhension orale.
- Les activités interactives de type glisser-déposer sur Quizlet sollicitent l'interaction tactile et visuelle.
- Les chansons françaises sous-titrées stimulent à la fois l'écoute et la lecture, favorisant l'acquisition lexicale.

Dans certaines écoles d'Idemili North, comme Christ the King College Nkpor, les enseignants encouragent les élèves à suivre des vidéos éducatives sur YouTube avec sous-titres. Cette pratique améliore la prononciation, l'orthographe et la compréhension orale, en cohérence avec les apports de la théorie multimodale (Moreno & Mayer, 2007).

## **Étude Empiriques:**

Les travaux empiriques portant sur l'intégration des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères, en particulier du français, mettent en évidence à la fois le potentiel pédagogique du numérique et les obstacles qui limitent son exploitation dans les contextes éducatifs africains et nigériens.

Plusieurs études Internationales montrent que les outils numériques — tels que les applications mobiles, les plateformes d'apprentissage en ligne, les ressources multimédias et les environnements collaboratifs, renforcent la motivation, l'autonomie et la participation des apprenants. Chapelle (2001) et Godwin-Jones (2018) soulignent que l'apprentissage assisté par ordinateur favorise une exposition authentique à la langue cible et encourage des pratiques communicatives interactives. Ces travaux montrent que le numérique transforme les modalités d'apprentissage en permettant aux apprenants de travailler à leur rythme, de recevoir une rétroaction immédiate et d'accéder à une variété de ressources linguistiques.

Dans le contexte africain, plusieurs recherches (Adegbija & Fakeye, 2010; Etoundi, 2021) confirment que les technologies numériques améliorent l'engagement des apprenants et facilitent l'enseignement des langues étrangères. Toutefois, ces études révèlent également des contraintes structurelles telles que l'insuffisance des infrastructures technologiques, la connexion Internet limitée et le manque de formation des enseignants.

Au Nigeria, les travaux d'Ezeani (2012) et d'Onyejekwe (2021) montrent que l'usage des supports audiovisuels et des applications mobiles favorise l'acquisition des compétences orales et auditives en français. Ogunmodimu (2015) note également que les ressources multimédias permettent aux apprenants de mieux comprendre les sons, les expressions et les intonations de la langue française. Cependant, d'autres études (Okeke, 2017; Ajiboye & Alao, 2019)

soulignent que l'intégration du numérique reste limitée dans de nombreuses écoles en raison du manque d'équipements, de l'électricité instable, de l'accès irrégulier à Internet et de la maîtrise insuffisante des outils numériques par les enseignants.

De façon générale, la littérature empirique montre que, malgré une attitude positive envers l'usage du numérique dans l'enseignement du français, son intégration demeure partielle et inégale selon les régions et les établissements. Les études existantes portent majoritairement sur les universités et collèges, laissant relativement peu de travaux portant spécifiquement sur les écoles secondaires, en particulier dans des zones locales comme Idemili North. Cette lacune justifie la pertinence de la présente recherche, qui vise à analyser de manière ciblée l'utilisation des technologies numériques dans l'enseignement/apprentissage du français au niveau secondaire et à identifier les défis propres à ce contexte.

### **Méthodologie de la Recherche**

La présente étude a adopté une approche quantitative en utilisant un design descriptif par enquête (survey design). Ce choix méthodologique se justifie par la nécessité d'examiner, de décrire et d'interpréter les perceptions, les pratiques et les défis liés à l'intégration des outils numériques dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage du français langue étrangère (FLE).

### **Domaine d'Étude et Population**

L'étude a été menée dans les écoles secondaires de la zone d'Idemili North, dans l'État d'Anambra, au Nigeria. La population cible se composait de l'ensemble des enseignants de français et des élèves apprenant le français dans cette zone.

### **Échantillon et Procédure d'Échantillonnage**

Un échantillonnage intentionnel (ou prémédité) a été utilisé pour sélectionner cinq écoles secondaires au sein de la zone d'étude. L'échantillon final comprenait 225 participants, répartis comme suit:

200 élèves des classes de JSS1 à SS3 (40 élèves par école).

25 enseignants de français (5 enseignants par école).

La répartition des participants par école est détaillée dans le Tableau 1.

École	Nombres d'étudiantes	Nombres d'Enseignant Sélectionnés
A	40	5
B	40	5
C	40	5
D	40	5
E	40	5
TOTAL	200	25

### **Instrument de Collecte des Données**

L'instrument principal de collecte était un questionnaire structuré, développé par la chercheuse, complété par une grille d'observation utilisée lors des visites en classe. Le questionnaire comportait quatre sections principales: informations démographiques, disponibilité et usage des outils numériques, perceptions et attitudes, et obstacles/suggestions.

Les items du questionnaire étaient structurés autour d'une échelle de Likert à quatre points, allant de:

4 points: Très D'accord (TD)

3 points: D'accord (D)

2 points: Pas D'accord (PD)

1 point: Pas du Tout D'accord (PTD)

La validité de l'instrument a été assurée par son examen minutieux et la correction par la directrice de mémoire avant son administration, garantissant la pertinence des items.

### **Collecte et Analyse des Données**

La collecte des données s'est déroulée par l'administration directe des questionnaires aux participants et par des observations en classe de français à l'aide de la grille prédéfinie.

Pour l'analyse, la méthode de pourcentage statistique simple (la moyenne arithmétique) a été utilisée pour répondre aux questions de recherche. La décision de validation des hypothèses était basée sur le seuil de coupure (cut-off point) suivant :

- Tout item obtenant une moyenne ( $\bar{x}$ ) supérieure à 2.5 (le point médian de l'échelle) a été accepté (indiquant un accord).
- Tout item obtenant une moyenne inférieure à 2.5 a été rejeté (indiquant un désaccord).

La moyenne arithmétique a été calculée selon la formule:  $\bar{x} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$

Où  $\bar{x}$  représente la moyenne,  $f$  la fréquence de chaque score,  $x$  le score attribué (1, 2, 3 ou 4) et  $N$  le nombre total de participants.

## **Présentation des Résultats**

Cette section doit présenter les faits (les moyennes et les décisions) sans interprétation majeure, en se concentrant sur les points clés de chaque question de recherche.

### **Disponibilité et Usage des Outils Numériques (RQ1)**

Les résultats indiquent une disponibilité modérée des outils numériques (moyenne globale:  $\{x\} = 2.68$ ). Si l'existence d'ordinateurs  $\{x\} = 2.85$  et l'usage de téléphones portables par les élèves  $\{x\} = 3.00$  sont acceptés, l'item crucial de l'accès régulier à Internet dans l'école est rejeté ( $\{x\} = 2.25$ ).

### **Attitudes et Perceptions (RQ2)**

L'attitude des participants envers le numérique est fortement positive (moyenne globale:  $\{x\} = 3.00$ ). Les participants s'accordent à dire que l'usage des technologies rend l'apprentissage du français plus intéressant ( $\{x\} = 3.35$ ) et améliore la compréhension et la prononciation ( $\{x\} = 3.30$ ). L'idée selon laquelle le numérique prend trop de temps est rejetée ( $\{x\} = 2.10$ ).

### **Les Défis Majeurs (RQ3)**

Les défis structurels et humains sont les plus fortement acceptés (moyenne globale:  $\{x\} = 3.36$ ). Les trois obstacles perçus comme les plus importants sont:

Le manque de matériel numérique (ordinateurs, projecteurs) ( $\{x\} = 3.52$ ).

L'insuffisance de la formation des enseignants ( $\{x\} = 3.50$ ).

L'électricité instable ( $\{x\} = 3.50$ ).

### **Stratégies Pédagogiques Actuelles (RQ4)**

Les enseignants intègrent des stratégies numériques modérées (moyenne globale:  $\{x\} = 3.06$ ). Les pratiques les plus courantes sont l'utilisation de vidéos et chansons françaises ( $\{x\} = 3.10$ ) et l'encouragement des recherches en ligne ( $\{x\} = 3.20$ ).

#### Recommandations Clés (RQ5)

Il existe un consensus très fort pour l'amélioration (moyenne globale:  $\{x\} = 3.56$ , la plus élevée de toutes les questions). Les recommandations principales sont:

L'équipement des écoles par le gouvernement ( $\{x\} = 3.67$ ).

L'organisation de formations pour les enseignants ( $\{x\} = 3.60$ ).

#### **Discussion des Résultats**

Les résultats de cette étude confirment que l'intégration des outils numériques dans l'enseignement du FLE à Idemili North est à la fois une opportunité pédagogique non saisie et un défi structurel critique. La discussion s'articule autour de la confrontation des perceptions positives avec la réalité d'une utilisation limitée. Les résultats montrent aussi que la disponibilité limitée des technologies et le manque de formation constituent les obstacles principaux à l'intégration du numérique. Les perceptions positives des enseignants et élèves sont en phase avec les théories constructiviste et multimodale, qui valorisent l'interactivité, la participation et la diversité des supports.

Le modèle TAM permet d'expliquer la faible adoption: lorsque les enseignants ne maîtrisent pas les outils, la facilité d'usage est faible, ce qui réduit l'intégration pédagogique. Les obstacles structurels relevés corroborent les études d'Ezeani (2012) Adegbiya & Fakeye (2010) et Okeke (2017).

Ainsi, bien que le numérique soit perçu comme bénéfique pour l'apprentissage du FLE, son intégration effective nécessite un soutien

institutionnel, des infrastructures adéquates et une formation continue.

## **Conclusion**

L'étude montre que les technologies numériques constituent un levier important pour moderniser l'enseignement du français au secondaire. Elles renforcent la motivation, améliorent la compréhension et favorisent une pédagogie interactive. Toutefois, leur utilisation demeure limitée par le manque d'équipements, l'insuffisance de formation et l'instabilité électrique.

Une intégration efficace du numérique nécessite une politique éducative cohérente, un renforcement des infrastructures et une formation technopédagogique régulière des enseignants.

## **Implications et Recommandations**

Les résultats de cette étude ont des implications Claires pour les autorités éducatives et les professionnels du FLE, menant aux recommandations suivantes:

### **Implications Éducatives**

**Ressources:** Les autorités éducatives (Ministère de l'Éducation, Commission éducative d'Anambra) doivent prioriser l'investissement dans des infrastructures fiables (électricité stable, accès Internet haut débit) et fournir aux écoles les équipements nécessaires (laboratoires de langues numériques, projecteurs, ordinateurs).

**Curriculum:** Le programme d'enseignement du français doit être révisé pour inclure explicitement la littératie numérique et l'usage des outils interactifs, afin d'aligner la didactique du FLE sur les exigences du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

**Pratiques:** Les enseignants sont encouragés à évoluer vers des approches communicatives et interactives qui exploitent les outils

numériques pour créer des situations d'expression authentiques, plutôt que de les utiliser uniquement comme supports de présentation.

### **Recommandations Spécifiques**

**Formation Continue:** Mettre en place des programmes de formation pratique et continue pour les enseignants, axés non seulement sur la manipulation des outils (logiciels, applications, plateformes) mais surtout sur les stratégies didactiques d'intégration du numérique en classe de langue.

**Laboratoires Numériques:** Créer et équiper des laboratoires de langues numériques fonctionnels dans chaque école secondaire pour garantir un accès équitable aux ressources technologiques pour tous les élèves.

**Encouragement à l'Autonomie:** Encourager et formaliser l'utilisation par les élèves des ressources numériques autonomes (applications d'apprentissage, dictionnaires en ligne, médias français) pour renforcer leur autonomie linguistique et leur engagement.

### **Suggestions pour des Études Futures** (Limites de l'Étude)

Pour approfondir la compréhension de ce phénomène, il serait pertinent d'explorer:

L'impact mesurable de l'intégration numérique (méthodes mixtes ou hybrides) sur la performance académique et la motivation des élèves en FLE.

Une étude comparative des défis et des stratégies d'intégration entre les écoles publiques et privées d'une même zone.

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**INTERROGATING AND PROMOTING TOLERANCE IN  
PLURALISTIC SOCIETIES THROUGH RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION**

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**Abstract**

In Madrid from 23 to 25 November 2001, the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation with Freedom of Religion and Belief, Tolerance and Non-discrimination was held. The conference was organized by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Prof. Abdelfattah Amor, in collaboration with the Spanish government. The conference, was not intended as a theological meeting, rather it was convened to create an international educational strategy focused

on the right to freedom of religion, thought and conscience. The United Nations Secretary General Kofi Anan, in a message delivered at the Opening ceremony by Mrs. Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Conference aim was “to break new ground” through a discussion about how education, about religion and belief can contribute to building global tolerance”. In its religious dimension, one of the most vital elements that is to make up the identity of believers as well as their conception of life, although a precious asset for atheists, agnostics, skeptics as well as the unconcerned. Thus, the pluralism indissociable from a democratic society, which has been obviously won over the centuries, rely on it.

**Keywords:** Religious Education, Human Rights, Freedom of religion, Tolerance, Conference.

## **Introduction**

In order to combat intolerance and discrimination based on religion and belief which continue to be manifested in various parts of the world, the Special Rapporteur has been monitoring the situation in the field of freedom of religion and belief and has been alerting the international community concerning problems.<sup>1</sup> For all intent, and purposes, and for the most part, his intention has been geared to the manifestations of intolerance as well as discrimination, and not to their prevention. A survey conducted by the Special Rapporteur in 1994 by means of questionnaire addressed to States, on problems relating to freedom of religion and belief in schools, revealed that elaboration of prevention strategies is an issue of great importance.<sup>2</sup>

Altogether, replies were received from 77 States, providing issues of further debate and helping to shape the framework of the conference.<sup>3</sup> However, comments to replies were available on the website before the Madrid Conference started, although the conference was preceded by consultations and discussions, based on

analysis and interpretation of the data gathered during the survey. Besides, representatives of States, intergovernmental organizations, religious communities, NGOs as well as experts submitted their recommendations. The Spanish government in collaboration with the International Religious Liberty Association, for instance, invited a group of experts to respond to a questionnaire on this topic as well as assembled them together to deliberate on their responses. The questionnaires and responses and resulting reports were collected into a volume published prior to the Conference, Religious Freedom, Tolerance, and Non-Discrimination in Education.<sup>4</sup>

Based on the U.N Charter and taking into consideration, the provisions of the 1981 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief, the call of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education and its recommendations on education for international understanding, peace and co-operation, the Madrid Conference aimed to critically assess the draft of a document defining a set of recommendations in support of principles outlined for the development of textbooks as well as curricula related to tolerance and non-discrimination in the field of freedom of religion and belief. Thus, the redesigning the role that school education should play to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights was given a special attention.

However, the most attractive presentations emphasized that what is far-reaching in education is the development of values and attitudes among students so they can appreciate the diversity and richness of different ethnic, religious, social and cultural groups as a source of positive contributions to the entire society. As a first step towards a preventive educational strategy, Speakers stressed that the

eradication of perspectives on stereotypes, biases as well as myths from textbooks which always leads to misunderstanding as well as obvious discrimination.

With respect to preventing prejudice and hatred toward other groups, the teaching of comparative religion versus education in one religious tradition was raised by numerous speakers during the debate as valuable approaches and tools. Furthermore, also included in the debate is the issue of whether or not religious education should be a specific subject in schools or whether it should be incorporated within the framework of other subjects like history, philosophy or ethics. Another issue for consideration was the need for appropriate teacher training, as well as internship abroad including the designing of international educational programmes providing bilateral school exchanges. Although, the presentations did not provide for the conditions required for such contacts as well as exchanges to be successful, yet such specific information is for specifically pedagogical seminars, instead of the Madrid Conference which was characterized to be a human rights conference focused on freedom of religion and belief.

Stressing the need for awareness of the interdependence between nations, the Final Document states that efforts aimed at promoting freedom of religion and belief through education require “co-operation among states, concerned organizations and institutions, and that parents, groups and communities based on religion or belief have an important role to play in this regard”.<sup>5</sup> In this connection, the Final Document recognized “the right of parents, families, legal guardians and other legally recognized care givers to choose schools for their children, and to ensure their religious and/or moral education in conformity with their own convictions”, with minimum educational standards as established by state authorities.<sup>6</sup>

The article in its introduction has discussed the conference background, conference goals and objectives, and the conference outcome. Furthermore, it discussed prerequisites for pluralism; the basic issue and approach; paradigm for religious education, the aims and challenges; the outcome of Special Rapporteur; and regional examination of approaches to religious education.

### **Prerequisites for Pluralism**

Thus, the European Court of Human Rights 1993, in *Kokkanakis V. Greece* reiterated the prerequisite for peaceful coexistence in pluralistic societies. Freedom of religion or belief as a human right, not only makes pluralism possible, although, the right to have as well as to manifest a religious, or non-religious, conviction is also closely related to the equal as well as inherent of all human beings.

At the state level, toleration of different religious and nonreligious opinions and manifestations can be seen as one dimension of freedom of religion or belief.<sup>7</sup> Among its citizens, the state is obliged to accept (tolerate) the existence of a diversity of opinions. Also, it is obliged to respect the freedom of its inhabitants to change their religion or belief, as well as their freedom—either alone or in community with others and in public or private—to manifest their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship or observance.<sup>8</sup> States have also committed themselves to the promotion of awareness of and respect for human rights among citizens, in order to minimize the possibilities of human rights violations resulting from the actions of “third parties” (*Drithioirkurgen*).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, this awareness invariably should include respect for the right to freedom of religion or belief of all individuals, so that discrimination based on religious intolerance can be avoided.

With respect to the promotion of freedom of religion or belief, we might distinguish between “toleration” at the state level, and

“tolerance” at the individual or group levels.<sup>10</sup> Thus, while state toleration of diverse beliefs as well as practices may or may not be based on the values or worldview of a certain religion or tradition, tolerance as an individual attitude or conviction will often have some particular worldview as well as value system as its underpinning. From the perspective of the individual, tolerance-by the very connotation of the word-assume that you have a basic conviction that differs from the convictions of the person or the practice that you tolerate. From the principle of equal human rights and equality before the law, in Liberal States, state toleration of different religions or belief systems and hence the protection of freedom of religion or belief, will be guaranteed or followed strictly. However, in certain “confessional” states the toleration may be induced by the values of the belief system that the state has given priority to, values that also may comprise or give support to the liberal principles of human rights as well as freedom of religion or belief.

In the field of religious education, the distinction between “toleration and “tolerance” may be studied further by examining its relevance. Thus religious education is taught in public schools either as an independent subject or as part of other subjects, in several countries of the world. A state’s toleration of and attitude towards different religious or philosophical traditions becomes manifest, and hence, freedom of religion or belief as well as the principle of nondiscrimination may be challenged, in the field of religious education. Moreover, in this sphere of school curriculums, different religious as well as moral convictions may be presented and discussed, and hence the pupils’ conceptions of their own and of other traditions may be influenced and challenged. At the individual level, this makes religious education vital for addressing the challenge of fostering tolerance.

Where the state is to be credible in its use of the education system to promote tolerance among people of different confessions,

state toleration of different groups as well as opinions must be articulated and freedom of religion or belief must be accommodated by the content of textbooks and curricula, and in the choice of teaching methods.

### **The Basic Issue and Approach**

Bearing in mind the great significance of toleration and tolerance to freedom of religion in the field of religious education, the main of this article is to study, criteria for successful religious education<sup>11</sup> in pluralistic societies. The religious education being discussed in this context must bear the following attributes:

- Contribute effectively to the fostering of tolerance, and
- Respect the equal rights to freedom of religion or belief of all individuals affected.

The basic issues for determination are inter alia:

What approaches to religious education in pluralistic societies can contribute effectively to the fostering of tolerance and at the same time respect the equal right of all inhabitants to freedom of religion or belief?

Our discussion of this basic issue is a combination of normative as well as empirical factors. To this end, it will be based on results of different comparative surveys on religious education. Thus, the basic empirical focus will be on experiences of different European countries. In the field studies conducted in other parts of world, a regional focus is chosen mainly because of limited access to studies. Nevertheless, some results from the global survey of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief will be presented, based on summaries of the survey, in documents made available for the International Consultative Conference on Tolerance,

Non-Discrimination and Freedom of Religion or Belief in Relation with School Education, in Madrid, 23-25 November 2001.<sup>12</sup>

The human rights norms on freedom of religion or belief constitute the main standard of evaluation, in examining different approaches to religious education. In this context, our normative discussion will focus on the recommendations for the promotion of tolerance through religious education presented by the U.N Special Rapporteur in the documents for the 2001 Madrid Consultative Conference as well as the final document of the Madrid Conference.

### **Paradigm for Religious Education: Aims and Challenges**

Much like other fundamental human right norms, the U.N. human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief include, a strong emphasis on the principle of nondiscrimination. The equal right of all inhabitants to freedom of religion or belief is stated in several human rights documents,<sup>13</sup> i.e, in the 1981 U.N. Declaration on the Elimination on All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.<sup>14</sup> However, the declaration emphasis the close relation between promotion of tolerance and freedom of religion or belief. It contended that:

The child shall be protected from any form of discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. He shall be brought up in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, friendship among peoples, peace and universal brotherhood, respect for freedom of religion belief of others, and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men (art. 5, para 3).<sup>15</sup>

The declaration went further to state inter alia:

every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents or, as the case

may be, legal guardians, and shall not be compelled to receive teaching on religion or belief against the wishes of his parents or legal guardians, the best interest of the child being the guiding principle (art. 5, para. 2)<sup>16</sup>

In defining the content of religious education, according to the two statements from the 1981 Declaration, several concerns must be taken into consideration. The first consideration is that the public educational aim of promoting tolerance and mutual understanding; secondly, the rights of the parents to have a last say in the religious and moral education of their children.

### **The Outcome of the Special Rapporteur**

Another tension among human rights norms in this field is between, on the one hand, the rights of the parents to decide the religious and moral education of their children, and on the other hand, the rights of the child to freedom of religion or belief, expanding with increasing age, and the right of the child to receive pluralistic information and in other ways, an education that meets with the aims set out in the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the best interests of the child being the guiding principle.<sup>17</sup>

In the field of religious freedom, tolerance and nondiscrimination, since the early 1990s, the Special Rapporteur has worked on developing preventive strategies. Although, focusing on human rights violations, such strategies may supplement the traditional monitoring strategy. Education-and in particular religious education- has been emphasized as one of the most effective means for fostering tolerance and mutual understanding across borders of faith and culture in pluralistic societies.<sup>18</sup>

In 1994 the Commission on Human Rights encouraged the Special Rapporteur to examine the role of education in the promotion of tolerance of different religious views and traditions, and to study

how education might contribute to the fostering of tolerance in a more effective way.<sup>19</sup> With regards to the protection of human rights in general and to the protection of religious freedom and a climate of tolerance and nondiscrimination in particular, the Special Rapporteur conducted a survey that was to explore if and how the curricula on religious education at the primary and secondary school levels of different countries contributes. In this respect, a questionnaire was sent to the UN member states, and responses were received from seventy-seven states. The answers were analyzed and summarized, and the Special Rapporteur presented the results in his report to the Commission on Human Rights at its 2001 Assembly in Geneva.<sup>20</sup>

In the field of religious education and of possible strategies to meet challenges, the material collected in the Special Rapporteur's survey provides a rich basis for discussions both of the challenges to religious freedom and tolerance. The Special Rapporteur concludes that there is a "considerable variety in the approaches taken with regard to education in the field of religion and conviction. What emerges clearly is that beside a consistent number of interesting experiences, there are just as many situations nurturing a 'ghetto approach' based on exclusion".<sup>21</sup> The Special Rapporteur, in his report, warns against the kind of "ghetto mentality" that might be created by a religious education that does not provide knowledge about religions other than one's own, and that does not serve the aim of tolerance, nondiscrimination, and respect for human rights.

Furthermore, the two approaches to religious education discussed by the Special Rapporteur might be called a "Separation" or "ghetto" approach as well as an "integration" approach. Against this backdrop, the Special Rapporteur contended for the latter approach to religious education, according to which all pupils are kept together as much as possible, rather than being separated into groups, and learn not only about their own tradition but also about that of others.

In the school systems of various countries, the Special Rapporteur points out the differences in the status given to religious education. In some countries religious education is a compulsory subject but still does not “affect the passage from a level to the subsequent one”, the Special Rapporteur notes.<sup>22</sup> The Special Rapporteur underlines that where religious education is a subject online with other parts of the curriculum, this may express a conviction that this subject can foster “understanding of the others, of cultural and moral differences, and contribute to the creation of a culture of peace, human rights and tolerance.”<sup>23</sup> In order to deliver their teaching in a credible way, the Special Rapporteur points out the importance of and need for training teachers and educators in the field of human rights and religion. Although, his main emphasis is, nevertheless, on the aims of religious education. The underlying proposition should be both on developing the child’s self-understanding and on the child’s understanding of ‘the other’, by providing knowledge about and respect for the different religions and traditions. By the Universalist dimension of education, as expressed in universal human rights and the principles of equal human dignity, tolerance and nondiscrimination, these two aims should be connected. By recognizing these values, the Special Rapporteur argues, we learn to see the unity of mankind (“mankind is one”) and hence to see that “the others are indeed us”.<sup>24</sup> The Special Rapporteur, in these statements, expresses the view that religious education, and education in general, should not only contribute to increased knowledge, but also to identify building and internalization of values, and a certain image of man or mankind.

Similarly, human rights standard presupposes that education should provide Knowledge as well as respect for other groups and the national culture in which the child resides. However, they also make it clear that the cultural, religious or philosophical identity of the child should be respected in accordance with the convictions and

wishes of the parents.<sup>25</sup> In the self-conception of the individual child, and his religious identity, an encounter with different religious as well as philosophical traditions might lead to changes. As the Special Rapporteur puts it, schools will have to deal with the challenges that follow from parents' rights to decide about the religious and moral education of their children, in the sense that, if one important aim of religious education is to help the pupils to "see themselves as the other".

### **Regional Examination of Approaches to Religious Education**

During the last years, some comparative and systematic studies on different models and dimensions of religious education in European countries have been undertaken.<sup>26</sup> The studies show that it is possible, for instance, to distinguish between two main types of religious education (RE)-a "confessional approach" on the one hand, and a "non-confessional approach" on the other.<sup>27</sup>

- The "confessional approach" indicates that a religious community or a church is responsible for the curriculum, for the qualifications and acknowledgement of RE teachers, and sometimes also for school books. As a rule, this type of RE is organized for the children of a specific faith community, but in some countries pupils can choose the subject without being an affiliated member (e.g., in Belgium and Protestant RE in Germany). In all cases the pupils and their parents have the right to opt out and or to choose other alternative subjects like ethics or philosophy, in line with freedom of religion. The main aim of this type of RE is to facilitate the identity formation of pupils concerning religious questions, e.g., about the meaning of life, death and sorrow, love and happiness, to give orientation and knowledge.
- RE based on a "non-confessional approach" often has the aim to inform about religious) and other world views. Learning about religion is combined with learning from religion to help the pupils

make their own choices. It can focus mainly on one religion, or, as is the case in England and Wales, on a number of religions.<sup>28</sup>

The confessional/non-confessional distinction above has similarities to the distinction between an “integration approach” and a “separation approach” drawn from statements of the Special Rapporteur. Peter Schreiner’s distinction is based both on differences in content and aims of religious education.<sup>29</sup>

- (i) different ways of co-operating about RE based on who has overall responsibility for the content of religious education: public schools, faith communities or both;
- (ii) different ways of organizing the teaching of RE: either one or several alternative RE subjects); compulsory or noncompulsory RE; RE taking place only outside school hours or included in school curricula;
- (iii) different approaches to RE based on the pedagogical profile of the subject in terms of content, aims, and guiding principles (a focus on one or on several confessions/religions, aiming mainly to provide knowledge, or also emphasizing religious experience and religious or existential identity building); and last but not least;
- (iv) different ways of defining the value basis of RE and of school education in general, focusing on moral and other values of the “cultural heritage” of the country, linking it to specific religious tradition(s); and/or focusing on values that are taken to be “common” for different religions, by reference either to national legislation and constitutional principles or to universal human rights standards.

In more detail, we may analyze the religious education of different countries, using a multidimensional approach. Therefore, summarizing our findings, it is essential to sort the approaches of different countries into main categories. If we combine two of the four dimensions provided above, and then sort findings of empirical

studies of religious education in Europe and the U.S.A, we may-at a very general level-group the different main approaches as follows:

**Models for Religious Education**

Dimension 1: The <i>profile</i> of Religious Education curriculums and aims*			
Dimension 2: The institutional <i>arena</i> and responsibility for Religious Education**			
Dimension 1:	Confessional <u>(Segregated)</u>	Pluralistic <u>(Integrated)</u>	Ethics <u>(Integrated)</u>
Dimension 2: School		Sweden Norway Iceland	(Brandenburg)
Cooperation school/church (in school)	Finland Germany Italy Austria	England	
Church (in school)	(Berlin)		
Church <u>(outside school)</u>	France USA		

\* Dimension 1 indicates different *profiles* of religious education in terms of curriculum contents and teaching goals: focusing on the teachings of one particular confession ("Confessional") on different religions or life stances ("Pluralistic") or on ethics and philosophical thinking ("Ethics"). Dimension 1 also maps the *organizational* separation of pupils and/or students of religious education along confessional divides ("Segregated") or, alternatively, the organizational integration of all pupils/students in shared religious education classes ("Integrated").

\*\*Dimension 2 maps different institutional arenas for religious education: whether provided for in public school venues and as a part of regular school hours; or as a shared responsibility between school authorities and faith communities for curriculum, text books, and teacher training and qualification; or as provided for outside public school premises and managed by religious or life-stance communities.

This overview of different models of religious education is based on studies of curricula and legal provisions regarding religious education in the countries named, supplemented by presentations of the country's approach to religious education in public documents, reports, and scholarly articles.<sup>30</sup> Thus, sorting religious education practices of different countries, in some cases, may prove challenging. There are differences, for instance, in the profiles of the so-called "pluralistic" and "integrated" approaches of different countries. For instance, the English-often called the "multifaith approach"- and the Swedish models have a more comparative as well as multireligious profile the Norwegian and Danish ones, particularly at the lowest levels. In Norway and Denmark, a main emphasis is still on the Christian tradition, even though Knowledge about other

religions and philosophical traditions is a part of the curriculum.<sup>31</sup> However, it would be misleading to group them with countries that still provide “confessional” education in the traditional context. In Norwegian and Danish public schools, loyalty to the doctrines of a particular denomination is no longer required for teaching religious education. Furthermore, some interesting variations can be found at regional as well as local levels of the countries surveyed here. In parts of England, many schools strongly emphasize the pluralistic approach, both in the content of their RE and in their development of RE didactic principles.<sup>32</sup>

To some extent, different approaches to religious education are correlated to the different religio-political systems of countries<sup>33</sup> Thus, in the Nordic countries, for instance, with the exception of Finland, church and state still maintain close relation, and the state has the general responsibility for the content and the teaching of religious education. In the field of religious education, like in Germany, where there is separation of church and state yet close co-operation between the state and the majority churches at the level of the *Bundersländer*, we find close local level co-operation agreements. The separation between the church and state in France and the USA is much stricter than in Germany, and religious education is left as a responsibility for faith or belief communities and is not a part of public school curricula.

Based on answers to questionnaires to state parties and curricula and textbook materials attached to their answers, and despite variations in analytical categories and differences in empirical materials, the findings of European survey point in the same direction as the findings of the global survey of the Special Rapporteur. As do the alternative distinction between different kinds of models for organizing the religious education and different pedagogical profiles of the subject(s) the distinction of the Special Rapporteur between the “integration logic” and the “ghetto

approach”, and Schreiner’s distinction between the “non-confessional” and the “confessional” approach, leads to broadly similar groupings.

At least on the European scene of religious education, the differences that are revealed through comparative studies of religious education must not cover that fact that there are also some common characteristics and some general tendencies of development. At least as a part of the education given during the school time and on the premises of public schools, the dominant feature is that most European countries have some kind of religious education. Despite the province of Alsace-Lorraine where religious education is taught in the public Schools, France is the most obvious exception from this. Thus, another general feature is that religious education in public schools in almost all the countries is either noncompulsory or pupils have a choice between different RE subjects with different confessional or nonconfessional profiles. Norway and Sweden are indeed exceptions where the parents and children, since 1997 as well as 1998 respectively, can only be exempted from specific parts of RE subject that is compulsory and common for all pupils.

Across religious borders, when surveying approaches to religious education of various countries, another similarity found is the focus on “common values”. In general, often these are values that are also supposed to be part of the normative foundation of public school in education. From country to country, and sometimes also between regions within a country, the definition of “common values” differs. In some of the German Bundesländer, as well as in most of the Nordic countries, for instance, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, and Sweden, there is a particular emphasis on the “Christian tradition” as a normative for some of the core values such as human dignity, even though the significance of a cross-religious consensus about some basic values is also emphasized. The value foundation of the national educational system, in some countries is rather defined by the

universal principles of human rights or by similar principles enshrined in national constitutions in countries like Germany and France. A “Charter on Values in Education and Community” in England, has been developed by different groups of civil society taking part in a national dialogue, initiated by the school authorities. Respect for human rights as well as rule of law were emphasized by this Charter however, it also describes a number of other values that are assumed to be for the common good of humanity.

In pluralistic societies, these attempts to define some kind of common value foundation for public school education in general, or for religious education in particular, can be seen as expressions of different definitions of what is- or should be – the basis for a common identity. However, if one shall succeed in defining the basis of such a common “we” that transcends differences of faiths, it is important not to define the basis for identification too narrowly.

In a pluralistic society, the basis for common identification can be approached in diverse ways. For instance, one might distinguish between the “cultural heritage” approach and the “meeting point” approach to the issue of collective identification.<sup>34</sup> Resorting or better still concentrating on a country’s cultural heritage as a basis of identification for all in a pluralistic society may exclude rather than serve as a means of social cohesion. In other words, this unintended consequence might be avoided if the cultural heritage view is combined with a more pluralistic as well as dynamic approach to common identification, focusing on contact and communication between people with diverse cultural as well as religious backdrop as a basis of identification and solidarity development.

## **Conclusion**

The Special Rapporteur, in the draft documents for the Madrid Consultative Conference, warned against the “ghetto” or “Segregation” approach, keeping pupils separated according to their

religious affiliation in the religious education provided by public schools. For the fostering of tolerance and understanding across borders of faith, I do align and adopt the reasoning of the Special Rapporteur, that the school classrooms are the most important potential arenas for achieving such objective. In conclusion, however, the need for dialogue, accommodating representatives of the diverse faith communities in developing as well as evaluating the curriculum and textbooks for religious education, is a most prerequisite for the “integration approach” to breakthrough.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See the special Rapporteur’s Website at <[http://www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/frame\\_page/intolerance%20En? Open Document & Start =1 Count = 15 & Expand = 2](http://www.unhchr.ch/huridoca.nsf/frame_page/intolerance%20En?Open+Document+&+Start=1+Count=15+&+Expand=2)>

<sup>2</sup>A copy of the questionnaire is available on-line at <[http://www.unhchr.-ch/html/menu2/7/6/mrei\\_quest.html](http://www.unhchr.-ch/html/menu2/7/6/mrei_quest.html)>

<sup>3</sup>A report containing the replies is available on-line at <<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/cfedubasicdoc.html>>.

<sup>4</sup>A copy of the questionnaire is available on-line at <[http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/mrei\\_quest.html](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/7/b/mrei_quest.html)>.

<sup>5</sup>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Final Document of the International Consultative Conference on School Education in Relation with Freedom of Religion and belief, Tolerance and Non Discrimination, sec. (t) (hereinafter” “Final Document”). See also sec. 14: “Encourages all parts of society, both individual and collectively, to contribute to an education based on human dignity and to respect freedom of religion or belief, tolerance and non-discrimination”, and 15: “Encourages states at the

appropriate level of government organizations and all members of civil society to join their efforts”.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., sec. (n). See also sec. 9 “Deems that the role of parents, families, legal guardians and other legally recognized care givers is an essential factor in the education of children in the field of religion or belief; and that special attention should be paid to encouraging positive attitudes and, in view of the best interest of the child to supporting parents to exercise their rights and fully play their role in education in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination.

<sup>7</sup>Sophie Van Bijsterveld distinguishes the negative dimension from the positive dimension of freedom of religion or belief. Toleration, as defined in the following, refers mainly to the negative dimension of this basic human right. Sophie C. Van Bijsterveld, “Religion and Law: Legal Structures in an International and Comparative Contexts”, in church and state consultation: Conference of European Churches, 13-16 March 1997, Czech Republic (Geneva: Conference of European Churches, 1998).

<sup>8</sup>CF. 1966 UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (C.C.PR) article 18; 1981 Declaration; 1950 European Convention in Human Rights, article 9. Whereas the State may never interfere with the individuals Conviction or belief (the “forum internum”) there may be limitations to the right to express or manifest one’s conviction (the “forum internum”) when necessary in other to protect public safety, order, health, morals or the fundamental freedom of others (cf CCPR, art. 18[3]). One might say that the limitations to the right to freedom of religion or belief based on the criteria just mentioned also express limits to prescribed state toleration of different expressions of religion or belief.

<sup>9</sup>“Dirtwirkungen” are human rights effects caused by the actions of other individuals or groups in civil society (“third parties”).

<sup>10</sup>A similar distinction is made by Howard L. Biddulph in a paper presented at the Conference on Religious Freedom in Kiev, 2001. Biddulph's makes a fruitful distinction between the term "toleration" and the term "tolerance" that might be used; respectively, for the level of state and the level of individuals and groups. Biddulph's definition of these terms will be used as a point of departure in this article.

<sup>11</sup>By "religious education" I shall refer to education about both religions and secular worldviews or life stances.

<sup>12</sup>The conference was initiated by the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Abdelfattah Amor, in co-operation with the Spanish government. An aim of the Conference was to discuss the possibilities for developing an International Strategy for the fostering of tolerance through education. Documents from the conference are available online, including "Introductory Note" by Abdelfattah Amor at [http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu\\_2/7/b/cfeddy.home.html](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu_2/7/b/cfeddy.home.html)>. The Madrid Final Document is available online at [http://www.oslocalition.org/html/project\\_school\\_education/index.html](http://www.oslocalition.org/html/project_school_education/index.html)>.

<sup>13</sup>Cf. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles 2.

<sup>14</sup>General Assembly Resolution 35/55 (November 25, 1981).

<sup>15</sup>These aims and principles have later on been included in the UN Convention on the Right of a Child of 1989 (CRC). Article 3 of CRC further underlines a basic principles that must also be heeded by the state in the field of education: In all actions concerning the child, "the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration". Article 3[1], article 29 of the CRC outlines aims and principles for the education of a child: it shall be directed to the development of a child's personality and talents to their fullest

potential (29.1a). Further, it shall ensure respect for the child's parents and his or her own cultural identity, language, and values, as well as respect for the national values of the country in which the child is living and for civilizations different from his or her own (29.1c). The education also shall prepare the child for "responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups" (29.1d).

<sup>16</sup>The right of parents (or guardians) to decide upon the religious and moral education of their children is also stated in several other human rights treaties, e.g., the 1948 UN Universal Declaration on Human Rights (art. 26 [3]) the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights (art. 2 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention) the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (arts. 18, 4) the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13 [3]) the 1969 UNESCO Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination in Education (art. 5 [1]) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 14, 28 and 29).

<sup>17</sup>CRC, arts 3, 12 and 29.

<sup>18</sup>Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1994/18 (February 25, 1994) and Resolution 1998/18 (April 9, 1998).

<sup>19</sup>Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1994/18 (February 25, 1994).

<sup>20</sup>Cf. Amor, "Introductory Note".

<sup>21</sup>See *Ibid*, para. 14.

<sup>22</sup>Amor, "Introductory Note", para. 38.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*, para. 17.22.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>26</sup>Cf. Peter Schreiner, *Religious Education in Europe: A Collection of Basic Information about RE in European Countries* (Münster: Comenius Institut/Intereuropean Commission on Church and School, 2000); Ingvil T. Plesner, “Religion Political Models and Models for religious and Moral education,” *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values*, ed. Peter Schreiner, Vol. 14., no.2 (winter 2002); Ingvill T. Plesner, “Hvordan Definere fellersskapets grunnlag? Om Pluraliseringens betydning for offentlig religions undervisning” (How to define the basic of community? On the impact of the pluralization on Religious education in Public Schools in identitet og pluralitet (identity and plurality).

<sup>27</sup>Schreiner, *Religious Education in Europe*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 8

<sup>29</sup>Plesner, *Et Komparativt utblikk*” and “Hvordan Definere”.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup>In Norway the parliament has recently reiterated that at least fifty percent of the time in the RE classes in total shall be spent on the Christian traditions. In Denmark knowledge about religions other than Christianity is not to be taught before the second level of primary school (about the age of eleven).

<sup>32</sup>The multireligious approach in the English School System is also expressed by the fact that the schools are obliged to organize “collective worship,” where all pupils shall gather in a veneration of a divine creature or force. As a main rule, the “collective worship” (CW) shall have a “mainly Christian” character, though “without being distinctive of any particular denomination” (Department of Education Circular, 1994). The schools might also choose to have a

CW of a mainly non-Christian character if this seems more natural with regard to the religious diversity of the pupils (ibid).

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Ingvill T. Plesner, “Religion Political models and models for Religious and moral education”, *Panorama: International Journal of Comparative Religious Education and Values*, ed. Peter Schreiner, Vol. 14, no. 2, (Winter 2002).

<sup>34</sup>Terms translated from Norwegian, See Geir Skeie’s article in Heid Leganger-Krogstad and Elisabeth Haakedal, eds., *Religiose og Pedagogiske Idealer (Religious and Pedagogical Ideals)* (Oslo: Norges forskningsråds Skriftservic KULT nr. 42, 1995); and Thomas Hylland Eriksen ed., *Flerkulturell forståelse (Multicultural Understanding)* (Oslo: Tano Aschehoug, 1997).

## **THE *UMUNNA* AS IGBO TRADITIONAL INSTITUTION: NEED FOR REVIVAL**

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the *Umunna* as a fundamental Igbo traditional institution and emphasized the need for its revival in contemporary society. The study was motivated by the observed decline of the *Umunna* and its impact on communal unity, moral regulation, and cultural preservation. The problem addressed is the weakening of the *Umunna*, which has led to reduced participation in family and community affairs, erosion of moral values, and diminished cultural identity among the Igbo people. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 150 respondents from selected Igbo communities in South-Eastern Nigeria were purposively sampled. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores to answer the research questions. Findings revealed that the *Umunna* continues to perform essential roles in conflict resolution, enforcement of moral standards, organization of communal projects, and preservation of cultural heritage. However, factors such as urbanization, modern education, individualism, and changing religious practices have contributed to its decline. The study also found strong consensus among respondents on the need for the revival of the *Umunna* to strengthen communal unity, moral values, and cultural identity. The study concluded that the *Umunna* remains an indispensable

institution in Igbo society, and its revival is crucial for restoring social cohesion, moral discipline, and cultural continuity. Accordingly, it recommended encouraging active participation in *Umunna* activities and implementing cultural education programs to promote awareness and engagement among all members, especially youths.

## **Introduction**

Igbo traditional society is built upon strong indigenous institutions that regulate social life, preserve cultural values, and ensure peaceful coexistence among members of the community. One of the most important of these institutions is the *Umunna*, which literally refers to the male descendants of a common ancestor. The *Umunna* forms the foundation of Igbo social organization and serves as the primary unit through which identity, authority, morality, and communal responsibility are expressed. In traditional Igbo society, an individual exists not in isolation but as a member of a lineage whose conduct reflects on the entire *Umunna*. Traditionally, the *Umunna* played vital roles in the administration of justice, settlement of disputes, regulation of land ownership, performance of ancestral rites, and maintenance of social order. It acted as the first court of arbitration in cases of conflict, ensuring reconciliation rather than punishment. Through regular meetings and collective decision-making, the *Umunna* promoted unity, mutual support, and a strong sense of belonging among its members. It also served as a channel for the transmission of cultural norms, values, and traditions from one generation to another, thereby sustaining Igbo identity and worldview. Furthermore, the *Umunna* functioned as a moral institution that enforced discipline and communal ethics. Members were expected to uphold good character (*inwe ezi aha*) and protect the dignity of the lineage. Any action capable of bringing shame to the *Umunna* was discouraged, while commendable behavior was

rewarded with honour and recognition. In times of hardship, such as death, sickness, or economic distress, the *Umunna* provided social security and collective assistance, reinforcing the spirit of brotherhood and solidarity that characterized Igbo communal life. In contemporary Igbo society, however, the relevance and effectiveness of the *Umunna* have significantly declined. Urbanization, western education, individualism, modern legal systems, and changing religious orientations have weakened traditional kinship bonds. Many members, especially the younger generation, now show little commitment to *Umunna* activities, leading to neglect of communal responsibilities and erosion of traditional authority. This decline has contributed to increasing family disputes, land conflicts, moral breakdown, and loss of communal cohesion. The weakening of the *Umunna* poses a serious threat to the preservation of Igbo cultural identity and indigenous systems of social regulation. This study therefore examines the *Umunna* as an Igbo traditional institution and emphasizes the urgent need for its revival in a manner that aligns with present-day realities. Reviving the *Umunna* is essential for restoring communal values, strengthening social responsibility, and ensuring cultural continuity in Igbo society.

### **Statement of Problem**

The *Umunna* has historically served as the bedrock of social order, moral regulation, and communal unity in Igbo society. Through its authority, disputes were resolved peacefully, land matters were properly regulated, cultural values were preserved, and individuals were held accountable to communal norms. However, in recent times, the effectiveness of the *Umunna* as a traditional institution has been seriously undermined. What once functioned as a respected and binding authority has gradually lost its influence in many Igbo communities. One major problem confronting the *Umunna* is the

declining participation and commitment of its members. Many individuals, especially those living in urban areas, no longer attend *Umunna* meetings or recognize its decisions as binding. This lack of participation weakens collective decision-making and reduces the capacity of the *Umunna* to enforce discipline, mediate conflicts, or mobilize members for communal development. As a result, issues that were traditionally resolved within the *Umunna* are now taken to external institutions, often leading to prolonged conflicts and breakdown of family relationships. Another critical problem is the erosion of respect for traditional authority within the *Umunna*. Elders who once commanded honour and obedience now struggle to assert moral leadership. The influence of individualism and modern lifestyles has encouraged personal interest over communal welfare, making it difficult for the *Umunna* to function effectively as a unifying force. This erosion of authority has contributed to increasing cases of land disputes, inheritance conflicts, and disintegration of extended family ties. Additionally, the weakening of the *Umunna* has negatively affected the transmission of Igbo cultural values. Younger generations are increasingly disconnected from their lineage history, ancestral traditions, and communal obligations. Practices such as collective responsibility, mutual assistance, and respect for kinship bonds are gradually disappearing. Without a functional *Umunna*, these values lack an institutional framework for continuity and enforcement. The continued decline of the *Umunna* poses a serious challenge to social cohesion and cultural sustainability in Igbo society. If this trend persists, the Igbo community risks losing an indigenous institution that once ensured unity, moral order, and peaceful coexistence. This study therefore identifies the weakening of the *Umunna* as a critical problem and seeks to examine the need for its revival as a viable traditional institution capable of addressing contemporary social challenges while preserving Igbo identity.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to examine the *Umunna* as an Igbo traditional institution and to highlight the need for its revival in contemporary Igbo society. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the traditional roles and functions of the *Umunna* in Igbo society.
2. To identify the factors responsible for the decline of the *Umunna* in contemporary Igbo society.
3. To assess the need for the revival of the *Umunna* and its relevance to modern Igbo society.

## **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant because it highlights the importance of the *Umunna* as a vital Igbo traditional institution and draws attention to the need for its revival in contemporary society. By examining the roles, challenges, and relevance of the *Umunna*, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of indigenous systems of social organization and their place in modern Igbo life. The findings of this research will be beneficial to several groups in different but interconnected ways.

First, the study will benefit Igbo families and members of the *Umunna*. By emphasizing the traditional responsibilities and values associated with the *Umunna*, the study will help family members rediscover the importance of unity, mutual support, and collective responsibility. It will encourage renewed participation in *Umunna* activities and promote peaceful resolution of family disputes, especially those related to land, inheritance, and leadership. This

renewed awareness can strengthen kinship bonds and restore harmony within Igbo families.

Second, the study will be beneficial to traditional rulers, elders, and community leaders. The study provides insights into how the *Umunna* can function as a supportive institution for maintaining social order and moral discipline at the grassroots level. By understanding the causes of its decline and the need for revival, community leaders can develop strategies for integrating traditional authority with contemporary governance structures. This can enhance effective leadership, reduce communal conflicts, and promote sustainable community development.

Third, the study will be useful to youths and younger generations of the Igbo society. Many young people are increasingly disconnected from their cultural roots and lineage responsibilities. This study will help them understand the relevance of the *Umunna* to their identity, moral upbringing, and social security. By appreciating the value of the *Umunna*, youths may develop a stronger sense of belonging, respect for elders, and commitment to communal values, thereby reducing social alienation and moral decline.

Fourth, the study will benefit scholars, students, and researchers in the fields of Igbo studies, anthropology, sociology, religion, and cultural studies. It will serve as a reference material for academic inquiry into indigenous institutions and kinship systems. The study also provides a foundation for further research on the adaptation of traditional institutions to modern social realities, thereby contributing to knowledge production and cultural scholarship.

Finally, the study will be significant to policy makers and cultural organizations concerned with cultural preservation and community development. By demonstrating the relevance of the *Umunna* to social cohesion and moral regulation, the findings can inform policies

aimed at strengthening indigenous institutions. Cultural organizations may also use the study to design programs that promote cultural education, conflict resolution, and community participation rooted in Igbo tradition.

Overall, this study underscores the relevance of the *Umunna* as an enduring institution whose revival can contribute meaningfully to social stability, cultural continuity, and communal development in Igbo society.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The concept of *Umunna* has generated various scholarly interpretations within Igbo studies. According to Nwankwo (2020) *Umunna* refers to a patrilineal descent unit made up of individuals who trace their ancestry to one common male progenitor. This view is strong because it highlights the genealogical foundation of the institution, showing that membership is rooted in blood and lineage. However, its weakness lies in reducing the *Umunna* to a mere biological cluster without recognizing the social, moral, and administrative duties that define its daily operations. Thus, while it is foundational, it is too narrow to capture the full scope of the institution.

In another view, Okeke (2018) describes *Umunna* as a collective brotherhood of male descendants who, beyond their blood ties, are bound by shared customs, mutual responsibility, and communal obligations. This view expands the concept by capturing the moral duty and socio-cultural expectations embedded within the *Umunna*. The researcher's reaction to this view is that it is more comprehensive because it recognizes that *Umunna* is not simply a lineage structure but a value-driven community. Nonetheless, its limitation is that it focuses exclusively on males, thereby overlooking the continued

relevance of women who, though married out, still maintain ritual and symbolic ties with their *Umunna*. This exclusion reduces the inclusiveness of the view.

Furthermore, Udechukwu (2017) viewed *Umunna* as the smallest unit of political authority in Igbo traditional governance responsible for decision-making, conflict mediation, and leadership within the extended family. This view is useful in understanding the administrative significance of the institution, highlighting its governance role. However, its flaw is that it over-politicizes the *Umunna* presenting it as purely governmental. It does not give attention to its emotional, cultural, and spiritual bonds, which are crucial for understanding why the *Umunna* commands obedience and respect among members.

In another scholarly attempt, Nwosu (2019) views *Umunna* as the moral conscience of the community and the custodian of discipline, ancestral ethics, and behavioural regulation. This view is compelling because it recognizes the authority of the *Umunna* in enforcing norms and ensuring moral accountability. The researcher's critique, however, is that it reduces the institution to a disciplinary body. It does not capture the role of welfare, economic support, and collective solidarity which have historically made the *Umunna* a dependable social unit beyond moral supervision.

Additionally, Onyema (2021) described the *Umunna* as a multi-generational extended family network that stretches across time and space, including both resident members and those in diaspora. This view is commendable because it addresses the continuity of the *Umunna* and the reality that its members may not reside within the same village space. Yet, the view weakens the institutional character of the *Umunna* by presenting it like an ordinary family network

without emphasizing its structured hierarchy, ritual functions, and governance mechanisms.

These views collectively show that scholars tend to emphasize different dimensions of *Umunna* lineage, obligation, leadership, morality, or extended family structure. The challenge is that each view isolates one aspect without presenting the institution in its holistic form. The *Umunna* is simultaneously a kinship body, a governing unit, a moral authority, a welfare system, and a cultural guardian. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher adopts a comprehensive working definition: *Umunna* is the patrilineal kinship institution through which Igbo communities regulate social life, preserve ancestral values, enforce communal responsibilities, provide political and moral leadership, and maintain solidarity among members bound by shared ancestry. This view integrates its genealogical, cultural, administrative, ethical, and spiritual dimensions, thereby offering a balanced conceptual frame for further discourse in this study.

## **Empirical Studies**

Okorie (2020) in his study *Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and peace building in Igbo rural communities* published in the *Journal of African Indigenous Studies* investigated the role of the *Umunna* in conflict resolution within selected rural Igbo communities in South-Eastern Nigeria. The study was motivated by increasing land disputes, inheritance conflicts, and prolonged family disagreements that were once easily settled through traditional mechanisms. Using a qualitative research design, the researcher relied on in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and oral narratives obtained from elders (*Ndi Ichie*) lineage heads, and long-standing members of the *Umunna*. Data were analyzed thematically to understand both the procedures and effectiveness of the traditional

conflict resolution system. Findings from the study revealed that the *Ụmụnna* traditionally served as the first and most trusted court of arbitration. Conflicts relating to land boundaries (*ala*) marriage obligations, inheritance rights, and moral misconduct were handled through collective deliberation. The elders relied on lineage history, ancestral customs, and communal norms to arrive at decisions that emphasized reconciliation and restoration of harmony rather than punishment. The study found that compliance with decisions was high because offenders feared ancestral sanctions and social stigma within the lineage. However, the study also observed a gradual decline in the authority of the *Ụmụnna*. Younger members increasingly challenged decisions, ignored summons, or transferred disputes to formal courts and law enforcement agencies. Factors responsible for this shift included urban migration, exposure to western legal systems, declining belief in ancestral authority, and internal leadership struggles. The study concluded that although the *Ụmụnna* still possesses strong conflict-resolution potential, its relevance is being undermined by social change. This study focused primarily on conflict resolution and treated the *Ụmụnna* only as a dispute-settling body. It did not examine the institution as a holistic social, moral, and cultural structure, nor did it strongly argue for its revival as a necessary traditional institution. The present study fills this gap by examining the *Ụmụnna* comprehensively and emphasizing the urgent need for its revival in contemporary Igbo society.

Nwoye (2021) in his study *Modernization and changing kinship patterns among the Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria* Nsukka published in the *Journal of the Humanities* examined the impact of modernization on traditional kinship institutions among the Igbo, with emphasis on structures such as the *Ụmụnna*, extended family system, and lineage councils. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and covered both urban and semi-urban communities in

Anambra and Imo States. Data were collected through questionnaires and oral interviews involving elders, civil servants, traders, and youths. The findings revealed that modernization has significantly altered patterns of communal interaction. Regular *Umunna* meetings, which once served as platforms for decision-making and social bonding, were poorly attended. Many respondents cited work schedules, urban residence, and economic pressure as reasons for their absence. The study also found that younger members perceived lineage obligations as restrictive and incompatible with individual aspirations. Furthermore, the study revealed that traditional sanctions imposed by the *Umunna* such as fines, public reprimand, or social exclusion had lost their effectiveness. Individuals could now evade sanctions by relocating or seeking protection from state institutions. Despite these challenges, the study noted that respondents still acknowledged the moral and cultural importance of kinship institutions, particularly during funerals, land disputes, and crisis situations. The study concluded that modernization has weakened but not completely destroyed Igbo kinship institutions. It recommended cultural education and institutional adaptation to modern realities. The study examined kinship institutions generally and did not provide an in-depth focus on the *Umunna* as a distinct traditional institution. It also failed to articulate the specific need for revival of the *Umunna*. The present study addresses this gap by isolating the *Umunna* for detailed analysis and making a clear argument for its revival.

Eze & Uche (2023) in their study *Youth perception of traditional institutions in contemporary Igbo society* published in the *Nigerian Journal of Culture and Society* investigated how Igbo youths perceive traditional institutions such as the *Umunna*, age grades, and traditional councils. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining questionnaires with focus group discussions among youths aged 18–35 in major urban centers. The objective was to

assess the level of awareness, participation, and attitude of youths toward indigenous institutions. Findings revealed that a significant number of youths possessed limited knowledge of the functions and authority of the *Umunna*. Many respondents associated it mainly with funeral contributions and land disputes, without understanding its broader social and moral roles. The study also found that some youths viewed the *Umunna* as dominated by elders who resist change and exclude younger voices. Nevertheless, the study revealed a growing interest among some youths in cultural identity and lineage belonging. Respondents acknowledged that the *Umunna* could provide social support, moral guidance, and protection in times of crisis if properly reformed. The study concluded that youth disengagement poses a serious threat to the survival of traditional institutions. This study focused on perception and attitude rather than institutional relevance and societal consequences. It did not examine how the decline of the *Umunna* affects social order and communal life. The present study fills this gap by linking the decline of the *Umunna* to broader issues of social cohesion and cultural sustainability.

Onyema (2025) in his study *Indigenous institutions and grassroots development in South-East Nigeria* published in the *Journal of Nigerian Social Research* examined the contribution of indigenous institutions to community development in selected Igbo communities. Using a case-study approach, the research focused on institutions such as the *Umunna*, village assembly (*Oha*) and age-grade associations. Data were gathered through interviews with community leaders and observation of development projects. The findings showed that communities with active indigenous institutions experienced stronger cooperation and collective action. The *Umunna* played a key role in mobilizing members for communal projects, welfare contributions, and social support during crises. However, the study also identified declining effectiveness due to leadership

disputes, lack of youth participation, and interference from modern political structures. The study concluded that indigenous institutions remain relevant but require reform to function effectively in modern society. While this study linked indigenous institutions to development, it did not explore the cultural, moral, and identity-based significance of the *Umunna*. The present study fills this gap by emphasizing the institutional and cultural necessity of reviving the *Umunna*.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on the *Umunna* as an Igbo traditional institution and examines the need for its revival in contemporary Igbo society. The study is limited to the roles, functions, relevance, and challenges of the *Umunna*, as well as the factors responsible for its decline. Attention is given to how the weakening of the *Umunna* affects communal unity, moral regulation, conflict resolution, and cultural continuity among the Igbo. Geographically, the study is confined to selected Igbo communities in South-Eastern Nigeria, where the *Umunna* traditionally functions as a lineage-based institution. The study does not cover other Nigerian ethnic groups or traditional institutions outside the Igbo cultural context. It is also limited to the social and cultural dimensions of the *Umunna* and does not engage in extensive legal or political analysis.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the traditional roles and functions of the *Umunna* in Igbo society?
2. What factors have contributed to the decline of the *Umunna* in contemporary Igbo communities?
3. How can the *Umunna* be revived to strengthen communal unity, moral values, and cultural continuity in Igbo society?

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Structural-Functional Theory**

The Structural-Functional Theory was propounded by Émile Durkheim in 1893, and further developed by Talcott Parsons and other sociologists. The theory posits that society is a complex system composed of interconnected structures, institutions, and practices that function together to maintain social stability, order, and equilibrium. Each part of society whether family, religion, education, or kinship institutions has a role or function that contributes to the proper functioning of the whole system. According to the theory, the effectiveness of any institution is measured by its ability to maintain social cohesion, regulate behavior, and meet the needs of its members. Institutions that fail to perform their functions may lead to social disruption, conflict, or moral decay. In the Igbo traditional setting, the *Umunna* represents a critical social institution whose roles include conflict resolution, land administration, enforcement of moral values, ancestral worship, and promotion of communal solidarity. For example, when a dispute arises within a family or between households, the *Umunna* acts as a mediating authority to ensure justice and maintain harmony. It also regulates inheritance, marriage, and land use, ensuring that community resources are used fairly and responsibly. Additionally, the *Umunna* organizes collective activities such as communal labor, burial rites, and social ceremonies, which strengthen bonds among members and reinforce cultural norms. The theory further explains why the decline of the *Umunna* has significant social consequences. As modernization, urbanization, and western education weaken traditional authority, the social functions of the *Umunna* are disrupted. Conflict resolution becomes dependent on formal courts, communal cohesion diminishes, and moral guidance is weakened. Applying the Structural-Functional Theory allows the researcher to understand the

*Umunna* not merely as a cultural artifact but as a functional institution essential for maintaining social stability and harmony. It provides a lens through which the consequences of the *Umunna*'s decline can be analyzed and highlights the necessity of its revival for sustaining communal order, social responsibility, and cultural continuity in contemporary Igbo society. The Structural-Functional Theory provides a framework for examining the roles, functions, and importance of the *Umunna* in maintaining social order and cultural integrity. It also underlines the potential consequences of its decline and supports the argument for revitalizing the *Umunna* as a functional institution capable of addressing modern social challenges.

### **Social Identity Theory**

The Social Identity Theory was propounded by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. This theory emphasizes that an individual's self-concept and sense of belonging are strongly influenced by group membership. Social groups provide individuals with identity, meaning, pride, and a sense of security. According to the theory, membership in a social group influences behavior, attitudes, and norms, as individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity. In other words, people derive part of their self-esteem and moral orientation from the groups to which they belong, and they tend to conform to group expectations to reinforce their social identity. In the Igbo context, the *Umunna* serves as a primary social group through which individuals acquire their identity, values, and responsibilities. Membership in the *Umunna* connects individuals to their lineage, ancestors, and community. It reinforces moral behavior, encourages collective action, and fosters a sense of accountability to the group. For example, a member of the *Umunna* is expected to participate in communal labor, uphold the family name, and contribute to ceremonies and welfare projects. This social identity strengthens

social cohesion, ensures compliance with communal norms, and maintains cultural continuity across generations. The theory also explains the impact of the *Umunna*'s decline on identity and belonging. As younger members disengage from *Umunna* activities due to urban migration, education, or individualism, their connection to lineage and cultural heritage weakens. This results in diminished social responsibility, moral laxity, and weakened communal bonds. Applying the Social Identity Theory to this study highlights the importance of reviving the *Umunna* not only as a functional institution but also as a cultural and social identity anchor for the Igbo people. By reinforcing group membership and participation, the *Umunna* can continue to instill moral values, promote communal responsibility, and sustain cultural heritage, even in a modernized society. Social Identity Theory provides a conceptual lens for understanding how membership in the *Umunna* shapes individual behavior, social responsibility, and cultural identity. It supports the study's focus on the revival of the *Umunna* as a mechanism for restoring social cohesion, moral discipline, and communal belonging among the Igbo.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data on the roles, functions, challenges, and relevance of the *Umunna* in contemporary Igbo society. The design also facilitates the examination of factors responsible for its decline and the opinions of members regarding its revival.

## **Population of the Study**

The population of the study comprised all adult members of selected Igbo communities in South-Eastern Nigeria who belong to *Ụmunna* structures. This includes male and female adults actively participating in family and communal activities.

## **Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

A total of 150 respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique, focusing on adult members who are aware of the *Ụmunna*'s functions and roles. The purposive approach ensured that the participants have relevant experience or knowledge to provide reliable data for the study.

## **Research Instrument**

The main instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire contained sections on demographic information, roles of the *Ụmunna*, factors contributing to its decline, and opinions on its revival. A 4-point Likert scale was used for responses, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

## **Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in social and cultural studies. A pilot test was conducted among 20 respondents from a community outside the study area. Reliability was confirmed using the Cronbach Alpha method, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency.



**Demographic Variable Frequency Percentage (%)**

Occupation

Civil Servant	50	34.5
Trader	45	31.0
Farmer	30	20.7
Others	20	13.8

**Interpretation:** The majority of respondents were male (62.1%) and aged between 31–45 years (44.8%). Most respondents were civil servants and traders, indicating active participation in both modern and traditional community life.

**Roles and Functions of the *Umunna***

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Agree (%)	Total Disagree (%)
<i>Umunna</i> resolves disputes within the family	80	50	10	5	90.3	9.7
<i>Umunna</i> enforces moral and ethical standards	70	55	15	5	86.2	13.8
<i>Umunna</i> organizes communal projects and welfare	60	65	15	5	86.2	13.8
<i>Umunna</i> preserves cultural heritage and identity	75	55	10	5	90.3	9.7

**Interpretation:** Data indicate that respondents strongly acknowledge the roles of *Umunna* in dispute resolution, moral regulation, communal projects, and cultural preservation. Over 86% agreed that the *Umunna* plays a vital role in maintaining social cohesion.

**Factors Responsible for the Decline of *Umunna***

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Agree (%)	Total Disagree (%)
Urbanization and migration have reduced participation	70	50	15	10	82.8	17.2
Modern education reduces respect for traditional authority	60	55	20	10	79.3	20.7
Individualism and personal interests weaken communal bonds	65	55	15	10	82.8	17.2
Religious changes and western influence undermine <i>Umunna</i>	55	50	25	15	72.4	27.6

**Interpretation:** The major factors contributing to the decline of the *Umunna* include urban migration, modern education, individualism, and changing religious practices. Over 79% of respondents agreed that these factors have weakened participation and traditional authority.

**Revival of *Umunna* in Contemporary Society**

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total Agree (%)	Total Disagree (%)
Reviving <i>Umunna</i> will strengthen communal unity	85	50	5	5	91.0	9.0
Reviving <i>Umunna</i> will enhance moral and ethical values	75	55	10	5	89.7	10.3
Reviving <i>Umunna</i> will preserve Igbo cultural identity	80	50	10	5	89.7	10.3

**Interpretation:** Respondents overwhelmingly support the revival of *Ụmụnna*, noting that it will promote social cohesion, moral discipline, and cultural preservation. Over 89% agreed on the importance of reviving this traditional institution.

### **Summary of Findings**

1. The *Ụmụnna* continues to play vital roles in dispute resolution, moral regulation, communal welfare, and cultural preservation, though participation is declining.
2. Major factors responsible for its decline include urbanization, western education, individualism, and changing religious practices.
3. There is strong consensus among respondents that reviving the *Ụmụnna* will restore communal unity, reinforce moral values, and preserve Igbo cultural heritage.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study reveal significant insights into the roles, decline, and revival of the *Ụmụnna* in contemporary Igbo society. The discussion is guided by the study's research questions, existing literature, and the two theories adopted: Structural-Functional Theory and Social Identity Theory.

### **Roles and Functions of the *Ụmụnna***

The study found that the *Ụmụnna* continues to perform essential social functions such as dispute resolution, enforcement of moral standards, organization of communal projects, and preservation of cultural heritage. Over 86% of respondents confirmed that the institution plays a central role in maintaining unity, harmony, and ethical behavior. These findings are consistent with the 2020 study by Okorie, which emphasized the *Ụmụnna's* role in mediating

conflicts and maintaining social order. From the perspective of the Structural-Functional Theory, these results affirm that the *Umunna* is a critical institution that contributes to societal stability. Each function of the *Umunna*, whether resolving disputes or organizing communal activities, reinforces the cohesion and equilibrium of the community. Its roles are indispensable for sustaining order and cultural continuity, supporting the argument that the *Umunna* should be revived to restore social harmony in modern Igbo society.

### **Factors Responsible for the Decline of the *Umunna***

The analysis revealed that urbanization, modern education, individualism, and changing religious practices are major contributors to the decline of the *Umunna*. Over 79% of respondents agreed that these factors reduce participation and weaken traditional authority. This finding aligns with the 2021 study by Nwoye, which highlighted that modernization has transformed kinship structures and reduced engagement in traditional institutions. Through the lens of Social Identity Theory, the decline of the *Umunna* has negatively impacted individuals' sense of belonging and social responsibility. As members become less involved, their connection to lineage and communal identity weakens. The loss of group identity undermines moral enforcement and diminishes participation in communal activities, confirming that the weakening of the *Umunna* affects not just governance but also cultural and moral cohesion.

### **Need for Revival of the *Umunna***

Respondents overwhelmingly agreed (over 89%) that reviving the *Umunna* is necessary to strengthen communal unity, enhance moral values, and preserve cultural identity. This finding resonates with the 2025 study by Onyema, which emphasized that active indigenous institutions support social development and cooperation. Reviving

the *Umunna* would reinstate its traditional functions while adapting to contemporary realities, ensuring its relevance to modern society. The Structural-Functional Theory provides theoretical support for this position, emphasizing that institutions must perform their essential functions to maintain social stability. Similarly, Social Identity Theory explains that revival would strengthen individual and collective identity within the lineage, fostering participation, loyalty, and adherence to communal norms. Therefore, revitalizing the *Umunna* is not only a cultural imperative but also a social necessity to promote cohesion, morality, and cultural continuity.

### **Synthesis of Findings**

In summary, the findings demonstrate that while the *Umunna* remains a vital institution in Igbo society, its effectiveness has been compromised by modern socio-cultural changes. The results highlight a strong recognition among members of its traditional functions and the urgent need for revival. The study confirms that reinvigorating the *Umunna* will enhance social order, moral discipline, and cultural preservation, ensuring the survival of one of the most important Igbo traditional institutions.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the *Umunna* as a fundamental Igbo traditional institution, focusing on its roles, factors responsible for its decline, and the need for its revival in contemporary society. The findings reveal that the *Umunna* has historically played vital roles in conflict resolution, moral regulation, communal development, and preservation of cultural heritage. It remains a critical mechanism through which Igbo society maintains unity, ethical conduct, and a sense of belonging among members. However, the study also highlighted significant challenges facing the *Umunna*. Urbanization,

western education, individualism, and changing religious practices have weakened participation and respect for the institution, leading to diminished influence and reduced capacity to perform its traditional functions. The decline of the *Umunna* has resulted in a weakening of communal bonds, moral lapses, and erosion of cultural identity among younger generations. The study concludes that the revival of the *Umunna* is essential for sustaining social cohesion, reinforcing moral values, and preserving Igbo cultural heritage. Revitalization would involve encouraging active participation, adapting traditional practices to contemporary realities, and promoting awareness of its cultural significance. By doing so, the *Umunna* can continue to serve as a unifying institution that fosters social order, communal responsibility, and a strong sense of identity among Igbo people. In essence, the *Umunna* remains indispensable to the social and cultural fabric of Igbo society. Its revival is not merely a nostalgic endeavor but a necessary step toward ensuring that traditional structures continue to contribute meaningfully to the moral, social, and cultural development of communities in a rapidly changing world.

## **Recommendations**

1. **Revival and Active Participation in *Umunna* Activities:** Communities and family members should encourage regular participation in *Umunna* meetings and activities. Elders and community leaders should create programs that involve both adults and youths, ensuring that the institution remains relevant. This will strengthen communal unity, reinforce moral values, and restore respect for traditional authority. **Cultural Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Educational programs and awareness campaigns should be organized to enlighten members, especially the younger generation, on the roles, significance, and benefits of the *Umunna*. Schools, cultural organizations, and local communities should

collaborate to promote knowledge of lineage systems and cultural heritage, fostering pride, identity, and active engagement in traditional institutions.

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**GREEN ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
IN SOUTH EAST NIGERIA: CAPACITY OF GREEN  
ECONOMY TO SUPPORT AKUMUBA N’ULO  
CONSCIOUSNESS IN SOUTHEAST NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

Green Economy refers to an economic model that is low-carbon, resource- efficient, and socially inclusive (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2011). In recent times, there has been roaring calls for green economy system across States. The UNEP report on green economy argues that the model has the capacity to reduce environmental risks, ecological scarcities, paves way for sustainable development without degrading the environment, and has both efficiency and fairness capacities- recognizes global and State level equity dimensions. Guided by the Sustainable Development Theory and the Green Growth Frameworks both of which aim to balance economic growth with environmental protection and social equity, the study sought to: (1) investigated the capacity of Green Economy to contribute to Sustainable eradication of Poverty in the South East (2) examined how Green Economy can be a tool for the promotion of healthy living in South East Nigeria, and (3) determined the capacity of Green Economy to support the creation of ‘AkuMubaaN’Ulo’ Consciousness in South East Nigeria. Findings show that green economy can help reduce poverty, upgrade health system and support an Aku Mubaa N’Ulo concept. The paper concluded that, with a central focus on investment towards Aku MubaaN’Ulo, the green economy will eventually provide employment

opportunities and skills development of people in the South East. The study recommended a total embrace of Aku MubaN’Ulo Consciousness as the foremost approach to the green economy toward the sustainable development of the South East Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Green Economy, sustainable development, eradication of poverty, Aku Mubaa N’Ulo Consciousness, healthy living, Southeast Nigeria.

### **Introduction**

In recent times, there has been roaring calls for green economy system across States. The seriousness attached to the calls, couple with the rather firm view that the green economy system has the capacity to reduce environmental risks, ecological scarcities and pave way for sustainable development without having to degrade the environment has received significant international attention over the past few years as a tool to address the 2008 financial crisis as well as one of two themes for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). This has resulted in a rapidly expanding literature including new publications on green economy from a variety of influential international organisations, national governments, think tanks, experts, non-government organisations, private individuals, corporate bodies, and others.

Experts on the meaning of green economy agree that it is that economic system that is geared toward improving human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is that system that can generate growth and improvements in people’s lives in ways reliable with sustainable development. A Green Economy endorses a triple bottom line: sustaining and advancing economic, environmental and social welfare. A Green Economy is one in which the vital links between economy, society, and environment are taken into account and in

which the transformation of production processes, production and consumption patterns, will revitalize and diversify economies, create decent employment opportunities, promote sustainable trade, reduce poverty, and improve equity and income distribution while contributing to a reduction per unit in reduced waste, pollution, and the use of resources, materials, energy, waste, and pollution emission. Green economy is that economy that results in increased human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP 2011: UNECA, 2010: UNECA, 2011; *Loiseau, et al, 2016; Georgeson, et al, 2017; Telukdarie, et al, 2024*). Simply put, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive (UNEP, 2011).

In this study, a green economy is a mechanism to enhance sustainable poverty eradication, improve sustainable healthy living and healthy living standards, encourage growth in income, create cleaner environment, worthy trust employment, rebuilding of natural capital, and to consolidate the *AkuMubaaN’Ulo* consciousness in the South East, toward the enhancement of sustainable development. In a green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments (Voumik and Shah, 2014) that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and basically cause them to be catalyzed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation modifications. The development path should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and as a source of public benefits, particularly for poor people whose livelihoods and security depend on natural capital, such as forest, natural rivers and waters, as against mechanical rivers such as canals which are man-made and could be risky.

Part of the reasons for the campaign for green economy, is basically because it is a pathway to achieving sustainable development. There is a growing understanding that the pursuit for sustainability rests almost wholesomely on getting the economy on its right path. For a third world country, where resources are scarce, environmental risks and ecological scarcities, resource deficiency, socially exclusive, yet having a vast population, going through tough times, it will be difficult to balance supply with demand; the option therefore, is green economy (UNCTAD. 2010; Conway and Venables, 2008).

Reviewing World Resources Institute Climate Analysis Indicators Tool-CAIT, Stern explained that green economy is important because by 2030,

- Global energy demand will go up by 45%
- Oil price will go up to US\$180 per barrel (IEA)
- GHG emissions will go up 45%
- Global average temperature will go up 6°C
- Sustained losses equivalent to 5-10% of Global GDP
- Poor countries will suffer costs in Excess of 10% of their GDP (Stern)
- 1 billion people living on less than US\$1 a day and US\$3 billion Living on less than US\$2 a day by 2015 (ILO) [Prepared by Stern Review, from data from World Resources Institute Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) on-line database version 3,0]

The author is of the view that Green economy sustains environment but accelerate development. However, in a green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments. In a small but heavily populate society like the South East, in Nigeria, the investments must be such that reduces carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem facilities.

Speaking on the capacity of green economy to contribute to sustainable development, UNECA (2010) posit that green economy a passageway to sustainable development, and as such, Green Economy is very important for sustainable development, especially as green technology has the capacity to generate energy without nontoxic, harmful by-products. Also Green economy suggests making alternative environment prone technology, helps reducing waste and pollution by changing patterns of production and consumption.

Discussing the approaches, visions, models and tools to achieve the purposes for the establishment of green economy, for each State in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities Voumik and Shah (2014) established that there are different approaches to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions in each country via green economy.

Clarifying on the supporters of green economy, Investopedia (2024) explained that supporters of the green economy are concerned with the health of the natural environment and believe that actions should be taken to protect nature and encourage the positive co-existence of both humans and nature. He noted that the way these [economists](#) advocate for the environment is by making an argument that the environment plays a pivotal role in the economy of which the health of any good economy is essentially determined by the health of the environment that constitutes it.

Literature on Sustainability, point to it as a social goal for people to live together on Earth for a very long time. In his work [on not defining sustainability](#), Ramsey (2015) observes that, definitions of the term sustainability are disputed among scholars, and have varied with literature, context, and time. However, Purvis, *et al* (2019) explain that, Sustainability usually has three dimensions (or pillars): environmental, economic, and social, but many definitions

emphasize the environmental dimension (Kotze, 2022) including, addressing key environmental problems, which include climate change and biodiversity loss (Bosselmann, 2010). The idea of sustainability can guide decisions at the global, national, organizational and individual levels (Berg, 2020). Sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal (i.e. a more sustainable world) while sustainable development refers to the many processes and pathways to achieve it (UNESCO, 2022). Sustainable development is famously defined by the Brundtland Commission as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987, p. 43). The concept integrates three pillars: economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. The green economy is thus considered an operational pathway for achieving sustainable development (UNDP Nigeria, 2013).

Globally, empirical studies have demonstrated the transformative potential of the green economy. For instance, in Kenya, investments in renewable energy and sustainable agriculture have expanded rural electrification and reduced poverty (UNDP, 2017). In South Korea, green growth policies accelerated industrial innovation while reducing carbon emissions (OECD, 2011).

In the Nigerian context, Nigeria has initiated national policies to mainstream green growth, such as the *Nigeria's Path to Sustainable Development through Green Economy* framework (UNDP Nigeria, 2013). However, the practical implementation of these policies has been weak due to governance challenges, lack of financing, and low awareness. Studies indicate that renewable energy investments, particularly in solar mini-grids, have potential to address Nigeria's electricity deficit and foster rural development (Reuters, 2025).

In the south-East Nigeria, Empirical evidence highlights both opportunities and challenges in the South-East. Nwofoke (2025) documents the economic costs of land degradation in the region, noting that agricultural productivity losses threaten livelihoods. Despite these challenges, the region possesses a strong base for climate-smart agriculture, agro-based industries, and renewable energy adoption. Community-based renewable projects in states such as Anambra and Ebonyi have already shown positive socioeconomic impacts.

### **Identified Research Gaps:**

Although brilliant works on the green economy have been done by scholars, who have made great effort in explaining the concept of green economy, and stressed on its capacity as a pathway to sustainable development, and are therefore worthy of acknowledgement. However, they unwittingly failed to determine the capacity of green economy to help create an Aku Mubaa N’Ulo Consciousness in the South East Nigeria. Existing literature tends to generalize Nigeria’s green economy prospects without accounting for regional disparities in land use, population density, and governance capacity (UNDP Nigeria, 2013). Furthermore, while renewable energy mini-grids and agro-processing initiatives are gaining momentum, empirical studies have not viewed AkuMubaN’Ulo- the Consciousness that there is need to invest energy and capacities in creating wealth massively back home, as the greatest green economy for the South-east Nigeria. Herein is the departure point of this study, and the eagerness to carry out further studies on the matter with view to bridging the gap in literature. To that extent, this study addresses these lacuna, including, to (1) investigate the capacity of green economy to contribute to sustainable eradication of Poverty in the South East (2) examine the capacity of green economy to help in the promotion of healthy living in the South East (3) determine the capacity of green economy to help in the

consolidation of Aku Mubaa N’Ulo Consciousness in the South East. The sustainable development theory and the Green Economics framework were adopted in the study to demonstrate the economy as a component of the environment in which it is based. The theories pay great attention to the need for complete protection of the environment and its natural resources that fuel the economy for the purposes of economic growth and environmental protection. Perhaps the basic contention of sustainable theory revolves around intergenerational equity, intra-generational equity, environmental sustainability, and economic growth and development geared toward balanced economic, social, and environmental dimensions to achieve human well-being and prosperity. Simply put, the state of any economy is wholesomely determined by the environment and state of the natural resources that fuel the economy. If the environment is protected, natural resources, such as natural capital will be allowed to co-exist with man, and in turn serve as a channel for healthy living of man. At the core of the green economy framework, is the belief that, it is an economy that improves human well-being and social equity while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP, 2011). Perhaps the central goal of the green economy theory is the transformation of economies to achieve sustainable development, poverty reduction, and environmental protection.

Theoretically, the study advances the application of green economy and sustainable development frameworks in regional development discourse. Practically, it provides evidence-based insights for policymakers, development partners, and private investors on how to leverage green growth strategies to address unemployment, energy deficits, and environmental degradation in South-East Nigeria. It also highlights actionable policy pathways regional-level development plans with global and sustainable programs. The study focuses on the southeast of Nigeria, examining amongst all the capacity of Green Economy to support the establishment of an ‘AkuMubaaN’Ulo’

Consciousness in South East Nigeria- assessing how south east Nigeria can under the green economy concept build, multiply and harness its wealth-making capacity strategies back home for the purposes of transformative development in the south-east Nigeria. Limitations include data gaps in sector-specific statistics, reliance on self-reported survey.

Table 1:

**Global Policy Frameworks Relevant to Green Economy and Sustainable Development**

Framework/Initiative	Year	Key Objectives	Relevance to South-East Nigeria
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	2015	Promote inclusive economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social equity	Provides targets for renewable energy (SDG 7) Green jobs [AkuMubaN’Ulo] (SDG 8) and climate action (SDG 13).
Paris Agreement	2015	Limit global warming to below 2°C; promote low-carbon development	Nigeria’s NDCs commit to renewable energy expansion, relevant for regional energy transition
UNEP Green Economy Initiative	2011	Invest in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem services	Offers practical policy pathways applicable to climate-smart agriculture and agro-processing [AkuMubaN’Ulo].

OECD Green Growth Strategy	2011	Integrate environmental sustainability into economic growth policies	Provides tools for measuring and monitoring progress toward green growth [AkuMubaN’Ulo].
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Source: Survey and tabulated by the Researcher

Table 2:  
**National and Sub-National Policy Frameworks in Nigeria**

Policy/Initiative	Year	Key Provisions	Implementation Challenges in South-East Nigeria
National Policy on Climate Change	2012	Mainstream climate adaptation/mitigation across sectors	Weak institutional capacity; poor enforcement mechanisms.
Renewable Energy Master Plan (REMP)	2015	Promote solar, wind, biomass, and hydro power	Funding gaps; limited technical expertise at state level.
Nigeria’s Path to Sustainable Development through Green Economy	2013	Integrate sustainability into national planning	Fragmented adoption at regional/state levels.
Energy Transition Plan	2022	Achieve net-zero by 2060; scale renewable access	Political will and financing remain uncertain.

State-Level Renewable Projects (Anambra, Ebonyi, Abia, Enugu, Imo)	Ongoing	Solar electrification, waste-to-energy, agro-processing support	Fragmented, donor-driven, not institutionalized into state strategies.
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Source: Survey and tabulated by the Researcher

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopted a **mixed-methods design**, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the immediate and future economic relevance of the green economy in South-East Nigeria. Quantitative data allowed for statistical analysis of household and enterprise perspectives, while qualitative data from key informant interviews enriched the findings with policy, institutional, and expert insights. Mixed-methods were selected to strengthen validity through triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

### Population of the Study

The study population comprised households, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) policymakers, and development actors across the five South-East states of Nigeria (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo). The region was chosen due to its high population density, heavy reliance on agriculture, and emerging renewable energy initiatives.

### Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across states and sectors. The sample included:

- **480 households and enterprises**, drawn proportionately from urban and rural areas.

- **24 key informants**, consisting of state-level policymakers (environment, agriculture, and energy ministries) renewable energy practitioners, and agribusiness stakeholders.  
The household/enterprise sample size was determined using Yamane’s (1967) formula at a 95% confidence level

### **Sources of Data**

Two sources of data were utilized:

- **Primary data:** Structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.
- **Secondary data:** National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2025) reports, UNDP and UNEP policy documents, state-level development plans, and academic literature.

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

(v) **Questionnaire** – Designed with both closed- and open-ended items, divided into sections on:

- Socio-economic characteristics
- Awareness and adoption of green economy practices
- Perceived opportunities and constraints
- Expected impacts on employment, income, and sustainability

(vi) **Interview Guide** – Semi-structured, covering:

- Institutional capacity for green economy adoption
- Policy frameworks and challenges
- Perceived future potential of renewable energy and climate-smart agriculture

The instruments were validated by three experts in development studies and pre-tested in Abja State to refine clarity and reliability.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

- **Survey administration:** Questionnaires were administered in person by trained research assistants in the five states.
- **Major informant interviews:** Conducted face-to-face and virtually, depending on respondent availability.
- **Secondary document review:** Collected from government agencies, NGOs, and online repositories

### **Method of Data Analysis**

- **Quantitative data** were analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentages, frequencies, and means) and simple inferential tests (chi-square) with SPSS version 25.
- **Qualitative data** from interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes.
- **Triangulation** was employed to integrate findings across data sources, enhancing validity.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by coding responses. The study complied with ethical guidelines for social science research, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw.

### **Justification of the Methodology**

The mixed-methods design is justified because the study investigates both measurable socio-economic outcomes (employment, income, adoption rates) and contextual factors (policy, institutional capacity, stakeholder perceptions). Quantitative data provide generalizability, while qualitative insights explain underlying dynamics. This approach is consistent with best practices in sustainability research,

which emphasize holistic inquiry into complex socio-economic and environmental systems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

**Findings and Discussion**

This section presents and interprets the empirical findings from the survey conducted in South-East Nigeria. The results are discussed in line with the study’s objectives and situated within existing scholarship on the green economy and sustainable development:

**Table 1:**  
**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 100)**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	54	54.0
	Female	46	46.0
<b>Age</b>	18-25	22	22.0
	26-35	38	38.0
	36-45	24	24.0
	46-55	10	10.0
	56+	6	6.0
<b>Education</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	18	18.0
	<b>Tertiary</b>	55	55.0
	<b>Post-graduation</b>	27	27.0

**Source:** Survey and tabulated by the Researcher

Table 1 shows that the sample included both male (54%) and female (46%) respondents, with the majority aged between 26–35 years

(38%) followed by 36–45 years (24%). More than half of the respondents had tertiary education (55%) while 27% possessed postgraduate qualifications. This indicates that the respondents were relatively educated, enhancing the reliability of their perceptions on technical subjects such as the green economy. Similar studies emphasize the role of educated populations in adopting sustainable economic practices (Okonkwo & Chukwu, 2021).

**Table 2: Awareness and Knowledge of Green Economy**

Awareness Question	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Heard of green economy	Yes	70	70.0
	No	30	30.0
Knowledge level	Very low	12	12.0
	Low	18	18.0
	Moderate	40	40.0
	High	22	22.0
	Very high	8	8.0

**Source:** Field Survey and tabulated by the researcher

As presented in Table 2, 70% of respondents had heard of the green economy, though only 30% reported high or very high knowledge. This reflects a situation where awareness is increasing, but depth of understanding is still limited. This aligns with Akinwale and Adepoju (2019) who noted that while Nigerians are increasingly aware of environmental issues, technical comprehension of sustainability frameworks remains low.

**Table 3:**

**Perceptions of Green Economy (Likert Scale)**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Disagree (%)</b>	<b>Neutral (%)</b>	<b>Agree (%)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (%)</b>
Green economy can create jobs in SE Nigeria.	5	7	15	45	28
Renewable energy will improve electricity supply.	4	6	10	48	32
Agro-processing can reduce poverty.	6	8	20	42	24
Green economy contributes to sustainable development.	3	7	18	50	22

**Source:** Survey and tabulated by the researcher

Table 3 highlights respondents’ perceptions. A large proportion (73%) agreed or strongly agreed that the green economy could create jobs, while 80% agreed that renewable energy would improve electricity supply. Similarly, 66% agreed that agro-processing could reduce poverty. These findings affirm the assertion by UNEP (2011) that green economies provide pathways for job creation, energy efficiency, and poverty alleviation. In the Nigerian context, these

perceptions demonstrate an appetite for green-driven transformation, especially in sectors like agriculture and energy.

**Table 4:**  
**Major Barriers to Green Economy Adoption**

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Poor financing/credit facilities	74	74.0
Limited government support	72	72.0
High cost of technology	68	68.0
Low technical knowledge	60	60.0
Lack of awareness	50	50.0

**Source:** Survey and tabulated by the Researcher

Table 4 identifies key barriers: poor financing (74%) limited government support (72%) high technology costs (68%) and low technical knowledge (60%); these findings echo Oteh and Udeh (2020) who argued that the absence of accessible financing mechanisms and weak institutional frameworks hinder green investments in Nigeria. The results suggest that without systemic reforms in credit access, policy support, and capacity building, the South-East may not fully harness the green economy’s benefits.

**Table 5:**  
**Sectorial Opportunities for Green Economy Development**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Renewable energy	36	36.0
Agro-processing	30	30.0

Waste management	12	12.0
Forestry/ afforestation	10	10.0
Eco-tourism	7	7.0
Other	5	5.0

**Source:** survey and tabulated by the Researcher

As shown in Table 5, respondents saw the greatest opportunities in renewable energy (36%) and agro-processing (30%) followed by waste management (12%). These priorities reflect both the region’s challenges (energy poverty, food insecurity, and waste management issues) and its comparative advantages in agriculture. The emphasis on renewable energy aligns with Nigeria’s broader commitment to diversifying energy sources and reducing carbon dependence (Eleri & Onuoha, 2019).

Generally, the findings suggest that while awareness of the green economy exists, significant knowledge gaps and systemic barriers hinder its adoption in South-East Nigeria. However, the strong perception of economic potential indicates readiness for transition if enabling conditions, such as financing, government policy, and technical training are strengthened. These findings support the green growth theory (Pearce et al., 1989) which posits that environmental sustainability and economic growth can reinforce each other when institutions and policies are aligned.

**Genesis of the Green Economy Initiative:**

In the 1960s and 1970s an environmental movement raised concerns about the negative impacts of industrialization on the environment. This led to a growing recognition of the need for sustainable development and the concept of a green economy emerged. The

1980s and 1990s, captured international agreements like the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 brought global attention to the importance of integrating environmental sustainability into economic development. This led to the adoption of policies and practices that aimed to promote a more sustainable and environmentally friendly economy. But in the early years of 2000, there was a significant shift in focus towards renewable energy and clean technologies. At this time, Governments and businesses started investing in renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power, and promoting energy efficiency measures. This marked the beginning of a transition towards a low-carbon economy. The green economy campaign increased following the global financial crisis of 2008, which brought further attention to the need for a green economy as governments sought to stimulate economic growth while also addressing environmental concerns. Many countries started incorporating green measures into their economic recovery plans, such as investing in green infrastructure and promoting sustainable industries. Thus, the attention drawn by the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which gave birth to the idea of green economy has since then continued to evolve and grow. It encompasses various sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, green building, and eco-tourism. Governments, businesses, and individuals are increasingly recognizing the economic potential of green industries and the importance of transitioning towards a more sustainable and resilient economy (United Nations, 1972-2024).

Speaking on the timeline of the green economy, Wiki (2024) explained that, the timeline of the green economy is characterized by a shift in mindset from traditional economic models to one that prioritizes environmental sustainability. It reflects the growing awareness of the finite nature of natural resources and the need to protect the environment for future generations. As the world faces pressing challenges such as climate change and resource depletion,

the green economy offers a pathway towards a more sustainable and prosperous future. Showing how the issue of green economy started and got to the present, he showed that the issue has brought the United Nations through various conferences, as follows:

**United Nations Conferences on Green Economy**

S/ N	Date	Title of Conference	Conference
1	1972	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment	The idea of a green economy was introduced for the first time at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden. This conference emphasized the need to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.
2	1987	Brundtland Report	The Brundtland Report, also known as "Our Common Future," was published by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development. This report defined the concept of sustainable development and highlighted the importance of integrating environmental, social, and economic considerations. It laid the foundation for the green economy concept.
3	1992	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development	The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The summit brought together world leaders to address global environmental challenges and promote sustainable development. It further advanced the idea of a green economy and led to the adoption of

			Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action for sustainable development.
4	2008	Financial Crisis and the Green Economy	The global financial crisis of 2008 highlighted the vulnerability of traditional economic systems and the need for alternative approaches. Many countries started to recognize the potential of the green economy as a solution to both environmental and economic challenges. This led to increased investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other green sectors.
5	2012	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development	The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conference aimed to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development and assess progress made since the Earth Summit in 1992. The green economy was a central theme of the conference, with discussions on its potential to create jobs, reduce poverty, and promote sustainable development globally.
6	Present	Global Transition to a Green Economy	The concept of a green economy continues to gain momentum worldwide. Governments, businesses, and civil society organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of transitioning to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and socially inclusive economy. Efforts are being made to promote renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, circular economy practices, and other green initiatives. The goal is to achieve sustainable development while minimizing environmental impacts and ensuring a just transition for all.

Designed and Tabulated by the researcher

Thus the need to ensure functional sustainable development in human society by saving the environment from further depletion precipitates the current urgent call for Green Economy. Voumik and Shah (2014) reminded that Sustainable development has been the overarching goal of the international community since the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. Amongst numerous commitments, the Conference called upon governments to develop national strategies for sustainable development, incorporating policy measures outlined in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. Despite the efforts of many governments around the world to implement such strategies as well as international cooperation to support national governments, there are continuing concerns over global economic and environmental developments in many countries. These have been intensified by recent prolonged global energy, food and financial crises, and underscored by continued warnings from global scientists that society is in danger of transgressing a number of planetary boundaries or ecological limits.

### **Importance of Green Economy towards Sustainable Development in the South East**

One may want to know what green economy means in the context of the South and what purpose it serves. Communities of Africa, including the South East, are known to be highly dependent on natural resources. Natural capital assets are thus critical to the economic activities and the livelihood of millions of people who depend on fertile soil, forest, fishery and other resources from nature. The exploitation of these resources has fostered rates of economic growth, which in recent years have been among the strongest in the world; notwithstanding such economic performance, persistent poverty, and unemployment. Underemployment, particularly among the continent's fast growing young population (UNESCECA, 2011) not to mention hunger that is on high increase daily. At the same time,

the potential for future economic growth and development itself is put at risk given the level of environmental degradation, climate change, desertification, and other environmental risks and resource scarcities, which are driven by internal and external factors. The natural capital, an essential basis for wealth creation, faces mounting pressure at a time when the South East States need to meet the growing demand for water, food and health, whilst reducing poverty and stimulating economic activity to create employment and raise income levels.

Under this development trajectories, a green economy may offer considerable opportunities for mobilizing resources toward a low-emission, climate-resilient development pathway. However, the combination of tackling poverty, accelerating growth and development, and addressing climate change, is likely to involve trade-offs and policy choices between mutually supportive, but equally important priorities toward the improvement of welfare and quality of life for Africa's citizens. This will entail an increase in food, energy and water consumption. Policies and investments to sustain and enhance natural capital assets – the soils, forests and fisheries on which many poor communities depend for their livelihoods – can be instrumental (UNESCECA, 2011).

### **Approach to the Green Economy in the South East Nigeria**

To achieve the purpose of the green economy initiative there must be an approach to it. Voumik and Shah (2014) explained that there are various approaches to the green economy. A pragmatic approach to the green economy in the South East is required to tailor strategies for solving the most important problems facing the present South East. A good starting point of the approach to the green economy is to end the unsustainable building of empires abroad, Aku Muba Na Mba regime, developing abroad while Motherland lives Suffering-and-Smiling, and redirects a significant portion of the money made

abroad for up-front establishment of Aku Mubaa N’Ulo consciousness required to catalyse the green economy in the South East.

### **Capacity of Green Economy to Eradicate Poverty in the South East Nigeria**

A greener economy will provide better income opportunities needed for poverty reduction in the South East, and pave way for social inclusion. The World Bank had reported that the number of poor people in Nigeria, including the South East as at 2022 was 95.1 Million. But with green economy, jobs will be created in their thousands through various avenues including, green public transport initiatives, massive increase in renewable energy; these will help reduce the various current poverty in the land, including, energy poverty, food poverty, road poverty, security poverty, health poverty. Energy and security poverty will be reduced by leveraging South East’s ‘limitless’ solar energy potential, combined with our substantial biofuel prospects. This will go a long way to enhancing energy supply security and reduce the country’s exposure to volatilities in the global fossil fuel market.

### **Capacity of green economy to promote healthy living**

One of the goals of the green economy is protection of the environment from further degradation caused by human activities, including pollution, which is disastrous to human health, considering the many diseases such pollutions introduced into human habitation. Green economy practice which canvas for rebuilding of natural capital, such as replanting trees, redeveloping forest, cleaning up natural waters, which is healthier than mechanical rivers such as canals, will apparently create room for healthy living for mankind. It is obvious that access to safe drinking-water and improved sanitation can save lives and reduce the climate footprint associated with poor wastewater management, water resource degradation and water

resource extraction. Adair-Rohani and Bruce (2011) observe that unsafe drinking water, unsafe sanitation and lack of hygiene can cause the death of millions of people as it did in 2004. They observed that:

- infectious diseases: vector-borne diseases such as malaria, waterborne diseases (diarrhea) and airborne diseases, including tuberculosis, can be prevented through low-energy and climate-friendly designs to: improve natural ventilation; limit vector and pest infestations (e.g. sealing of cracks, window screening); and improve access to safe drinking water and sanitation as part of planning and siting,
- Good ventilation is critical to ensure health gains from energy-efficient and weather-tight housing. Insufficient natural ventilation is associated with higher risk of airborne disease transmission, dampness and accumulation of indoor pollutants that are risk factors for allergies and asthma. Unless outdoor air is heavily polluted, natural ventilation also reduces buildup and exposure to toxic indoor air pollutants from interior design materials, furnaces (e.g. carbon monoxide) and naturally-occurring radiation (radon).

### **Capacity of Green Economy to support an Aku Mubaa N’Ulo Consciousness**

In the recent past and continuing, there has been a conflict between the South East dependence on Aku Muru Na Mbaa (The wealth made abroad) for its economic wellbeing, and the sustainable development the nation strives to achieve. Since the destruction of its exploits for years now, in various States, and cities across the globe, coupled with countless challenges from host cities, and States asking them to export their business empires to motherland or else be drawn in rivers and high seas, and most times exploiting them economically, appetite to continue in those countries has waned for so many. Presently, the world is on a quest towards a resilient, post-COVID-19 future that

addresses the complex and intricately linked challenges of pollution, climate change, clean energy and infectious diseases prevalent in communities, cities, States, and the South East not excluded. The demands for innovative strategies to combat these multifaceted challenges underline the importance of a transition to a green economy which presupposes *Aku Mubaa N’Ulo*. *Aku Mubaa N’Ulo* refers to a transition from *Aku Muru Na Mbaa* (wealth made abroad) to *Aku Mubaa N’Ulo* toward a sustainable development *Ulo* (Motherland). Green Economy which is a strategy to better the environment including creating and enhancing wellbeing of people, creation of employment, creating cleaner communities, resuscitating nature capital, creating increased and sustainable income, will go a long way to help create *Aku mubaa N’Ulo* consciousness, basically because, of the goal of *Aku Mubaa N’Ulo*, which including, but not limited to, building a sustainable South East, building a sustainable South East economy, through the establishment of low-Carbon industries capable of creating employment for people back home, which in turn build an economy no stranger destroy.

Green Economy is synonymous with *Aku Mubaa N’Ulo* concept. And going green will be in the best interest of the South East, and is a strategic choice which, if fully pursued, can allow South East to take advantage of an emerging global push towards low-carbon economies.

It is possible that with a flourishing South East green economy, investment opportunities will be far above \$270bn in critical sectors, including renewable energy, transportation, infrastructure, manufacturing, importation, agriculture and land use. It is imperative to develop investment prospectus containing business cases and business opportunities back home that a futuristic *Aku Mubaa N’Ulo* South East (green South East) presents.

By going Aku Mubaa N’Ulo (Aku, go Green) the South East can build a more inclusive, resilient and prosperous nation, overcoming prevailing challenges, such as the unprecedented destruction of her economy by host countries, inhuman deportation from abroad, discrimination by host countries, climate change, social inequality, poverty, and insecurity in various places of sojourning.

Aku Mubaa N’Ulo, is consciousness that hopes to stimulate interest and attention around issues of innovation, green economy, trust, leadership and framing a more positive nationhood narrative, and green economy concept being synonymous with Aku Mubaa N’Ulo concept will go a long way to consolidate this initiative, resulting in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities (UNEP, 2016) and in turn pave path for inclusive green economy, which is a thriving economy that delivers considerable economic, social and environmental benefits sought by the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. This development path should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and source of public benefits, especially for underprivileged people whose livelihoods and security depend strongly on nature (UNEP, 2011).

### **Paths to a Green Economy in the South East Nigeria**

Given the fact that many communities in the South East Nigeria depend so much on natural resources, aim to achieve industrialisation and economic diversification, but are facing challenges of poverty and unemployment, a path to green economy will demand action on three fronts. United Nations Economic and Social Council Economic Commission for Africa-UNESCECA (2011) discussed the three fronts as follows:

- Capitalizing on communities natural capital,
- Exploiting opportunities for industrial growth, and
- Establishing enabling policies and institutions.

First, the economic importance of natural capital in wealth creation, employment, livelihoods, and poverty reduction in Africa as a whole, and then in the south-east Nigeria in particular needs to be recognized. South East's natural resources support its social and economic systems. They provide a basis for livelihood for poor and most vulnerable people who depend primarily on nature for survival. Natural capital assets sustain much of the tourism and associated service industries, which have become essential pillars of external trade, foreign exchange revenue generation and employment creation (UNESCO, 2022) in the South East.

Second, Africa's early stage of industrialization offers avenues for an industrial development supported by the deployment of clean, efficient, and resource-saving technologies in the South East. Such technologies would increase energy and resource efficiency in the exploitation of the continent's natural resources, whilst avoiding wasteful consumption, undue economic costs and risks of resource depletion. While the technological and financial requirements of green industrialization are considerable, there are indications that existing opportunities for leapfrogging yield very high potential returns, as can be observed in the African aluminium industry.

Finally, driving green economic transformation will require a set of enabling policies and institutions that imply a critical role for the State, through public investment, fiscal policies, regulations, government procurement, and market creation at national, regional and international levels, as well as the facilitation of an active participation of non-State actors

### **Sustainable Development**

It is argued that the term "Sustainability" and "Sustainable Development" are closely related, and most times used to mean the same thing. Both terms are linked with the "three dimensions of sustainability" concept (*Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022*). But

*Harrington, (2016) explains that* One distinction is that sustainability is a general concept, while sustainable development can be a policy or organizing principle. Sustainability is a broader concept because sustainable development focuses mainly on human well-being

In the Brundtland (1987) Report, the environment and development are inseparable and go together in the search for sustainability. Sustainable development is a global concept linking environmental and social issues. Sustainable development is **development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**; it important for both developing countries and industrialized countries. It states:

The 'environment' is where we all live; and 'development' is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable. [...] We came to see that a new development path was required, one that sustained human progress not just in a few pieces for a few years, but for the entire planet into the distant future. Thus 'sustainable development' becomes a goal not just for the 'developing' nations, but for industrial ones as well.

The Rio Declaration from 1992 is seen as "the foundational instrument in the move towards sustainability. It includes specific references to ecosystem integrity (Bosselmann, 2022).

Discussing the hierarchy of Sustainability, Kotez, et al (2022) inform that of the three dimensions of sustainability-Environmental, Economic, and Social, many publications state that the environmental dimension is the most important. Protecting environmental (ecological, or planetary, as it is also called) integrity is the core of sustainability according to many experts. Its environmental dimension sets limits to economic and social development. (*Bosselmann, 2010*).

Sustainable Development in the South east would refer to home-focused development that is capable of attending to the aspirations of the present people of the area, without disrupting the capacity of the in-coming generations to attend to their own aspirations, expectations, and dreams. It is that development that is linked with not just ‘Aku Rue Ulo’ (bringing wealth back home, remitting wealth back home) but support ‘Aku Mubaa N’Ulo’ concept, which is synonymous with ‘the Green Concept’, restructuring the South East Nigeria for global competitiveness. It implies that the South-East Nigeria needs to take care of their area, resources, people, by developing the consciousness of creating massive wealth, opportunities, employment back home, geared toward bettering and granting overall security of their economic life. This will constitute one of the panaceas to ensure that their economy is no longer destroyed over-night by people who feel that if ‘they ever have a home they cannot be leaving it for places where they must need to spend massively feeling up swamps and building empires, only to be pulled down overnight. To achieve this, there is the need to balance Aku Rue Ulo concept with this study on Aku Mubaa N’Ulo Consciousness. It is difficult for foreigners to come to an area to destroy the environment, economy, and social life overnight. Remittances can be intercepted, reduced, taken or even be destroyed *en-route*, and probably nothing will be done about it, but wealth and capacities built back home may not easily destroyed overnight by opposition.

### **Conclusion**

Green Economy practice requires radical transformation and profound systemic change. South East Nigeria capacity for green economy is not encouraging, and the scale of action demanded to catalyse a green economy (The Republic, 2022S) in the South East Nigeria cannot be underestimated. Many structural reforms and interventions are required to unlock green growth – ‘Aku’ in the area.

These include, direct public investments in green economy- ‘Aku’ of the area- ‘N’Ulo’, policies, and infrastructure, targeted public and private long-term investments-‘Aku Mubaa’ system towards building efficient innovation systems, improving the level of education, training, and skills of the population, and supporting market development and trade mechanism to enhance competitiveness back home. Thus, The Green Economy provides a macro-economic approach to sustainable economic growth [Massive wealth and opportunities creation back home- AkuMubaN’Ulo] (UNEP, 2016) in the South East Nigeria, with a central focus on building and expanding an enduring economic system (Aku Mubaa N’Ulo) back home which will eventually result in employment opportunities and skills development of people in the region for life. This is imperative as it will draw the attention of South East investors back home resulting in building empires that no one can pull down over night, with the pointer, “if you are angry, go back to your native land and build it, or you will be drawn in lagoon”.

### **Recommendation**

- The foremost approach to the green economy toward the sustainable development of the South East Nigeria is to embrace an AkuMubaaN’Ulo Consciousness.
- Environmental principles to guide the practice of green economy should be accessible to all. It may be necessary to drop copies of the principles in public centers, such as, institutions of higher learning, local government reception centers, newspaper stands, eateries, official bus stations, and others.
- South east wealth creators, industrialists, and entrepreneurs need to draw attention back home to establish industries, micro and macro opportunities for people of the region.

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**EXPERIENTIAL MEANING AND EXISTENTIAL  
IMPLICATIONS IN GOODLUCK JONATHAN’S 2011  
INAUGURAL SPEECH: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE  
ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

Language is a social semiotic – a meaning-making resource for constructing experiences, enacting relationships and generating texts for recording such functions. It offers its users a variety of ways of expressing meanings by making choices from the plethora of alternative potential options in the linguistic system. The implication is that linguistic choices are not neutral but are motivated by the kinds of experiences and social reality being conveyed in any given situational context of human existence, of which political discourse is a typical example. This limitless meaning potential of language makes it amenable to manipulation by the political elites in naturalizing ideologies and manufacturing consent of the electorate. Focussing on former President Goodluck Jonathan’s 2011 inaugural speech, and anchoring on Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar

particularly the system of Transitivity, the paper critically examines how experiential meaning is constructed in different identified clause/process types paying particular attention to ideological implications and encoded human existential concerns. Analysis reveal that Relational clauses were predominantly employed to define identities, assert moral values and naturalize attributes of leadership authority while Material clauses conveyed development and collective action often masking power asymmetries. These clauses mirror existential issues in political discourse where political actors make choices to achieve spurious goals and construct human existence that seem to obfuscate the realities on ground. The study concludes that critical awareness of these subtle manipulations of language by text producers will enable text consumers to more critically interpret textual representations that border on human existential concerns in order to resist, contest and subvert personal or group ideologies presented as commonsense discourses with a view to mitigating social power abuse for harmonious coexistence.

**Key words:** Language, Experiential, Inaugural, Ideology, human Existence, Critical Discourse Analysis.

## **Introduction**

Language is not a neutral medium of communication but an existential act deeply entwined with the human condition, power relations and the struggle for meaning. As a social semiotic system, language is shaped by the purposes it serves in human interaction (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) yet it is also the primary means through which individuals assert their presence, interpret their realities and exercise agency within structures of domination and resistance. Language offers users a network of choices that reflect not only grammatical systems but also existential stances, providing resources through which speakers encode lived experience, enact social relationships and organize meaning in a world where power

relations and ideology are ever present. Within Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL, henceforth) framework, these choices are realized through the metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Of particular interest to this study is the ideational metafunction, specifically its experiential aspect which focuses on how reality is construed through processes, participants and circumstances encoded in the Transitivity system (Eggins, 2004; Thompson, 2014). These configurations are not just technical features but they are sites of meaning negotiation where power is embedded in the ways speaker's choose to represent events, agency and responsibility. In other words, how we speak about the world reflects not only what we believe but also, how we position ourselves within networks of power and meaning.

This paper applies the SFL framework to analyze the experiential meanings in the 2011 inaugural speech of former President Goodluck Jonathan. Inaugural speeches are rich sites of existential and political performance where leaders do not merely describe a nation's condition but actively shape its imagined future. They are rhetorical instruments through which speakers claim legitimacy, reconfigure national identity and align the collective will with a particular vision. As such, they are discursive acts of power used to stabilize authority, respond to uncertainty and construct an ideological reality (Chilton, 2004; Fairclough, 2001).

Guided by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA, henceforth) which is concerned with the ideological nature of language and its role in sustaining power relations (Van Dijk, 1998, Wodak and Meyer, 2016) this paper investigates the linguistic choices made in the Transitivity system by Goodluck Jonathan in his inaugural speech. It explores how political reality is linguistically constructed and how such constructions serve ideological purposes. This analysis highlights the speaker's negotiation of agency and legitimacy, revealing how

language becomes both a site of personal expression and a mechanism of political control where meaning, power and responsibility intersect.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Existing scholarship on Nigerian presidential inaugural speeches have examined various dimensions such as ideological positioning, pronoun usage and rhetorical structure (Ezeifeke, 2013; Nnamdi-Eruchalu, 2017; Akinmameji, 2020; Awoyemi and Ajayi, 2023). While these studies offer valuable insights into political language, many are anchored on thematic analysis or limited linguistic features, overlooking how specific grammatical choices reflect power relations and subject positioning. In particular, Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 inaugural speech has not been analyzed from the perspective of Transitivity, a component of Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) that concerns how language is manipulated to construe human experiences. This gap is significant because language in political contexts does more than communicate policies. It functions as a mechanism for constructing reality, negotiating identity and legitimizing power. Political speeches, particularly, presidential inaugurals constitute a site of struggle where leaders perform ideological work and construct versions of existence that obfuscate the reality on ground. This study is germane in that it examines how Goodluck Jonathan's Transitivity choices construct the Nigerian experience and reflect his ideological stance with regard existential issues in Nigeria. It also stimulates critical awareness among the Nigerian audience with regard to the interpretation and comprehension of textual representations that border on human existential concerns in order to resist, contest and subvert personal or group ideologies presented as commonsense discourses

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to

1. Identify the Transitivity choices made in Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 inaugural speech to construe experiential meaning.
2. Interpret how these identified Transitivity choices construct political realities and encode ideological positions.
3. Explain how the most prevalent processes of the Transitivity system in Jonathan's 2011 inaugural speech were employed to frame human existential concerns.

### **Research Questions**

1. What Transitivity choices were made by Goodluck Jonathan in his 2011 inaugural speech to construe experiential meaning?
2. How were these experiential meanings used to construct political realities and encode ideological positions?
3. How were the most prevalent processes of the Transitivity system in Jonathan's 2011 inaugural speech employed to frame human existential concerns?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in that it exposes how political actors strategically deploy language to normalize personal and political ideologies which may obscure power relations and hinder national development. By foregrounding the role of language in the construction of sociopolitical reality, the study empowers the Nigerian populace to critically engage with political discourse, recognize ideological manipulation and assert their agency in democratic governance.

By highlighting how political language serves not only to represent reality but to shape the lived experiences and perceived roles of both the speaker and the audience, the study contributes to the understanding of how power is discursively enacted, negotiated and

sustained in the national space. Additionally, the study offers valuable insights into how CDA and systemic functional grammar can be integrated and applied to the analysis of political texts.

## **Conceptual Review**

### **Text and Discourse**

The concepts of text and discourse are foundational to linguistic and discourse studies, though they are often used interchangeably. While closely related, they denote different aspects of language use. In SFL, text is defined as a semantic unit – a meaningful stretch of language that is functionally complete within a given context. Halliday and Hassan, (1976) emphasizes that a text is not simply a collection of sentences but a unified whole characterized by cohesion and coherence realized through linguistic choices. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) further explain that a text represents the instantiation of the language system, shaped by the speaker or writer’s communicative goals and by the context of situation. Discourse on the other hand, refers more broadly to language as social practice. It encompasses not only the linguistic realization of ideas but also the ways in which these linguistic forms reflect and reproduce social structures, ideologies and power relations (Fairclough, 1992; Van Dijk, 1998). In this sense, discourse includes both the process of text production and the social practices surrounding them. Fairclough (1992) distinguishes text as concrete linguistic product and discourse as the process that integrates language, ideology and social practice. Wodak and Meyer (2016) similarly argue that discourse is socially situated communicative act that both shapes and is shaped by institutional and historical contexts. Thus, while texts are observable outcomes of communication, discourse provides the lens through which these texts are interpreted in relation to sociocultural and ideological frameworks.

Texts are dynamic and multifunctional, serving as windows into the beliefs, values and power structures of the societies from which they emerge. Political texts in particular, function as arena for ideological contestation and power negotiation. In such contexts, language becomes a strategic rhetorical instrument for persuasion, manipulation and the legitimization of authority. Political actors seek to influence public perception and normalize their ideological stances through their linguistic choices. The concepts of text and discourse form the basis of critical linguistic investigations, particularly within CDA, which seeks to reveal the implicit power dynamics encoded in language.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach to discourse that examines how language reflects, reinforces or challenges power relations, social inequality and ideological dominance. It is grounded in the view that linguistic choices are not neutral but ideologically motivated, shaped by speaker's social positions and group affiliations (Wodak, 2004). Van Dijk (2003) posits that CDA investigates how discourse enacts, legitimates or resists social power abuse in political and institutional contexts. Central to CDA is the concept of ideology, understood as representations or perspectives that sustain unequal power structures. Fairclough (1992) defines ideology as meanings shaped by and within power relations while Wodak (1996) sees it as discursive constructions that reproduce social dominance. These ideologies often operate implicitly, becoming naturalized as commonsense in which case, they assume hegemonic dimensions. (Fairclough, 1989; Widowson, 2000). CDA aims to reveal these hidden ideologies and their role in sustaining hegemony through discourse (Simpson, (1993). It positions itself as a form of social action in favour of marginalized groups, exposing and challenging oppressive structures (Wodak, 1989; Ezeifeka, 2018) embedded in language to prevent normalization and hegemonic entrenchment.

### **Human Existence in Political Discourse**

Human existence, in its broadest sense, refers to the lived realities, choices and struggles that define the human condition. Philosophers like Heidegger(1962) emphasize that human beings are meaning-making agents who constantly interpret their existence within a social and historical context. This existential orientation manifests in language, our primary tool for expressing being, agency and purpose. In political discourse, human existence is pragmatically constructed through language that reflects collective aspirations, challenges and ideologies. Political actors often invoke existential themes such as suffering, hope, sacrifice and national identity to align themselves with the people's lived realities. These representations are not neutral; they are strategic and ideological, serving to legitimize power and manufacture consent (Fairclough, 2001).

Through experiential meaning, language encodes actions, events, participants and circumstances (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014). Thus, examining experiential meaning in political speeches like Goodluck Jonathan's 2011 inaugural speech reveals how existential concerns are linguistically shaped to construct a narrative of leadership grounded in collective struggle and national renewal.

### **Empirical Study**

Presidential inaugural speeches have attracted considerable scholarly attention from different perspectives. Some of them are reviewed below.

Ezeifeke (2013) examined experiential meaning in the inaugural speeches of two past Nigerian leaders Shehu Shagari (1979) and Olusegun Obasanjo (1999) employing CDA and systemic functional theory. S found the language to be deliberately vague and noncommittal, enabling the speakers to evade direct responsibility. She recommended that future leaders adopt more accountable

linguistic choices. While this study shares similarities with the present one in its focus on experiential meaning, it adopts Wodak's discourse historical approach unlike the current study.

Nnamdi-Eruchalu (2017) analyzed Muhammadu Buhari's inaugural speeches in 1984 and 2015, focusing on pronoun usage. The study revealed how Buhari's pronoun choices constructed his dual identities as a military ruler and later, a civilian president thereby shaping discourse representations of authority and persuasion. Though similar in methodological orientation (CDA) it diverges from the present one in focus and the linguistic features examined.

Akinmameji (2020) conducted a CDA of Obasanjo's 1999 and 2003 inaugural speeches using Fairclough's three dimensional and systemic functional linguistics. The Findings indicate that Obasanjo's speech reflected power consciousness, self aggrandizement and inclusive governance through devices such as pronouns, idioms and assertions. While aligned in its critical approach, this study differs in its data and focus on recurrent themes in Obasanjo's rhetoric.

Awoyemi and Ayayi (2023) undertook generic structural analysis of presidential inaugural speeches 1999 – 2015, applying Halliday and Hassan's generic Structure Potential Theory. They identified ten discourse elements arranged in a fixed sequence noting that while some elements were optional such as Acknowledgement of God (AoG) others appear consistently. Although this study also centers on inaugural speeches, its methodological and theoretical frameworks differ significantly.

From the foregoing, it is clear that extensive work has been done on Nigerian presidential inaugural speeches. However, this study is unique in that it analyzes the 2011 inaugural speech of President Goodluck Jonathan through the lexicogrammatical realizations of

Halliday's experiential metafunction by investigating how Jonathan encodes personal and national experiences in language and explores the ideological implications embedded in his linguistic choices within the Transitivity system. Furthermore, the study adopts an existential discourse perspective to interrogate how the speech constructs power relations by positioning the speaker as an agent of national transformation and the audience as co-existential subjects within a shared sociopolitical reality. In this way, analysis seeks to uncover how linguistic choices in the transitivity system reflect the Nigerian reality and the ideological position of the administration as well as how they are applied in framing existential concerns within the Nigerian political space. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no prior study has analyzed Jonathan's 2011 inaugural speech from this perspective.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts M. A. K Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) a social theory of language developed by M.A.K Halliday that views language as a resource for meaning-making rather than merely a system of forms or cognitive rules. Unlike traditional, structural and transformational generative grammars, SFT emphasizes the functional and contextual use of language presenting grammar as a system network from which language users make choices to create meaning. Language, according to Halliday and Matthiessen operates across three strata – semantics (meaning) lexicogrammar (wording) and phonology (sounding) and is structured around three metafunctions, namely, ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational metafunction reflects how language construes human experience. It is further divided into experiential and logical components. The experiential metafunction, which is the concern of this study, is realized in wording through the Transitivity system. Transitivity is concerned with how people represent the world through processes, participants and circumstances in the clause.

These representations are not arbitrary. They reveal the speaker's worldview and ideological stance. Six process types are recognized by SFT in the Transitivity system:

**1. Material Process:** actions and events such as kill, work with roles such as

**Actor – Process – Goal – (Circumstance)**

**2. Mental Process:** processes of sensing e.g. see, believe and wish involving roles such as

**Senser – Process – Phenomenon - (Circumstance).**

**3. Relational Process:** processes of being and classification e.g be, seem and have with roles **Carrier** and **Attribute for Attributive Relational Process** and **Identified/Token** and **Identifier/Value** for **Identifying Relational Process.**

**4. Verbal Process:** processes of saying with roles like **Sayer – Process – Receiver – Verbiage**

**5. Behavioural Process:** This is the process of psychological and physiological actions such as sneeze, snore, breathe and laugh with **Behavior** and **Behaviour** as roles.

**6. Existential Process:** encoding existence. They are usually introduced by the Dummy '**There**' or '**It**' with **Existent** as the only participant.

Linguistic choices are acts of self-positioning, a way, through which political leaders disclose their ideology, assume or evade responsibility and construct collective narratives of nationhood. This view aligns with the existential idea that language is a manifestation of lived experience, entangled with freedom, choice and accountability. Thus, by examining Jonathan's inaugural speech through Transitivity analysis, the study explores how experiential meanings encode his ideological and existential posture and how these linguistic representations shape the sociopolitical consciousness of the Nigerian public.

## Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research design suitable for examining textual data. The inaugural speech of former President Goodluck Jonathan, sourced online was critically examined. Twelve Material clauses, twelve Relational clauses, four Mental clauses, two Verbal clauses and one Existential clause making a total of thirty one clauses were purposively selected for analysis. The analysis was done using the Transitivity system, the lexicogrammatical system that realizes the experiential metafunction in Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar. The analysis explored the transitivity choices of the speaker and how they reflect his ideological positioning in relation existential concerns. Special attention was given to how power dynamics are encoded; how the speaker assumes and deflects responsibility, constructs national identity and evokes national experience to legitimize authority.

## Analysis of Data

**Table 1: Material Clauses**

In the days ahead, those of us that you have elected to serve must show that we are men and women with the patriotism and passion, to match the hopes and aspirations of you, the great people of this country
We must grow the economy . . . for our people
The leadership and the followership must strive to convert our vast human and natural resources into the force that leads to a greater Nigeria
We must form technical and financial partnerships with global businesses and organization.
We are ready to take off on the path of sustained growth and economic development. We will push programs and policies that will benefit both local and foreign businesses
Over the next four years, attention will be focused on rebuilding our infrastructure

We will create greater access to quality education and improved health care delivery
In the interest of justice, equity and national unity, we shall actively promote the development of the region.
• The bane of corruption shall be met by the overwhelming force of our collective determination, to rid our nation of this scourge
• The Nigeria of our dreams must be built on hard work and not on short cuts.
<b>12.</b> I will continue to fight, for your future, because I am one of you.

Material clauses represent ‘doing’ and ‘happening’ that is, actions and events that unfold in the physical world. The main participant roles of this process are: Actor (the participant that performs or initiates the process) Goal (the participant that is affected by or receives the outcome of the process) Scope (a less common participant role that reflects the domain of operation of the process or the process turned into a participant) indirect participants including Recipient (participant who receives something) Client (participant to whom a service is rendered) Beneficiary (participant who benefits from the process). For example, clause number 1 is analyzed thus

In the days ahead, those of us that you have elected to serve must show that we are men and women with the patriotism and passion, to match the hopes and aspirations of you, the great people of this country

In the days ahead	those of us that you have elected to serve	must show	that we are men and women with the patriotism and passion to match the hopes and aspirations ...
<b>Circumstance(Time)</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Process Material</b>	<b>Goal</b>

The clause is analyzed as a Material process with ‘those of us that you have elected to serve’ as the Actor; ‘must show’ as Process and the embedded Relational clause ‘that we are ...’ as Goal. Material clauses often serve to construct reality, promise change or demonstrate agency.

**Table 1** shows selected material clauses from Goodluck Jonathan’s 2011 inaugural speech. Through his transitivity choices, the speaker rebrands power as service and claims legitimacy through electoral mandate (those of us that you have elected). He acknowledges the existence of citizens only at the point of voting. Economic development is portrayed as a moral duty towards the people as reflected in the clause ‘we must grow the economy ... for our people’, while subtly retaining the decision-making power in the hands of the elites. Thus, the people are framed as passive beneficiaries. Their lived economic realities such as poverty and disillusionment are backgrounded while abstract growth is foregrounded as the clause ‘we are ready to take off on the path of sustained growth and economic development’. The clause ‘... must strive to convert our vast human and natural resources into the force that leads to a greater Nigeria’ constructs citizens as resources that are only existentially valuable when ‘converted’ into productive force. The worth of the citizens is thus equated with economic utility while their well-being is deemphasized. Global partnership is made to appear normal while the consequent potential exploitation thereof, which may favour the political class but is detrimental to the citizens is subtly hidden as portrayed in the clauses ‘we must form technical and financial partnerships with global businesses and organization’ and ‘we will push programs and policies that will benefit both local and foreign businesses’. The clause ‘... attention will be focused on rebuilding our infrastructure’ uses a passive construction to mask agency and evade accountability. Human needs (infrastructure) are referenced indirectly but people are absent from the process. The use of the

modal 'will' in the clause 'we will create greater access to quality education and improved health care delivery' frames education and healthcare as benevolent gifts from the government rather than human rights. The use of the clause 'in the interest of justice, equity and national unity, we shall actively promote the development of the region' is an attempt to replace redress and marginalization with development. The sufferings of marginalized regions such as Niger Delta are not directly acknowledged. Development, thus becomes rhetorical rather than relational. The clause '...overwhelming force of our collective determination to rid our nation of this scourge' is used to diffuse agency and distribute the responsibility of curbing corruption thus mobilizing citizens as instruments rather than subjects with needs. The clause 'the Nigeria of our dreams must be built on hard work and not on short cuts' constructs a meritocratic ideal while masking structural inequality. Thus, human identity is validated only through labour. The speaker uses the clause 'I will continue to fight for your future because I am one of you', as a populist move aimed at individualizing leadership and constructing a symbolic equality with the masses yet subtly maintaining the status quo. The clause affirms collective suffering and hope but positions the leader as the sole savior.

Across all clauses, the speaker uses Material clauses to project state action or authority, construct citizens as moral, productive and passive subjects, reinforce neoliberal development ideologies and reframe existential needs such as justice, inclusion and welfare as outcomes of leadership generosity. While language use appears inclusive, it obscures unequal power dynamics, obscures the real life struggles and existential crises of Nigerians and shifts focus from structural reform to behavioural expectations.

**Table 2: Relational Clauses**

. Such determination derives from the typical Nigerian spirit of resilience in the face of the greatest of odds
. I am mindful that I represent the shared aspiration of all our people to forge a united Nigeria
. The success of the 2011 elections and the widespread acclaim which the exercise received was due to the uncommon patriotism and diligence exhibited by many Nigerians
. It is the supreme task of this generation to give hope to the hopeless, strength to the weak and protection to the defenseless.
. Fellow citizens, the leadership we have pledged is decidedly transformative.
. A robust private sector is vital to providing jobs for our rapidly expanding population.
. To drive our overall economic vision, the power sector reform is at the heart of our industrialization strategy
. The fight against corruption is a war in which we must all enlist,
. Nigeria, as a responsible member of the international community, will remain committed to the maintenance of global peace and security.
. I am confident that we have every reason to look to the future with hope
. I believe that peace is a necessary condition for development.
. My dear countrymen and women, being a Nigerian is a blessing

Relational clauses serve as ideological instruments in political texts enabling speakers to define, classify and attribute values or meanings to social roles, entities and identities. In SFL terms, they encode ‘being’ and ‘having’. Relational clauses can be attributive or Identifying, each with distinct participant roles. Relational Attributive clauses assign qualities or characteristics to a participant. Participant roles for this process type are Carrier (the participant receiving the attribute) and Attribute (the quality or characteristic assigned). Relational Identifying clauses equate or define one entity with another. Its participant roles are Identified/Token (the entity being defined) and Identifier/Value (the defining element). For example, clause number 13 is analyzed thus

**Such determination derives from the typical Nigerian spirit of resilience in the face of the greatest of odds**

Such determination	derives from	the typical Nigerian spirit of resilience in the face the greatest of odds
<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process: Relational</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

The process ‘derives’ in clause 13 is analyzed as a Relational Attributive process establishing a relationship between ‘determination’ (Carrier) and its attributed source, ‘the typical Nigerian spirit of resilience’ (Attribute). This construction attributes national resilience to an internal quality, thus naturalizing endurance as part of the Nigerian patriotic identity and glorifying suffering as a means of national validation. Thus, systemic injustice responsible for the suffering in Nigeria is obscured.

Again, clause number 14 is analyzed thus

**I am mindful that I represent the shared aspiration of all our people to forge a united Nigeria**

I am mindful	That	I	represent	The shared aspiration of our people to forge a united Nigeria
		Identified	Process: Relational	Identifier

The process, ‘represent’, functions as a Relational Identifying process. The speaker uses it to equate himself with the collective national aspiration of the Nigerian people framing himself as the embodiment of the people’s dreams. By doing so, he reinforces symbolic unity and subtly silences dissenting voices.

**Table 2** above shows selected Relational Attributive and Identifying clauses from Jonathan’s 2011 inaugural speech. The clause ‘... the widespread acclaim which the exercise received was due to the uncommon patriotism and diligence exhibited by many Nigerians’ shifts agency from institutions to citizens masking state failures. The speaker claims the legitimacy through the people’s electoral participation attributes political success to citizens’ effort and by doing so, minimizes the role of the state in the outcome. Again, moral obligation is discursively framed as generational identity as in the clause, ‘it is the task of this generation...’ thus defining identity through duty. While this move frames service to the vulnerable as collective moral responsibility, it discursively places emotional labour at the center of civic identity and deemphasizes the responsibility of the government to tackle structural injustices that give rise to such vulnerabilities. ‘Transformative’ in ‘...the leadership we have pledged is decidedly transformative’ cloaks power in positive change rhetoric and frames the leadership as benevolent and humane. Thus, governance appears purpose driven rather than coercive. The clause ‘a robust private sector is vital to providing jobs for our rapidly expanding population’ is used by the speaker to displace state responsibility and shift essential welfare services to the private sector. The rights of the citizens to these essential services from the government are thus, downplayed. The speaker links ‘the power sector reform’ to economic viability with no mention of the exclusionary effects that it will be fraught with or how to deal with them. Corruption is framed as a national enemy and citizens are mobilized to fight it, as in ‘the fight against corruption is a war in which we must all enlist’. There is however no mention of how the citizens are to fight the war especially with regard to the systemic corruption that exists among those in the corridors of power. ‘Nigeria, as a responsible member of the international community, will remain committed to the maintenance of global peace and

security’ projects Nigeria as a civilized and responsible nation positioning it as committed to the global moral framework. This move seeks to reinforce narratives of peace and security for international validation while obscuring the fact that the same virtues are rare commodities within the country. The clause ‘I am confident that we have every reason to look to the future with hope’ uses emotional optimism to stabilize political mood and silence criticism. Hope is offered as a substitute for action and the responsibility for effecting change is placed in perception (‘look to the future’) rather than policy. ‘I believe that peace is a necessary condition for development’ links stability to economic growth. This discursive strategy is common in liberal peace building discourse as it silences the root causes of conflict such as injustice and marginalization. Human suffering is acknowledged only in terms of how it disrupts development with no concrete policy to alleviate it. The clause ‘... being a Nigerian is a blessing’ frames the Nigerian national identity as inherently positive masking contradictions of inequality, exclusion and hardship. This promotes emotional nationalism and frames Nigerian identity as a thing of pride. Thus, critical self-reflection or dissenting views (for example, sections of the country seeking self-determination) are marginalized.

Overall, Relational clauses in the speech are used as ideological tools to construct national identity that legitimizes the speaker’s leadership, affirm the roles of the citizens in development and portray the country in positive light for international validation. However, the sufferings of the citizens seem to be cloaked in rhetorics and their lived realities are downplayed.

### **Table 3: Mental Clauses**

. Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, earlier this year, over seventy-three million eligible Nigerians endured all manner of inconvenience just
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to secure their voters cards, in order to exercise the right to choose those that will govern them.
b. At the polls, we saw the most dramatic expressions of the hunger for democracy.
. I know your pain
b. I want you to start to dream again.

Mental clauses represent processes of sensing, that is, processes that go on inside the mind or inner world of participants. They express meanings related to perception, cognition, desire and emotion. Mental clauses involve two core participants: Senser (usually, a conscious being who experiences or feels the mental process) and Phenomenon (the thing that is sensed, thought about or perceived). For example, clause 25 is analyzed thus:

**Your Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, earlier this year, over seventy-three million eligible Nigerians endured all manner of inconvenience just to secure their voters cards, in order to exercise the right to choose those that will govern them.**

Your Exce llenc ies, Disti ngui shed Ladi es and Gent leme n	earlier this year	over sevent y-three millio n eligibl e Nigeri ans	Endure d	all mann er of incon venie nce	just to secure their voters cards . . . .
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	<b>Circumstance (Time)</b>	<b>Senser</b>	<b>Process : Mental</b>	<b>Phenomenon</b>	<b>Circumstance (Purpose)</b>
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Clause 25 expresses subjective inner experience of suffering which aligns with the experiential domain of the Mental process, particularly, perception. The Senser, (Nigerians) are represented as having persisted through hardship to fulfill a valued democratic right. Their civic action was framed as an emotional and psychological journey capturing the mental strain involved in acquiring voter cards. The circumstance of purpose ‘to secure their voter cards ...’ and ‘to choose those that will govern them’ reflect desiderative mental processes representing a collective will. The clause frames political participation as a moral action and legitimizes leadership by grounding it in the people’s effort and pain.

**Table 3** shows selected mental clauses from Jonathan’s 2011 inaugural speech. The clause ‘at the polls, we saw the most dramatic expressions of the hunger for democracy’ constructs democracy as a deeply emotional, almost collective spiritual desire using shared memory to forge national unity. It presents democracy as the only natural, ideal and valid political system and erases any possible alternative thus strengthening hegemonic democratic ideology. The speaker uses the clause ‘I know your pain’ to position himself as deeply empathetic and morally competent to lead. Using affective discourse, he constructed a symbolic proximity between himself and the people. However, empathy alone is insufficient for justice without any plans for structural change. The speaker uses visionary rhetoric to manufacture consent in the clause ‘I want you to start to dream again’. He turns leadership into inspiration and political goals into personal dreams, thus turning citizens into recipients of vision rather than co-creators. He mobilizes affect (hope) to legitimize policy and consolidate authority.

These clauses do more than express emotion. They structure how leadership, citizenship and national identity are felt, understood and acted upon. CDA reveals that emotional discourse functions not just as empathy but as soft mechanism of control, consent and ideological reproduction.

**Table 4: Verbal Clauses**

29. I thank you all, fellow citizens, for the trust and confidence, which you have demonstrated through the power of your vote.
30. I therefore call on the good people of Nigeria, to enlist as agents of this great transformation.

Verbal clauses represent processes of ‘saying’, ‘reporting’ or ‘communicating’. They are used to express the act of verbal interaction such as telling, asking, stating or suggesting. Verbal processes involve three main participant roles though not all are compulsory in every clause: Sayer (the participant who speaks or communicates something) Verbiage (content or the name of what is said) Receiver (optional participant who receives the message or is addressed) and Target (a rare participant who is affected or impacted by the speech act as in praise or insult). For example,

**I thank you all, fellow citizens, for the trust and confidence, which you have demonstrated through the power of your vote.**

I	Thank	you all, fellow citizens	for the confidence which you have demonstrated through the power of your votes
<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Process : Verbal</b>	<b>Receiver</b>	<b>Circumstance (Purpose)</b>

The verb ‘thank’ is a verbal process – a form of saying expressing gratitude. By using it, the speaker, not only foregrounds dialogue and interpersonal recognition, but also claims the legitimacy of his mandate acknowledging the people’s electoral power as foundation for his authority. He makes them feel that they own the regime by celebrating their participation rather than making concrete policies to meet their needs.

**Table 4** shows verbal clauses selected from Jonathan’s 2011 inaugural speech. The clause ‘I therefore call on the good people of Nigeria, to enlist as agents of this great transformation’ is a directive that positions the citizens as active agents in transformation but within a vision defined by the leader. The mobilizing tone of the clause masks power asymmetry. Participation is encouraged but only within the ideological boundaries set by the leader.

Verbal clauses are not just neutral acts of communication but powerful tools through which power is constructed, legitimized and reinforced. The speaker assumes the role of the benevolent and authoritative ‘Sayer’ who both recognizes the people’s power and directs future action. This discursively frames leadership as responsive and participatory while subtly reproducing a top-down communication hierarchy where the leader’s voice sets the national agenda.

### **Table 5: Existential Clauses**

. In our economic strategy, there will be appropriate policy support to the real sector of the economy
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Existential clauses serve to assert the presence or the existence of something – that something ‘exists’ or ‘happens’. These clauses typically begin with the word ‘there’ functioning as a grammatical placeholder for the Subject, hence, it is referred to as Dummy.

Existential clauses involve only one participant, ‘Existent’ (the thing or entity whose existence is asserted) though they may have Circumstances. For example, clause number 31 is analyzed thus:

**In our economic strategy, there will be appropriate policy support to the real sector of the economy**

In our economic strategy	There	will be	appropriate policy support to the real sector of the economy
Circumstance (place)	Dummy	Process Existential	Existent

Here the clause affirms the future presence of ‘policy support’ implying concern for citizens’ material wellbeing. Existential processes are ideologically potent, particularly when they construct abstract promises without specifying actors or agents. The clause uses grammatical vagueness ‘there will be...’ to project inevitability while withholding responsibility. The lack of a defined Actor strategically masks accountability creating a hopeful projection of future action while evading present responsibility. Ideologically, it legitimizes government’s intentions and project commitment to economic growth particularly for the ‘real sector’ which affects human survival. However, by embedding the promise within an abstract strategy and omitting responsibility, it functions as a strategic rhetorical tool raising the hopes of the citizens while minimizing accountability of the leader. Thus, the clause speaks to citizen’s economic wellbeing but appears symbolic rather than actionable.

**Conclusion**

The analysis of Material, Relational, Mental, Verbal and Existential clauses in President Goodluck Jonathan’s 2011 inaugural speech

reveals how language functions ideologically to legitimize power, construct national identity and embed governance within human experience. Specifically, Relational clauses and Material clauses were the most prevalent clause types used by Jonathan in his 2011 inaugural speech. Analysis reveal that Relational clauses were predominantly employed to define identities, assert moral values and naturalize attributes of leadership authority while Material clauses conveyed development and collective action often masking power asymmetries. Mental clauses foreground emotional engagement portraying the leader as empathetic, having emotional connection and mutual aspiration with the citizens. Verbal clauses are used to perform acts of gratitude and mobilization creating an illusion of participatory governance while subtly reinforcing the top-down communicative structure where the leader speaks and the people act. Existential clauses subtly assert political intentions and national priorities using abstract agentless constructions. This discursively evades direct responsibility while still appealing to hope and economic survival. These clauses mirror existential issues in political discourse where political actors make choices to achieve spurious goals and construct human existence in ways that seem to falsify the lived experiences of the people in order to reinforce personal or group ideologies. Through CDA, it becomes evident that such projections often mask structural inequalities and shirking of responsibility that is characteristic of the Nigerian political arena.

This study recommends that political leaders should cease using language as a rhetorical instrument but rather aim to tackle existential issues in Nigeria realistically. This will enhance justice, equity and inclusion which will ultimately lead to unity, progress and peaceful co-existence despite the linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity in the country.

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## **EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study adopts a descriptive survey research design to evaluate the effectiveness of Civic Education curriculum implementation in senior secondary schools in Kano State. The study was guided with four research objectives with the corresponding research questions. The population of the study comprises all Civic Education teachers in public senior secondary schools in Kano State. Samples of 250 civic education teachers' were selected from five educational zones in Kano State. Stratified random sampling techniques were used to select senior secondary schools across the educational zones in Kano State. Purposeful sampling was employed to select teachers for the study. The instrument for collection was researcher made structured questionnaires with the title "Civic Education Curriculum Implementation Teachers' Questionnaire" (CECITQ). The instrument was validated by four experts and the reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha method. The instrument yielded the reliability co-efficient of 0.81. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The results revealed that majority (60%) of the teachers in the study are NCE holder in Social Studies.*

*Also facilities for effective implementation of civic education curriculum are adequately available. The study further discovered that assignment method, lecture method and role playing method are used which are not adequate. Based on the findings recommendations were made that appropriate teachers should be employed for effective implementation of civic education and Government should provide adequate instructional materials, modern teaching aids, and adequate funding to enhance curriculum implementation*

## **Introduction**

Civic Education is a core subject in the Nigerian Senior Secondary School curriculum designed to inculcate civic knowledge, democratic values, national consciousness, and responsible citizenship among learners. In a pluralistic society such as Nigeria, Civic Education serves as a critical instrument for promoting unity, tolerance, respect for the rule of law, and participatory governance. The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) has made Civic Education a compulsory subject at the senior secondary school level to prepare young citizens for effective participation in national development.

Civic Education focuses on cultivation of the right type of values and attitude in the citizens for the growth of the society. The acquisition of these right types of values and attitudes enable individuals to operate as a functional member of the society. This definition revealed that education can be taught, learned through formal and informal education, it is formal when it is taught and learned in the four walls of education, while it is informal when it is through socialization process. Civic Education is widely regarded as a deliberate educational process aimed at developing informed, responsible, and participatory citizens. In the Nigerian context, Civic

Education focuses on the inculcation of democratic values, national consciousness, respect for human rights, and rule of law, tolerance, accountability, and social responsibility. Yahaya and Sadiq (2022) explain that Civic Education is not only knowledge-based but also value-oriented, emphasizing attitudes and behaviours that promote peaceful coexistence and national development. Balogun, Yusuf and Obafemi (2023) views civic education as a body of knowledge imparted through selfless efforts of efficient and effective teachers and received by conscious learners to showcase the right type of value and attitudes for the growth and building of the society.

Civic Education is widely regarded as a deliberate educational process aimed at developing informed, responsible, and participatory citizens. In the Nigerian context, Civic Education focuses on the inculcation of democratic values, national consciousness, respect for human rights, and rule of law, tolerance, accountability, and social responsibility. Yahaya and Sadiq (2022) explain that Civic Education is not only knowledge-based but also value-oriented, emphasizing attitudes and behaviours that promote peaceful coexistence and national development. The Civic Education curriculum in Nigeria is developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The curriculum emphasizes democracy, citizenship, leadership, national values, social justice, anti-corruption, and civic participation. Folorunso and Muhammad (2025) note that the curriculum content reflects Nigeria's socio-political realities and is designed to address issues of national integration and good governance.

At the senior secondary school level, Civic Education is designed to prepare students for adulthood by equipping them with skills for civic participation, critical thinking, decision-making, and leadership. Nigerian scholars argue that Civic Education serves as a foundation for political literacy and ethical citizenship, especially in a developing democracy such as Nigeria. Thus, the effectiveness of

Civic Education depends largely on how well its curriculum is implemented within schools.

In Kano State, one of the most populous states in Nigeria, the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum is particularly significant due to the state's socio-cultural diversity, political relevance, and large youth population. Schools are expected to translate curriculum objectives into meaningful classroom practices through appropriate teaching methods, instructional materials, and assessment strategies. However, concerns have been raised regarding whether the intended Civic Education curriculum is effectively implemented in senior secondary schools, especially with respect to teacher preparedness, availability of resources, and students' civic engagement outcomes.

Curriculum implementation refers to the process of translating curriculum objectives, content, and strategies into actual teaching and learning activities. In Nigerian secondary schools, implementation involves lesson planning, selection of teaching methods, use of instructional materials, assessment practices, and classroom management. Research suggests that poor implementation is a major reason why many well-designed curricula fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Based on this background the researcher examined Evaluation of the Effective Implementation of Civic Education Curriculum in Senior Secondary Schools in Kano State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Civic Education is being a compulsory subject in senior secondary schools across Nigeria, including Kano State. Observations from recent studies indicate gaps between policy prescriptions and classroom practices. These implementation gaps may be manifested through inadequate teacher preparation, lack of instructional materials, poor alignment between curriculum content and learners'

civic realities, and low levels of students' engagement in civic activities. Consequently, the expected outcomes such as improved national consciousness, political participation, and civic responsibility remain underachieved. In Kano State specifically, there is limited empirical research that focuses on how these implementation challenges affect students' civic knowledge, values, and participatory behaviors, necessitating this study.

Despite the compulsory status of Civic Education in Nigerian senior secondary schools, many students continue to exhibit low levels of civic awareness, weak democratic values, and limited participation in civic and community activities. In Kano State, observations and empirical reports indicate persistent challenges such as inadequate instructional materials, insufficient teacher training, overcrowded classrooms, and overreliance on teacher-centered instructional methods.

The apparent gap between curriculum intentions and actual classroom practices raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of Civic Education in achieving its stated objectives. If these challenges persist, Civic Education may fail to equip students with the necessary skills, values, and dispositions required for responsible citizenship. There is therefore a need for a systematic evaluation of how the Civic Education curriculum is implemented in senior secondary schools in Kano State and how such implementation affects students' civic outcomes.

### **Research Objectives**

- To find out teachers qualifications for effective implementation of Civic Education in senior secondary schools in the study area.
- To find out facilities available for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in senior secondary schools in the study area.

- To find out method of teaching used for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in senior secondary schools in the study area.
- Identify factors influencing the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the teachers' qualifications for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area?
- What are the available facilities of effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area?
- What are the teaching methods used for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area?
- What factors influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum in Kano State?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

#### **Concept of Civic Education**

Civic Education focuses on cultivation of the right type of values and attitude in the citizens for the growth of the society. The acquisition of these right types of values and attitudes enable individuals to operate as a functional member of the society. This definition revealed that education can be taught, learned through formal and informal education, it is formal when it is taught and learned in the school curriculum, while it is informal when it is through socialization process.

Adetayo (2011) defined civic education as a school subject which prepares people of a country especially the young to carry out their roles as citizens. The concept of “civic” is a Greek word which means citizens of a city or an area. This then means that civic education is a result of careful decision of the government to lead its citizens in different geographical and political communities to acquire some kinds of knowledge, facts, skills, abilities, values, virtues, attitudes and behaviours that are acceptable in society and useful in building a balanced and great nation (Ukegbu, Faskari, Adebayo, Obasi and Anyaoho, 2011). Civic education by way of definition is that form of education which is primarily designed and organized in content and function so as to produce good and useful people who know what events happen within the country and globally.

Ajibade (2011) revealed that Civic Education is concerned with the democratic skills and values that citizens need to function effectively in participatory democracy towards civilization. Civic Education is capable of inducing those values, attitudes and skills that will enable the learner to live patriotic and democratic lives and contribute meaningfully to the progress of the nation. Alexander (2012) defined civic education as an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate in the public life of a government and democracy, to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills.

Okam, and Lawal (2015) said that Civic Education is a discipline that makes the learner to be well informed with values, attitude and desirable skills that make them valuable, functional and meaningful in the society and also equipped an individual to become competent, productive, self-employed, self reliance so that he can add value to the society rather than become liability.

Solomon (2015) views Civic Education as a discipline that investigates human activities at home, at school, at worship, at play,

in villages, in politics, in short everywhere that man engages in his daily activities of living, as such it studies man in totality.

Sakina, Rashida and Zulyadaini (2015) see Civic Education as the study of society and also a subject that deals with man and his environment and how all the happenings in the society in turn affect man. Ruth and Shuaibu (2011) perceive Civic Education as systematic and deliberate planned curriculum in its own that differs in method and techniques. It borders on issues and problems of man's activities both physical and social problems towards effective development of intellectual social habit, values, attitude and competence both physical and mental in nature that will bring the reality of everyday's societal living to the learner with the desire to making them acquire attitude, values and skills required not only to be responsible, but also self reliant and discipline members in the society as tools for unity in the society. As a matter of fact, Civic Educationa consequences is seen as an instrument of positive change in the society.

### **Concept of Curriculum Implementation**

Implementation is the process through which a proposed concept, model, topic, theory etc is taken up by some practices. To implement means to make something that has been officially decided to happen or be used. It means to carry into effect. Implementation means putting a plan, scheme, decision, proposal, intention, an agreement, policy or ideas into effect. It is the bedrock of any plan, the determination of a plan's success or failure. It is the moving force of any plan without which a plan is only good intension.

Curriculum implementation is the disseminating of information on a wide basis, after pilot-test, on a newly designed curriculum or on a changed or revised curriculum. It ascertains the feasibility, adequacy or relevance of curriculum plans towards the accomplishment of

intended learning outcomes. It also serves as linkage role between conceived curriculum theory and practice, which breathe life into curriculum document and without which a well-conceived document is mere non-functional paper work.

Curriculum implementation is the stage of presentation of a combination of the combination of the curriculum content and topics, methodology and instructional materials by the teachers to the learners, most of the time in a classroom setting, a subject or combinations that will enable them take up such learning that the teacher wants to pass across to them. In the light of a given topic, the teacher adopts the appropriate teaching methods and materials to guide student's learning. The students on their own, are actively involved in the process of interaction with learning activities (Pwajok 2000). It is not restricted to sheer translation of curriculum proposal or decision into practice. It involves a complex of activities, materials, personnel and other factors which when approximately harnessed; constitute integral parts of curriculum implementation. These include the schools which are the major implementation theatre, the teachers, curriculum materials, students, teacher training institutions, administrative and political factors, examination bodies, the public, place of implementation in the curriculum planning process before curriculum evaluation or community members,.

Civic Education curriculum implementation, therefore refers to a process in civic education curriculum engineering concerned with instilling life into a dormant or inert civic education curriculum plans or document, in the sense of operational objectives. Ekpo and Okam (2009) view curriculum implementation as the various steps involved in achieving the desired curriculum objectives of educational programmes. To achieve these objectives, emphasis must be placed on the quality of educational programmes undertaken as well as the quality of teachers who implement them. Teachers are the major

implementers of the curriculum at the classroom level. The ability to put the curriculum into practice in the classroom is called curriculum implementation. After the curriculum has been planned with regard to identified objectives, selecting the contents, learning experiences and materials based on their assumed effectiveness in making it possible for the objectives to be achieved, then the design is put into action.

Curriculum implementation as used in this study, is the transmission of planned social studies curriculum into operational curriculum in the classroom. It is at this stage that all the relevant curriculum inputs are brought into direct contact with the target audience in such a way that through a variety of activities, and learning experiences, mastery of social studies subject matter can be maximally achieved at minimal cost. Curriculum implementation occupies a strategic position in teaching and learning civic education curriculum as it link the design with evaluation stages, that is the materials and methods are put together to produce the desirable learning outcome.

The concept of curriculum implementation has been viewed in different ways by experts in the field of curriculum. Okam (2014) submits that civic education curriculum implementation demands the translation of the objectives, concepts and topics in the curriculum into activities that are meaningful to the learner. This development requires that the teachers should demonstrate expertise in reducing different topics of the curriculum to specific lesson plans. The ability to do this on the part of the teacher requires not only a knowledge of the curriculum but also understanding of values and skills that are involves in civic education. The teacher has to see himself as both a facilitator of knowledge and an encourager of learning.

Doggoh (2007) defines curriculum implementation as the process of putting into actual practice what has been planned in the curriculum.

It is at this stage that the educational aims and objectives, the curriculum content, learning experiences and principles are practically pursued to actualization by passing them through the learners and enhancing changes in the behavior of these learners.

Garba (2004) viewed curriculum implementation as putting the curriculum into work for the achievement of the goals for which the curriculum is designed. In his view Okebukola (2004) described curriculum implementation as the translation of the objectives of the curriculum from paper to practice. Ivowi (2004) defines curriculum implementation as the translation of theory into practice, or proposal into action. Also Onyeachu (2008) viewed curriculum implementation as the process of putting all that have been planned as a curriculum document into practice in the classroom through the combined effort of the teachers, learners, school administrators, parents as well as interaction with physical facilities instructional materials, psychological and social environment. From the above views of experts, it is clearly observed that curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. The process involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. It is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner who is the central figure in the implementation process.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Curriculum Implementation Theory and Constructivist Learning Theory. Curriculum Implementation Theory emphasizes the distinction between the intended curricula (what policymakers design) the implemented curriculum (what teachers actually teach) and the attained curriculum (what learners eventually learn). The theory posits that successful curriculum implementation depends on factors such as teacher competence, availability of

instructional resources, school leadership, and classroom practices. In Civic Education, ineffective implementation may lead to a mismatch between curriculum goals and students' civic outcomes.

Constructivist Learning Theory, rooted in the works of Piaget and Vygotsky, holds that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction, experience, and reflection. Applied to Civic Education, this theory underscores the importance of participatory teaching strategies such as debates, role play, simulations, community projects, and group discussions. Ismaila, Muhammad, and Gaya (2025) affirm that Civic Education becomes meaningful when students are actively involved in civic-related learning experiences rather than passive recipients of information.

Together, these theories provide a strong foundation for examining how curriculum, teachers, instructional strategies, and learning environments interact to influence Civic Education outcomes.

## **Method**

The study adopts a descriptive survey research design to evaluate the effectiveness of Civic Education curriculum implementation in senior secondary schools in Kano State. The study was guided by four research objectives with the corresponding research questions. The population of the study comprises all Civic Education teachers in public senior secondary schools in Kano State. Samples of 250 civic education teachers' were selected from five educational zones in Kano State. Stratified random sampling techniques were used to select senior secondary schools across the educational zones in Kano State. Purposeful sampling was employed to select teachers for the study.

Data were collected using researcher made structured questionnaires with the title "Civic Education Curriculum Implementation Teachers' Questionnaire" (CECITQ). The instrument was validated

by four experts in curriculum studies and measurement and evaluation. A pilot study was carried out to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach’s alpha method. The instrument yielded the reliability co-efficient of 0.81.

Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The research questions were answered using frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Critical mean of 3.0 was used to accept issue on the questionnaire to answer the research questions.

**Results**

**Answering Research Questions**

**Research Question One:** What are the teachers’ qualifications for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area?

**Table 1:** Teachers Qualifications for Effective Implementation of Civic Education Curriculum.

SN	Teachers Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
1	PhD	-	-
2	M.Ed. Civic Education	-	-
3	M.Ed. Social Studies	16	6.4%
4	M.Sc. Sociology	1	0.4%
5	M.Sc. Political Science	5	2%
6	B.Sc. Sociology	3	1.2%

7	B.Sc. Political Science	8	3.2%
8	B.Sc. (Ed) Social Studies	61	24.2%
9	B.Sc. (Ed) Civic Education	-	-
10	B.Sc. History	1	0.4%
11	NCE Civic Education	-	-
12	NCE Social Studies	150	60%
13	NCE History	-	-
14	PGDE	5	2%
15	OND	-	-
		<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 above shows the frequency and percentage score of teachers qualification for effective implementation of Civic Education Curriculum. The analyses shows that 16(6.4%) are M.Ed. Holder in Social Studies, 1(0.4%) are M.Sc. holder in Sociology, 5(2%) are M.Sc. holder in Political Science, 3(1.2%) are B.Sc. holder in Sociology, 8(3.2%) are B.Sc. holder in Political, 61(24.2%) are B.Sc. holder in Social studies and 150(60%) are NCE holder in Social studies. The study shows that majority of the teachers in the study for Civic Education curriculum implementation are NCE holder in Social Studies.

**Research Question Two:** What are the available facilities for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area?

**Table 2:** Available facilities for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum

**Table 4:** Facilities available for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum

S N	Facility	AVAIL ABLE	NOT- AVAILA BLE	Frequency	Percentage (%)
		Frequen cy	Percenta ge (%)		
1	Classroom	250	100%	-	-
2	Library	40	16%	210	84%
3	Technology Workshop	-		250	100%
4	Computer Lab	20	8%	230	92%
5	Civic Education Curriculum	250	100%	-	-
6	Art & Craft Workshop	2	0.8%	248	99.2%
7	Debate club Auditorium	-	-	250	100%
8	Instructional materials	57	22.8%	103	77.2%
9	Textbooks	246	98.4%	4	1.6%
10	Assessment tools	100	40%	150	60%

**Source: Field-work**

Table 2 above shows the frequency and percentage of facilities available for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area. The analyses show the facilities available for implementation of Civic Education Curriculum which include: classroom with 250(100%) available, Civic education curriculum 250(100%) Textbooks 246(98.4%) assessment tools 100(40%) and instructional materials 57(22.8%) while others items in the table are not available for civic education curriculum implementation. This means that the available facilities for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum are classroom, civic education curriculum, textbook and assessment tools

**Research Question Three:** What are the teaching methods used for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in the study area?

**Table 3:** Teaching methods used for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum

SN	Teaching Methods	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Apprenticeship	1.99	.254	Disagreed
2	Assignment method	3.81	.646	Agreed
3	Brain storming	2.14	.350	Disagreed
4	Conference method	1.24	.432	Disagreed
5	Debate method	1.62	.490	Disagreed
6	Demonstration	1.36	.483	Disagreed

7	Discovery method	1.38	.490	Disagreed
8	Discussion	1.54	.596	Disagreed
9	Excursion method	1.38	.490	Disagreed
10	Experimental	1.45	.658	Disagreed
11	Guest speaker	1.54	.551	Disagreed
12	Interview method	1.76	.514	Disagreed
13	Lecture method	3.42	.730	Agreed
14	Practical method	1.56	.499	Disagreed
15	Project method	2.00	.000	Disagreed
16	Question Answer	2.06	.843	Disagreed
17	Role playing	3.86	.552	Agreed
18	Self-questioning method	2.06	.843	Disagreed
19	Seminar	1.18	.448	Disagreed
20	Stimulation method	1.24	.432	Disagreed
21	Story telling method	1.14	.350	Disagreed
22	Team teaching	1.26	.439	Disagreed

**Source:**Fieldwork

The table 3 above shows the teaching methods used for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum, from the analyses items 2, 13 and 17 are the only methods used in the study area, while

others methods are not used in the study area. This means that only assignment method, lecture method and role playing method are used in the study area.

**Research Question Four:** What factors influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum in Kano State?

**Table 4:** Teachers Perceived Factors influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum

SN	Perceived factors	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Adequate funding of education	4.38	.63	Agreed
2	Availability of ideal learning environment	4.25	.68	Agreed
3	Adequate science materials or resource materials for teaching and learning	4.29	.58	Agreed
4	Proper encouragement of teachers	4.36	.68	Agreed
5	Government policies and stability of government	4.29	.68	Agreed
6	Security of educational setting	4.36	.63	Agreed
7	Good leadership and corrupt free in education sector	4.31	.63	Agreed
8	Avoid examination malpractice in education	4.31	.61	Agreed

9	There should be links between education and employment opportunities	4.21	.73	Agreed
10	Sizable class-size for teacher control.	4.40	.55	Agreed

**Source:** Field work

Table 4 above shows the factors influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum, from the analyses all the items are agreed to be factor influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education in the study area because the means scores of the items are above 3.00. it means that adequate funding of the educational system, Government policies and stability of government, availability of ideal learning environment, adequate materials or resource materials for teaching and learning and many others as in the table 1 above are factors influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education in Nigeria.

**Discussion of the Finding**

The study examines Evaluation of the effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum in senior secondary schools in Kano State, Nigeria. It was discovered that majority (60%) of the teachers in the study are NCE holders in Social Studies. This is not in line with National Policy of Education (2013) which stated that the minimum qualification of secondary school teacher should be B.SC/B.Ed. In view of this, teachers teaching in the study areas are not qualified to teach secondary schools, it means that study areas lack qualified teachers for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum.

It was also discovered that the available facilities for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum are classroom, civic education curriculum, and textbook and assessment tools. This shows that the facilities for effective implementation of civic education curriculum are adequately available. This is in agreement with

Folorunso and Muhammad (2025) who state that most of the public secondary schools in Nigeria lack adequate facilities for the implementation of curriculum

The study further discovered that assignment method, lecture method and role playing method are used in the study area. This is not in line with the study of Lawal, Abdullahi, and Adoke, (2024) who noted that teaching and learning should be participating, experimental, and experiential methods in which students are actively engaged in learning by doing.

It was discovered that factors that influence the effective implementation of the Civic Education curriculum includes: adequate funding of the educational system, availability of ideal learning environment, adequate science materials or resource materials for teaching and learning, good leadership and corrupt free in education sector, links between education and employment opportunities, and sizable class-size for teacher control. This is in line with Ugwu (2023) who discovered that instructional materials and learning environment are designed to promote and encourage effective curriculum implementation which brings quality education and improvement in the educational sector. The finding also agreed with Balogun, Yusuf, and Obafemi, (2023) who stated that due to lack of political will and determination in providing quality education for citizens, budgetary allocations to education over the years show that Nigerian government had not met the required 26% of education budget recommended by UNESCO. They further stated that if the budgetary allocation to education is adequate it will improve quality education in Nigeria.

It was also found that inadequate funding of the educational system, poor learning conditions, lack of adequate time to cover the curriculum and Increased workload due to classroom over population are challenges facing curriculum implementation for quality

education. This is in agreement with Lawal, Abdullahi, Adoke, and Amadikwa, (2025) who noted that inadequate funding curriculum implementation programme and overcrowded classes constitute a challenge to the implementation of teacher education curriculum in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion Civic Education in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools is designed to strengthen students' knowledge of democratic ideals, civic responsibilities, national unity, and ethical conduct. Its effective implementation is crucial for nurturing informed and responsible citizens who can engage positively in Nigeria's democratic processes and social development. From the study it was found that majority of teachers who taught civic education are NCE holder in social studies, also available facilities for effective implementation of Civic Education curriculum are classroom, civic education curriculum, textbook and assessment tools and method used are assignment method, lecture method and role playing method. The study further revealed that inadequate funding of the educational system and poor learning conditions effect implementation of civic education curriculum.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made base on the findings

- Appropriate teachers should be employed for effective implementation of civic education.
- Teachers should use appropriate methods that influence effective civic education curriculum
- The Federal Government, State Government, NGOs, Educational stakeholder, Parents and Guidance should provide the enabling environment/infrastructural and facilities for effective implementation of civic education.

- Government should provide adequate instructional materials, modern teaching aids, and adequate funding to enhance curriculum implementation.

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**THE BLUE ECONOMY AND THE SOUTHEAST  
GEOPOLITICAL ZONE: FEASIBILITY OF  
ESTABLISHING A FUNCTIONAL SEAPORT IN SOUTH  
EAST NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved standards of living, and job creation while preserving and protecting ocean ecosystems. Scholars argue that the Blue Economy framework has become increasingly relevant giving the deteriorating condition of terrestrial resources, alongside the growing demand for economic gains. In the case of Nigeria's southeast geopolitical zone, it is contended that the establishment of a functional seaport is crucial for harnessing Blue Economy opportunities. The overall aim of this paper is to examine the Blue Economy within the context of the Southeast geopolitical zone. The specific objectives are: (1) to investigate the importance of the Blue Economy for the Southeast geopolitical zone, (2) to examine the feasibility of establishing a functional seaport in the region, and (3) to determine the potential benefits of the Blue Economy for regional development. This study is anchored in developmental state theory and regional development theory, which provide lenses to examine how infrastructural decisions shape economic outcomes and regional

equity within Nigeria. A qualitative descriptive design, complemented with simple quantitative analysis, was employed. Findings confirmed that the absence of a seaport in the Southeast entrenches structural inequality in Nigeria's maritime sector, reinforcing regional disparity. The study recommended capacity building, mainstreaming of Blue Economy strategies, and the adoption of Public–Private partnerships [PPP] for financing seaport infrastructure.

**Keywords:** Blue Economy, maritime sector, ecosystem, southeast Nigeria, functional seaport

## **Introduction**

Trade and agricultural products have historically been the bedrock of the Southeast Nigerian economy. However, the discovery of oil and the subsequent expansion of the petroleum industry in the 1970s led to a sharp decline in agriculture, which had been a significant economic driver in the region (Adeyemi & Abiodun, 2013). Many shifted into oil-related ventures, assuming it would remain an enduring source of wealth. Although it created opportunities for some, the overexploitation of land and natural resources resulted in environmental deterioration (Augustine & Okon, 2022). In the present context, the **Blue Economy** has been identified as a viable alternative to drive sustainable growth, given the continued loss of terrestrial resources and the need for economic diversification (Abdullahel, 2017; Amaechi, 2018; Bertazzo, 2018; World Bank, 2016).

The Blue Economy, also referred to as the **marine economy**, is widely regarded as critical in alleviating poverty and hunger by creating employment and expanding economic opportunities. These include seafaring activities, ship recycling, ownership and management, shipbuilding and maintenance, as well as port services

(UNDP, 2013). Nigeria has an 870-kilometer coastline and more than 3,000 kilometers of inland waterways, endowed with natural resources such as hydrocarbons, natural gas, zinc, bauxite, mineral ores, copper, gypsum, and lead (Pauli, 2010; Ebarvina, 2016; Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU], 2015). Despite this potential, over-reliance on oil and import-based trade, particularly of second-hand goods and fabrics, has heightened the urgency for the Southeast to diversify its economy and embrace Blue Economy pathways. Scholars argue that marine-based industries can significantly boost regional economic progress while simultaneously supporting livelihoods and environmental resilience (Abdullahel, 2017).

Globally, the Blue Economy is viewed not only as a source of food and livelihoods but also as fundamental to ecological stability, with oceans covering over 75% of the earth's surface and sustaining over half of all living species (Hoegh-Guldberg, 2015). Literature underscores its potential to provide innovative marine management solutions that balance sustainability with economic growth (UNEP, 2012, 2013; UNEA, 2016). Without improved stewardship of marine resources, the communities that depend on them face serious existential risks. Aligning with this, the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** recognizes the Blue Economy as a key pathway for achieving SDG 14.7, which aims to enhance the economic benefits to small island and developing regions through the sustainable use of marine resources (UNCTAD, 2016).

The Southeast geopolitical zone Nigeria, is particularly positioned to benefit from the Blue Economy development, especially giving its potential to host a seaport east of the Niger River. Maritime development in this region could not only foster regional equity within Nigeria but also support long-term sustainability. The Blue Economy emphasizes economic progress, social inclusion, and livelihood security, while ensuring the conservation of aquatic

ecosystems (World Bank, 2017). Accordingly, the objectives of this paper are threefold: (1) to investigate the importance of the Blue Economy for the Southeast geopolitical zone Nigeria, (2) to examine the feasibility of establishing a functional seaport in the zone, and (3) to determine the potential benefits of the Blue Economy for sustainable regional development. This study is anchored on Developmental State Theory and Regional Development Theory, both of which provide analytical lenses for examining the blue economy and seaport development in Nigeria's southeast.

Developmental State Theory argues that governments, through proactive policies and strategic investments, play a central role in directing economic growth and structural transformation (Johnson, 1982; Evans, 1995). In the context of the Southeast of Nigeria, this theory suggests that the Nigerian state must take deliberate steps, such as dredging the Oseakwa River, the River Niger and authorizing new seaports, to correct structural inequalities entrenched in maritime infrastructure. The absence of such interventions reinforces dependency on Lagos ports, perpetuates regional disparities, and undermines inclusive growth.

Regional Development Theory emphasizes the importance of balanced spatial and economic growth across different regions within a country (Myrdal, 1957; Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2017). Unequal access to maritime infrastructure in Nigeria exemplifies the "backwash effect," where benefits are concentrated in certain regions (e.g., Lagos) while others (e.g., the Southeast in Nigeria) remain marginalized. Applying this theory, the development of seaports in the Southeast Nigeria, is not only an economic necessity but also a matter of regional equity and integration into the national economy.

Together, these theories highlight that the blue economy cannot thrive without deliberate state intervention and regional balancing.

They justify the call for both federal and state governments, in partnership with private actors, to mainstream the blue economy in the Southeast geopolitical zone.

## **Clarification of Concepts**

### **A. The Blue Economy Conceptualization**

The term *Blue Economy* refers to an income diversification framework for sustainable growth that considers a nation's reliance on marine and aquatic resources (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2016). The Blue Economy reflects the idea that development can be achieved while adhering to sustainability values and intergenerational equity. Although the term was popularized by Professor Gunter Pauli in 1994 as an economic ideology, it was at the Rio+20 Summit in 2012 that the concept gained global traction, particularly as a framework for sustainable ocean-based growth (Pauli, 2010; United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2013).

The Blue Economy is often described as the marine extension of the Green Economy, applied to sea-based resources and opportunities. The Rio+20 Summit endorsed it as a mechanism for promoting human well-being, social equity, reduced environmental degradation, and efficient resource use (UNEP, 2013; World Bank, 2017). It represents the dynamic relationship between socioeconomic development and the need to prevent environmental degradation.

Scholars highlight that the Blue Economy includes diverse marine industries and policy frameworks designed to maximize the benefits of ocean resources while safeguarding ecosystems (Lee et al., 2020; Silver et al., 2019). It emphasizes inclusive growth, livelihood creation, and ecosystem protection, with the goal of decoupling economic progress from ecological degradation (Voyer et al., 2018). Furthermore, the Blue Economy encompasses activities ranging from

fisheries and aquaculture to port services, renewable energy, biotechnology, and tourism, thus reflecting its expanding scope as an evolving global development paradigm (World Bank, 2017; European Commission, 2021).

UNEP (2012, 2013) stressed that resource optimization and low-carbon strategies remain central to the Blue Economy model. It advocates for harnessing “blue capital” — the economic potential of oceans, rivers, and lakes across all stages of development, from infrastructure building and commerce to energy generation and sustainable procurement. By doing so, the Blue Economy seeks to reconcile economic opportunity with environmental responsibility.

### **B. Southeast Geopolitical Zone Nigeria**

The Southeast geopolitical zone is both a geographic and political region of Nigeria, comprising five states: Abjā, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The largest commercial hub in the zone is Aba, while other major urban centers include Enugu, Onitsha, Owerri, Umuahia, Nnewi, Awka, and Abakaliki. The zone spans 29,388 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated within the West Africa Time Zone (UTC+1; World Atlas, 2023).

Linguistically and culturally, the Southeast is predominantly Igbo, with multiple dialects and subgroups across the region (Chikezie, 2013; Emelumba, 2022). The region is bordered by the River Niger to the west, the Niger Delta to the south, the North Central zone to the north, and Cross River to the east. Ecologically, it straddles the Cross–Niger transition forests and the Guinean Forest–Savanna mosaic, providing a rich biodiversity base (World Population Review, 2022).

Economically, despite being the smallest of Nigeria’s six geopolitical zones, the Southeast Nigeria plays a significant role in the national

economy. It is home to oil and natural gas reserves, mineral resources (such as coal, bauxite, and iron ore) and is widely known for its entrepreneurial and industrial culture (Premium Times Nigeria, 2022). Aba, in particular, has been described as the “China of Africa” due to its manufacturing and trading capacity, producing a wide range of “Made in Nigeria” goods (Ifegwu-Livingrich, 2018).

Agricultural productivity remains strong, with yam, cassava, rice, and cocoyam as major crops, while the zone’s mineral wealth, especially coal in Enugu, has historically been important for energy production. However, successive governments’ neglect of inland waterways, particularly the River Niger, has constrained the zone’s maritime potential. In light of the federal government’s new Marine and Blue Economy policy framework (Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy [FMMBE], 2023) the Southeast’s waterways and potential seaports are increasingly recognized as untapped economic drivers that can stimulate both regional and national growth (Amaechi, 2018; UNECA, 2016).

### **Literature Review**

The concept of the **Blue Economy** has attracted significant scholarly and policy interest in recent decades. The Blue Economy is generally defined as the sustainable use of ocean, river, and lake resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and environmental health (World Bank, 2017; UNDP, 2013). It extends beyond traditional maritime activities such as fishing and shipping to include innovative industries such as offshore renewable energy, marine biotechnology, and sustainable tourism (Ebarvina, 2016; Pauli, 2010).

Globally, literature on the Blue Economy highlights its potential to address the dual challenges of **sustainable development and climate change**. According to Hoegh-Guldberg (2015) the ocean economy underpins food security, environmental stability, and

livelihoods for billions of people. The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2012, 2013)** emphasizes that the Blue Economy can support a transition to a green economy by balancing ecological integrity with economic advancement. However, without improved governance, resource depletion and inequality may undermine long-term sustainability (Silver et al., 2015).

From a **development policy perspective**, the Blue Economy is closely aligned with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** particularly Goal 14, which promotes the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources. UNCTAD (2016) argues that fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal tourism are critical pathways for advancing SDG 14.7, especially in developing regions. Similarly, the African Union's **2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy** envisions the maritime domain as a driver of continental growth, regional integration, and global competitiveness (African Union, 2012).

In **Nigeria**, the Blue Economy has gained prominence as a diversification strategy amid declining oil revenues and environmental degradation in oil-producing regions (Amaechi, 2018; Augustine & Okon, 2022). Nigeria's coastline of 870 kilometers and inland waterways of over 3,000 kilometers present significant opportunities for shipping, port development, aquaculture, and tourism (EIU, 2015). Yet, structural challenges such as poor maritime infrastructure, weak institutional capacity, and over-reliance on oil revenues constrain progress (Okeke, 2021). Scholars argue that the absence of a functional seaport in the Southeast contributes to regional inequality and reinforces Nigeria's structural imbalance in trade logistics (Adeyemi & Abiodun, 2013).

Furthermore, Blue Economy literature in Africa emphasizes **justice and inclusivity**. The "Blue Justice" perspective for instance focuses

on the distributive and participatory dimensions of maritime development, ensuring that artisanal fishers, women, youth, and small enterprises are not excluded from benefits (Bavinck et al., 2020; Taylor & Francis, 2024). This aligns with political ecology approaches, which examine how power, equity, and governance shape access to marine resources. It also incorporates **Value-Chain and Cluster Orientation** which highlights how economic benefits from the Blue Economy are created and distributed across sectors and regions. In Nigeria, clusters such as the Onitsha–Ogbaru river corridor and Oguta Lake tourism ecosystem illustrate potential value chains in logistics, cold storage, aquaculture, and hospitality services (Okeke, 2021) these opportunities require alignment with national and regional policy frameworks, including Nigeria’s *2025–2034 National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy* and the AU 2050 AIM Strategy.

Thus, literature demonstrates that the Blue Economy is both an opportunity and a challenge. For the Southeast geopolitical zone Nigeria, seaport development offers a pathway to address regional inequality, stimulate trade, and promote inclusive growth. However, achieving these benefits will require integrated governance, infrastructure investment, and policies that prioritize sustainability and equity.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a **mixed-methods research design**, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The choice of mixed methods is informed by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) who argue that integrating numerical data with qualitative insights enhances the depth and validity of social science research. The quantitative aspect provided measurable data on stakeholders’ perceptions and infrastructural feasibility, while the qualitative approach offered

nuanced insights into governance, inclusivity, and policy issues within the Blue Economy framework.

### **Study Area**

The research was conducted in the **Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria**, comprising the five states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. This region is landlocked but strategically positioned with rivers, lakes, and potential inland waterways such as the Onitsha–Ogbaru corridor and Oguta Lake (Okeke, 2021). Its absence of a functional seaport makes it an important case study for examining regional economic inequality and maritime development opportunities.

### **Population and Sample**

The target population included **policy makers, port authority officials, maritime industry stakeholders, traders, transport operators, and local community members** who are directly or indirectly affected by maritime activities in the region. To determine sample size, **Yamane’s (2020) simplified formula** was employed for statistical validity at a 95% confidence level. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across key stakeholder groups. In total, **350 respondents** were selected from the population, while 15 key informants were purposively chosen for qualitative interviews.

**Instruments of Data Collection:** Two main instruments of data collection were used:

1. **Structured Questionnaire** – The questionnaire was divided into four sections:
  - Demographics of respondents.
  - Awareness and perceptions of the Blue Economy.
  - Challenges and opportunities for seaport development.

- Policy and governance perspectives.  
Responses were measured using a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from *Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)*.
2. **Semi-Structured Interviews** – Conducted with policy makers, maritime regulators, and selected academics. This allowed deeper exploration of governance, infrastructure gaps, and inclusivity in the Blue Economy.  
The triangulation of both instruments ensured data reliability and credibility (Patton, 2015).

### **Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

The questionnaire was subjected to **content validity checks** through expert review by maritime scholars and practitioners. A pilot study involving 30 respondents was conducted to test reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielding a value of **0.82**, indicating high internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

### **Method of Data Collection:**

Data were collected through **face-to-face administration of questionnaires**, complemented with **key informant interviews**. Research assistants were trained to support distribution and retrieval of questionnaires in local markets, transport hubs, and government offices. Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analyzed using **descriptive statistics** such as frequency, percentage, and mean scores. These were presented in tables and charts to aid clarity. For inferential analysis, **Chi-square tests** were used to assess relationships between variables, particularly perceptions of seaport development and socio-economic factors. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, guided by Braun and

Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis framework. Emerging themes such as governance, inclusivity, infrastructure, and policy alignment were coded and compared with quantitative findings for integration.

## Results

### Demographic Characteristics

**Table 1: Demographic Summary (N=50 Responses)**

Variable	Value
Sample Size (N)	50
Mean Age	38.5 Years
Median Age	39 Years
Male %	52.0%
Female %	48.0%

**Source: Designed by the Researcher**

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Selected Questionnaire Items (Likert 1–5)**

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
B1: Familiarity with Blue Economy	3.60	1.12
B2: Support for Functional Seaport	4.20	0.97
B3: Job Creation Potential	4.10	0.88
C2: Corruption impedes investment	4.05	0.95
D2: Community consultation essential	4/30	0.85

**Source: Survey and computed by the Researcher**

### Frequency Analysis

**Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Support for Functional Seaport (Item B2)**

Likert Score	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	6.0%
Disagree	5	10.0%
Neutral	7	14.0%
Agree	15	30%
Strongly Disagree	20	40.0%
Strongly Agree	20	40.0%

Source: Survey, analyzed and tabulated by the Researcher

(80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with seaport development).

### Association Test

**Table 4: Gender × Support for Functional Seaport (Chi-square)**

Serial No.	Gender	Agree (4-5)	Not Agree (1-3)	Total
1	Male	25	7	32
2	Female	17	1	18
3	Total	42	8	50

Chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 2.34$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p > .05$ ) shows no significant gender difference in seaport support.

### Thematic Insights from Interviews

**Table 5: Thematic Coding (Qualitative Data)**

Theme	Codes	Example Quote
Governance and corruption	Weak institutions, policy gaps	“Corruption stalls most maritime projects in this country.”

Infrastructure & Dredging	Dredging, access roads	“Without dredging River Niger, seaport development is impossible.”
Livelihoods & Jobs	Job creation, MSMEs	“A functional seaport would employ thousands of youths.”
Environmental Concerns	Pollution, ecosystem	“We must balance seaport construction with environmental safeguards.”
Finance & PPPs	PPPs, concessional finance	“Only PPPs can realistically fund such a massive seaport project.”

**Source:** Survey and analysis by the Researcher

### **Discussion**

The findings of this study highlight the strategic importance of the Blue Economy to the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The high level of support (80%) for seaport establishment confirms the general perception among respondents that such an infrastructure is both overdue and essential. This aligns with the argument by Okoroafor and Mba. (2020) that Nigeria’s coastal and inland water resources remain underutilized in supporting regional economies, thereby entrenching structural inequalities.

The mean score of 4.2 for support of a functional seaport underscores the population’s recognition of its potential contribution to **job creation, trade facilitation, and economic diversification**. This corroborates the assertions of the World Bank (2017) which frames the Blue Economy as an emerging growth frontier capable of reducing poverty and generating sustainable employment, especially in coastal and riverine regions.

On the other hand, the strong agreement (mean = 4.05) that **corruption impedes maritime investments** echoes findings by Okoroafor and Mbah (2020) who identified governance bottlenecks as a central barrier to infrastructural progress in Nigeria. The interviews reinforced stakeholders' repeated emphasis that political will and institutional reforms are prerequisites for effective Blue Economy mainstreaming.

Equally significant is the thematic insight that **infrastructure development, particularly dredging of the River Niger**, Oseakwa River, and others were perceived as indispensable. Respondents viewed dredging not just as a technical necessity but as a developmental policy, symbolizing government's commitment to regional inclusion. This resonates with Regional Development Theory, which stresses that spatial equity in infrastructure provision reduces economic marginalization and fosters balanced national growth (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018).

The study further revealed a broad consensus on **public-private partnerships (PPPs)** as a viable financing strategy for seaport development. Both quantitative (mean score = 3.9) and qualitative findings confirmed confidence in PPPs, and its capacity to provide transparency mechanisms and enforcement. This supports UNECA's (2016) recommendation for African states to adopt innovative financing models to unlock Blue Economy opportunities.

A gendered perspective also emerged. Although the chi-square test showed no significant difference between male and female support for seaport development, qualitative accounts suggested that **women and youth stand to gain disproportionately** from improved livelihoods, particularly in logistics, small-scale trading, and cold-chain services. This aligns with research by Okeke (2021) which highlights the potential of Blue Economy strategies to empower

marginalized groups if inclusivity measures are deliberately built into policy.

Finally, environmental concerns were not overlooked. Stakeholders stressed that seaport development must integrate **ecosystem protection** to avoid repeating the mistakes of oil-related degradation in the Niger Delta. This reflects the growing recognition that sustainability is the foundation of the Blue Economy (UNEP, 2021).

### **Importance of the Blue Economy for the Southeast Geopolitical Zone Nigeria**

The Blue Economy refers to the sustainable use of ocean and aquatic resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and environmental health (World Bank, 2017). It emphasizes economic expansion from natural capital including rivers, seas, and coastal ecosystems, ensuring benefits for both present and future generations. Economic expansion in this sense drives overall economic growth, which is the long-term increase in the production of goods and services within a country. Growth is typically measured as the percentage rise in real gross domestic product (GDP) adjusted for inflation (DESA, 2017). GDP represents the market value of all final goods and services produced in a state or economy, while per capita income—GDP divided by the population offers a measure of individual prosperity (UNCTAD, 2022).

Real economic growth is characterized by increases in aggregate output after accounting for inflation, which, in turn, supports human development outcomes such as health, education, and environmental protection (Augustine & Okon, 2022). Economic expansion in resource-rich contexts often depends on extractive industries, including petroleum, natural gas, coal, and solid minerals. In Nigeria, petroleum discovered in 1956, has become the leading source of government revenue and foreign exchange. Much of this production

comes from onshore fields in the Niger Delta, though offshore output has steadily increased (Okey, 2023; Premium Times, 2022).

The South-East region also possesses significant reserves of coal, which had been mined since 1915 but declined after the oil boom of the late 1950s. With appropriate blue economy strategies, these deposits can be harnessed to diversify energy sources, fueling industries and electricity generation (World Bank, 2023). Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves, historically flared due to lack of infrastructure, now represent a growing export commodity. However, the revenues from these resources have not been equitably shared with producing regions, reinforcing regional disparities (Okey, 2023).

Hydropower also remains central to Nigeria's energy mix, with major dams at Kainji, Shiroro, and Jebba. Expanding hydroelectricity in the Southeast through new dam projects and dredging of the Niger River to allow for an ultramodern seaport could accelerate industrialization and trade integration, aligning with blue economy principles (Ikechukwu & Adepaju, 2020). Complementary energy investments in coal-fired thermal plants and renewable options could stabilize electricity supply, reducing the reliance on fuelwood, which continues to serve as a primary energy source for many households (UNCTAD, 2022).

Globally, rivers, lakes, and coastal ecosystems provide vital habitats, underpin food and nutrition security, and support national economic prosperity. The Blue Economy, alongside the Green Economy, emphasizes restoring these ecosystems and ensuring their sustainability (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [DESA], 2017). Effective leadership and policy commitment are critical to mainstreaming the blue economy in Nigeria's

Southeast, requiring both public and private partnerships to achieve sustainable outcomes.

### **Benefits of the Blue Economy for the Southeast Geopolitical Zone Nigeria**

The Blue Economy presents a transformative framework for harnessing marine and inland water resources to foster inclusive and sustainable development. For the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria, the Blue Economy offers a multidimensional pathway to economic growth, environmental protection, and social advancement.

First, the Blue Economy supports **economic diversification** by reducing dependence on crude oil revenues and creating opportunities in fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, renewable energy, and coastal tourism (World Bank, 2021). This diversification is critical for the Southeast, given its strong trading culture and industrial base, which can be expanded through port-led development and regional value chains (Okafor & Onyema, 2021).

Second, the Blue Economy provides avenues for **employment generation and livelihood security**. Sectors such as fisheries and aquaculture have significant potential to absorb labor, particularly youth and women, thereby reducing unemployment and improving household income (Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2022).

Third, the Blue Economy promotes **food and nutrition security** through fisheries and aquaculture. Sustainable management of rivers, lakes, and coastal ecosystems can increase the supply of protein-rich food while maintaining ecological balance (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2020). This is particularly relevant for the Southeast, where food insecurity remains a challenge.

Fourth, the Blue Economy enhances **climate resilience** and environmental sustainability. By prioritizing renewable energy sources, ecosystem restoration, and low-carbon maritime transport, it reduces vulnerability to climate change impacts while preserving biodiversity (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs [DESA], 2017; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022).

Fifth, adopting a Blue Economy strategy strengthens **regional integration and trade competitiveness**. Functional seaports, inland waterways, and modernized logistics networks can integrate the Southeast into regional and global markets, boosting Nigeria's competitiveness under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) framework (African Union, 2022).

Finally, the Blue Economy nurtures **innovation and technology transfer**. Investing in marine biotechnology, digital maritime monitoring, and renewable energy solutions can stimulate research, capacity building, and industrial upgrading in the region (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021).

In sum, the Blue Economy holds the potential to reposition the Southeast geopolitical zone as a hub of sustainable growth, contributing to Nigeria's national economic transformation while ensuring ecological stewardship.

### **The Feasibility of a Functional Seaport in the Southeast Nigeria**

The establishment of a functional seaport in Nigeria's southeast geopolitical zone has remained a subject of strategic importance. Seaports serve as critical nodes in global trade, facilitating the movement of goods, promoting regional integration, and stimulating industrial development (UNCTAD, 2023). Nigeria's existing

seaports are concentrated in the South-South and Southwest, including Lagos (Apapa and Tin Can Island) Port Harcourt, Onne, and Warri. The absence of a major seaport in the Southeast contributes to structural inequality in maritime infrastructure, reinforcing regional disparities in economic opportunities (Okafor and Nwanosike, 2020). Transporting goods to and from the Southeast currently relies heavily on congested road networks, resulting in higher transaction costs, inefficiencies, and insecurity for traders. A functional seaport in the zone would reduce logistics costs, open direct export channels, and strengthen access to regional and global value chains (Okechukwu, 2022). Moreover, it would encourage industrial clusters around the port, creating multiplier effects in employment, technology transfer, and supply chain development (Nnamani and Chukwu, 2022).

From a developmental state perspective, strategic infrastructural investments such as ports are essential drivers of regional equity and national cohesion (Nnaji, 2023). The construction of a Southeast seaport would align with Nigeria's National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan, which emphasizes balanced regional development through transport diversification (African Development Bank, 2020). It would also support the African Continental Free Trade Area objectives by improving cross-border trade flows and competitiveness (African Union, 2022).

However, challenges remain. Political will, bureaucratic bottlenecks, and financing gaps hinder port infrastructure expansion in Nigeria (Nnaji, 2023). Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as viable financing models, as seen in successful port expansions in Lagos and across Africa (World Bank, 2022). Applying such models to the Southeast could mitigate funding constraints, ensure technical expertise, and guarantee sustainable port management.

The viability of a functional seaport in the Southeast is further reinforced by geographical potential. The Niger River, if dredged and modernized, could serve as a navigational route linking the Southeast to the Atlantic, thereby complementing seaport development (Okafor & Onyema, 2021). This would not only reduce pressure on Lagos ports but also enhance regional trade competitiveness.

In summary, the establishment of a functional seaport in the Southeast is both feasible and necessary. It would address long-standing infrastructural imbalances, unlock economic opportunities, and position the region as a critical player in Nigeria's maritime economy.

### **Building a Sustainable Blue Economy: Principles and Policy Directions**

A sustainable Blue Economy requires economic activities that enhance the long-term health, resilience, and productivity of oceans, seas, lakes, and rivers. This includes integrating scientific knowledge into policy and decision-making, encouraging inclusive stakeholder participation, and fostering social and environmental responsibility among businesses (World Bank, 2017). Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in the Blue Economy, promoting innovative financing, and expanding markets for ocean-based industries are crucial to ensuring inclusive and sustainable growth (OECD, 2016):

#### **Policy Directions for the Blue Economy**

To integrate Blue Economy challenges into national and sub-national governance, policies must be developed or strengthened with clear targets and measurable outcomes (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [DESA], 2017). Such policies should focus on maintaining productive and healthy ecosystems while ensuring equity for marginalized communities.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF, 2015) emphasizes incorporating natural capital into Blue Economy planning and actively managing ecosystem services across the three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental, and economic. This includes awareness campaigns, addressing informational barriers, investing in youth training, and promoting technologies for monitoring, enforcement, and marine infrastructure (UNEP, 2021). Climate risks such as coastal flooding pose serious threats to Blue Economy development. Adaptation strategies include constructing barriers, relocating structures from high-risk areas, and investing in resilient coastal and marine infrastructure (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022). Strengthening regional knowledge centers and building collaborations with global institutions can also enhance innovation and skill development (AfDB, 2021).

### **Challenges Facing the Blue Economy in the Southeast**

While the Blue Economy presents significant opportunities for the Southeast geopolitical zone Nigeria, several structural and institutional challenges hinder its effective implementation:

**Infrastructural Deficits:** The absence of a functional seaport in the Southeast limits the region's access to international markets and increases dependence on Lagos ports, thereby raising transportation costs and reducing trade efficiency (Ezenagu, 2021). Poor road networks, inadequate inland waterways, and limited logistics facilities further constrain regional integration and competitiveness (Okoroafor & Mbah, 2020).

**Policy and Governance Gaps:** The Blue Economy requires coherent and integrated policies, but Nigeria currently lacks a robust legal and institutional framework specifically designed to regulate and promote ocean-based industries (World Bank, 2021). Fragmented

governance and overlapping mandates among federal and state agencies have led to inefficiencies in resource management and investment coordination (African Union, 2019).

**Environmental Degradation:** Unregulated sand mining, oil spills, and pollution of inland waterways threaten aquatic ecosystems in the Southeast (Nwankwo et al., 2020). These practices not only reduce biodiversity but also undermine fisheries and other marine-based livelihoods (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2020).

**Security Concerns:** Maritime insecurity, including piracy, smuggling, and vandalism of oil installations, poses risks to maritime trade and discourages investment (International Maritime Bureau [IMB], 2022). The Southeast, being strategically located along riverine routes, is vulnerable to these threats.

**Funding Constraints:** The Blue Economy initiatives, demand significant capital investment in infrastructure, technology, and capacity building. However, limited public resources, weak private sector participation, and inadequate access to international financing instruments constrain progress (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021).

**Capacity and Knowledge Gaps:** The Southeast of Nigeria faces shortages of trained maritime professionals, marine scientists, and technical experts required to drive innovation and sustainability in the Blue Economy (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development [UNCTAD], 2021). Without targeted investment in human capital development, the region risks lagging behind global trends.

## **Conclusion**

The blue economy, conceptualized as a marine-centered economic system, provides opportunities for inclusive growth, resource diversification, and ecological sustainability. The blue economy is unequivocally a transformative approach that integrates commerce, sustainability, and natural resource revitalization. Anchored in **Developmental State Theory**, this study underscores the role of a proactive Nigerian state in driving infrastructural investments such as seaports, dredging projects, and energy development. A developmental state must not only regulate but also strategically intervene in creating enabling conditions for industrial and maritime expansion.

Clearly, the establishment of a seaport in the Southeast of Nigeria remains feasible despite political and structural obstacles. Historical precedents, such as the Oseakwa seaport in Anambra State and Ossemoto in Imo State, demonstrate the region's longstanding maritime potential (Ejimakor, 2023). Proposed sites like Obeaku-Ndoki and Azumiri in Abia State further highlight opportunities for relatively low-dredging seaport development (African Union, 2019). If efficiently harnessed, such projects could lessen structural inequalities in Nigeria's maritime economy, ease congestion at Lagos ports, and transform the Southeast into a hub for freight forwarding as well as industrial growth (Chikezie, 2013).

Similarly, through the lens of **Regional Development Theory**, the neglect of maritime infrastructure in the South East reflects entrenched spatial inequalities that weaken national cohesion and regional competitiveness. The establishment of a functional seaport in the South East would reduce structural imbalances, promote equity among Nigeria's regions, and enhance the zone's integration into national and global markets. Therefore, the blue economy should not be viewed merely as an economic option but as a framework for

correcting developmental asymmetries and strengthening Nigeria's regional balance.

Ultimately, building a sustainable Blue Economy in the Southeast will necessitate visionary leadership, inclusive governance, and public-private partnerships [PPP]. Hence, the federal government, state actors, and regional stakeholders must collaborate to integrate seaport development into broader Blue Economy frameworks, thereby unlocking economic expansion, regional equity, and long-term ecological sustainability (African Union, 2019; World Bank, 2021).

### Recommendations

Following our findings, this study recommends:

- **State-led Intervention in Maritime Infrastructure:** In line with Developmental State Theory, the Federal Government should assume an active role in reviving the Oseakwa Seaport and initiating the dredging of the Niger River. Such projects require deliberate state intervention to diversify Nigeria's revenue base beyond petroleum and to reduce overdependence on Lagos ports.
- **Equitable Regional Development through Seaport Projects: Going by Regional Development Theory,** infrastructural investments should address spatial disparities. Building functional seaports in the South East would reduce structural inequalities, enhance economic inclusion, and stimulate industrialization in the region.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration for Regional Advocacy:** The South East governors, in collaboration with the South East Chambers of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and other stakeholders, should form a strong regional coalition to lobby the Federal Government. This reflects **regional development imperatives**, where collective action is essential to correcting

imbalances in national planning and ensuring federal policies promote balanced growth.

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## **OPIOIDS MISUSE, SOCIAL FACTORS, ROLE OF FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN AFRICA**

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### **Abstract**

Opioids, ordinarily, are a class of natural, semi-synthetic, and synthetic drugs, like, morphine, codeine, heroin, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, etc., that reduce moderate to severe pain. They can create a sense of euphoria, making them highly addictive and dangerous, with a high risk of abuse, dependence, and overdose. Opioid abuse is increasing in Africa, today, with East Africa reporting the highest number of users (57% of Africa's total) followed by Southern Africa (28%) West Africa (8%) and North Africa (7%). This is due to some socio-cultural, religious, and family factors like widespread poverty, high unemployment, stigma and discrimination against people who use drugs, poor parental supervision, etc. A situation which is having a devastating effects on Africa, currently, retarding sustainable development in the continent. This research generated data through the primary and the secondary sources. For data analysis and application, the phenomenological and the sociological methods were used. The employment of the neurobiological and the structural functionalism theories of drug use, is for the promotion of authenticity in this study. The general objective of this study is to discourage the misuse of opioids in Africa, while one of the specific purposes is to expose the best ways opioids can be used to improve healthcare in contemporary Africa.

This research discovered that opioid misuse causes a lot of health, socio-economic, and political problems like, respiratory depression, domestic violence, economic losses due to reduced productivity, insurgency, etc. It is our recommendation inter alia that the governments of the countries in Africa should enact and carefully implement stringent laws, to address the issues associated with the abuse of opioids in the continent, for improved and quality healthcare in Africa.

**Keywords:** Opioid, Misuse, Social factors, Family, Religious Institutions

## **Introduction**

The abuse of opioids in contemporary Africa has become a nightmare; it has constituted a monster threat to sustainable development in the continent. One may be right if he says that it (Opioids abuse) is a hydra whose tendrils are vitiating the attempts by some well-meaning Africans, and foreigners to reposition the continent for proper human capital development, and its accompanying positive sociocultural and political transformation.

Social factors like wide spread poverty, stigma surrounding addiction, limited access to healthcare, regulatory weaknesses, peer pressure, family problems, migration and displacement, globalization, rapid urbanization, limited educational and job opportunities, etc., are contributing in no small measure, to the astronomical surge in the said unfortunate situation in this part of the world, today. However, all hope is not lost. Social institutions such as the family, religion, etc., in contemporary Africa have a significant role to play, in order to salvage the above situation, and some Africans from psychosis, and untimely death. The misuse of opioids must always be condemned during family, and religious gatherings. Stigmatization, and discrimination against people suffering from opioids misuse in Africa can be counterproductive; they can prevent

opioids misuse victims especially, women, from seeking help and accessing treatment.

Opioids illegally infiltrate Africa through a lot of means, which include maritime, air and land transport mainly because of poor enforcement of drug trafficking laws, which abound in African countries like Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, etc., by certain corrupt officials and organized crime groups. Contemporary African political leaders must carefully monitor all shipments from, mainly, India and China, that arrive at major seaports especially, in West Africa. Sometimes opioids are hidden within legitimate cargos.

Medically opioids are primarily used for pain relief, including anesthesia (Stromgaard, Krogsgaard-Larsen, and Madsen, 2009). Therefore, if adequately used, opioids can improve healthcare in Africa. Once again, all hands must be on deck to ensure the total end of opioids misuse, and its accompanying devastating effects in Africa.

## **Opioids**

According to Health Canada (2024) opioids are drugs with pain relieving properties that are used primarily to treat pain. They can also induce euphoria (feeling high) which gives them (opioids) the potential to be used improperly. Opioids can be prescribed medications like codeine, fentanyl, morphine, oxycodone, hydromorphone and medical heroin. Once again, opioids are intended to treat pain. Doctors may also sometimes prescribe them for other conditions, such as; acute (short-term) moderate to severe pain, chronic (long-term) pain, moderate to severe diarrhea, and moderate to severe cough.

Prescription opioid medications are available in various forms, such as, syrups, tablets, capsules, nasal sprays, skin patches, suppositories, and liquids for injection (Health Canada, 2024). The short-term side

effects of using opioids may include; drowsiness, constipation, impotence in men, nausea and vomiting, euphoria (feeling high) difficulty breathing, headaches, dizziness and confusion, while the long-term effects of using opioids may include; increased tolerance, substance use disorder or dependence, liver damage, infertility in women, worsening pain, and life-threatening withdrawal symptoms in babies born to mothers taking opioids. It is pertinent to observe here that opioids can also be produced or obtained illegally.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse USA (2024) expects the above views when it holds that opioids are a class of natural, semi-synthetic, and synthetic drugs. These include both prescription medications used to treat pain and illegal drugs like heroin.

In the words of Hemmings and Egan (2013, p. 253), opioids work on opioid receptors in the brain and other organs to produce a variety of morphine-like effects, including pain relief. However, an overdose or concurrent use with other depressant drugs like benzodiazepines can result in death from respiratory depression (FDA, 2016). A careful look at the said ideas indicates that opioids are like two-edged swords; they can improve the health of man if properly used, they also have the capacity to sacrifice human life and dignity at the altar of ridicule if misused.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical framework is based on an existing theory or theories in a field of research that is related and/or reflects the hypothesis of a current study (Obilor, 2021, p. 44). In the words of Grant and Osanloo (2014) theoretical framework is a “blueprint” or a guide for a research. Fulton and Krainovich-Miller, in Obilor (2021, p. 44) compare the role of the theoretical framework to that of a map or travel plan. Thus theoretical framework guides the researcher so that he would not deviate from the confines of the accepted theories to make his final contribution scholarly and academic (Ibe, 2021, p. 25).

This research has adopted two theories, which relate and connect drugs use, social functions, and dysfunctions in this academic enquiry. They are the neurobiological and the structural functionalism theories of drug use. According to George (2011), the researchers who developed and shaped major neurobiological models are George F. Koob, Michel Le Moal, Terry Robinson, and Kent Berridge. Their foundational work established the modern understanding of drug addiction as a chronic brain disease involving distinct neurobiological stages.

George F. Koob and Michel Le Moal write that long-term drug use leads to a gradual transition. An individual shifts from being motivated by the drug's positive effects (reward) to using the drug to escape increasingly negative and stressful emotional states associated with withdrawal. This creates a new, altered homeostatic set point in the brain (George, 2011). Terry Robinson and Kent Berridge, in 1993, proposed that repeated drug use sensitizes the brain's mesolimbic dopamine system, causing drug-related cues and stimuli to acquire a powerful, motivating value.

The views of the said scientists have led to the current understanding of addiction as a three-stage cycle that affects specific brain regions; Binge/Intoxication (the initial rewarding and pleasurable effects associated with drug use, driven primarily by the basal ganglia and the dopamine system); withdrawal/Negative Affect (A State of negative emotionality, stress, and anxiety that emerges when a person stops using the drug. This is linked to the activation of brain stress systems in the extended amygdala); and preoccupation/Anticipation—craving (the stage of intense craving and a return to drug-seeking behaviour. This involves a compromised prefrontal cortex, which reduces impulse control and executive function) (George, 2011).

From the foregoing it is obvious that the neurobiological theory of drug use believes that addiction is a chronic brain disorder resulting

from the interaction of biological, psychological, and environmental factors that cause profound and lasting changes in brain structure and function. It holds that these changes affect brain circuits involved in reward, stress, and self-control, leading to compulsive drug-seeking behaviour regardless of harmful consequences. Concerning the structural functionalism theory of drug use, its major idea sees the society as an interconnected system, where all parts work together to maintain stability. Drug use, thus, is viewed as a form of deviance that can disrupt that stability (Merton, 1938, pp. 672-682). For example, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) one of the founders of functionalism, argued that during times of rapid social change, a breakdown of common social norms and controls can leave individuals feeling isolated and without a clear purpose. He believed this state of anomie could lead people to engage in self-destructive behaviours, like drug abuse, to cope. Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) refined Durkheim's concept of anomie with his "strain theory". Merton noted that drug addicts and alcoholics are examples of retreatists who withdraw from society to cope with their feelings of failure. For Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) a leading structural functionalist, his work on the concept of the "sick role" can be used to analyze addiction. The "sick role" describes a set of social expectations for someone who is ill, like seeking medical help and wanting to get better. Addiction can be viewed as a chronic illness that involves social expectations and has a potential for deviance (Agnew, 2001, pp. 319-361).

The best application of the said theories is in the areas of the causes, and effects of opioids misuse in Africa. Socioeconomic hardships are some of the factors driving opioids abuse in Africa, and consequentially, the underdevelopment of the continent. This abysmal situation can be fixed if the contemporary African political, sociocultural, and religious leaders live up to expectations.

## **Opioids Misuse in Africa**

The rate at which opioids are misused in Africa today, is indeed alarming. Onohuean and Oosthuizen (2025) expect the said view when they write that opioid abuse is an escalating public health crisis across Africa, fueled by a complex combination of pharmaceutical trafficking, easy access to unregulated opioids, and widespread socioeconomic challenges. The crisis is characterized by both rising addiction and a paradoxically low availability of controlled opioids for legitimate medical use, leaving many patients with severe pain untreated. X-raying the level of the increase in opioids misuse in the continent, they hold that opioid abuse is increasing throughout Africa, with East Africa reporting the highest number of users (57% of Africa's total) followed by Southern Africa (28%) West Africa (8%) and North Africa (7%).

It is pertinent to observe here that pharmaceutical opioids such as tramadol and codeine are the most commonly abused drugs. In 2017, a survey in Nigeria indicated that 4.7% of the population aged 15-64 misused pharmaceutical opioids, especially, tramadol (Onohuean and Oosthuizen, 2025). There is no gainsaying the fact that misuse is prevalent among young people, including secondary, and university students, as a result of social pressures and peer influence. A good number of them are poor, disenfranchised, and feel they have few options for a better life. Other vulnerable groups are sex workers, factory workers, and long-distance drivers, who use opioids to boost energy, endure hardship, or cope with trauma. Heroin use is common in some countries, with injecting heroin becoming a major public health issue in Tanzania and a concern in other East African nations (Onohuean and Oosthuizen, 2025).

Factors driving opioid misuse in Africa, according to Onohuean and Oosthuizen (2025) include illicit trafficking, unregulated pharmaceutical access, socioeconomic hardship, and easy access and

normalization. Global trafficking routes, particularly for heroin from Afghanistan, pass through East Africa and then West. This creates opportunities for local sales, flooding the market with cheap, readily available narcotics. In West Africa, illicit export of highly addictive tapentadol- carisoprodol combinations from India is a major driver. Corruption and weak regulation allow tramadol and codeine-based cough syrups to be sold easily and without a prescription from pharmacies and black markets. Permit me to observe at this juncture that high unemployment, poverty, and limited opportunities attract many, especially youths, to the lucrative drug trade. Opioids, also in the words of Onohuean and Oosthuizen (2025) are used as a cheap coping mechanism for stress, boredom, or traumatic experiences. The drug trade's financial lure and improved transportation infrastructure, they add, have increased availability. In some communities, they further maintain, the use of opioids has become normalized.

It is regrettable that while illicit opioid use is rising in Africa, a severe shortage of opioids exists for legitimate medical purposes, like pain management for cancer and palliative care. Fear of addiction, stigma, and overly restrictive regulations limit access to essential pain medication for those who truly need it in the continent.

### **Effects of Opioids Misuse in Africa**

Scholars like Onohuean and Oosthuizen (2025) Akpoki (2024) Kurth, Cherutich, and Bruce (2020) have written on the abuse of opioids in Africa, and in all they agree that this misuse has impacted the continent very negatively. UNODC (2020) writes that the non-medical use of opioids is creating a growing epidemic of addiction, especially among youths, manual labourers, and vulnerable communities in West, Central, and North Africa. It also notes that consistent and recreational misuse can lead to fatal overdoses, which are often underreported due to poor surveillance systems in Africa. Increased risk of infectious diseases is another public health effect of

opioids abuse in Africa. Unsafe drug practices, like the exchange of blood in rituals or needle sharing among those who inject drugs, increase the risk of transmitting diseases like HIV, Hepatitis C, and Hepatitis B. It is pertinent to observe here that the misuse of opioids in Africa has led to severe physical and mental health issues, and strained healthcare systems in the continent.

Opioid misuse causes a lot of health problems, including respiratory depression, seizures, cardiovascular damage, liver damage, and psychiatric comorbidities like depression and psychosis. Social, economic, and political and security effects equally highlighted by the UNODC (2020) are damaged families and relationships, child neglect and abuse, gender-specific vulnerabilities, increased crime and violence, intensified stigma, lost productivity, high healthcare costs, diversion of resources, fueling conflicts, organized crime, etc., in contemporary Africa.

In the view of the UNODC (2020) Opioid addiction places a great psychological and emotional toll on families, leading to conflict, domestic violence, and a breakdown of relationships. Children of people who misuse drugs are particularly vulnerable and face increased risks of neglect, abuse, and poor academic performance. While women who use drugs face significant barriers to accessing treatment due to stigma and are less likely to seek help for fear of being separated from their children.

Some may also engage in sex work to support their addiction, increasing their risk of sexually transmitted diseases and violence. Opioid misuse has been linked to higher rates of criminal behaviour, including violence, theft, kidnapping, and drug trafficking, which are ravaging some contemporary African villages and towns. It is also worthy of note that individuals with opioid addiction in the continent face severe stigma from their communities, religious leaders, and law enforcement, which discourages them from seeking treatment.

There is no gainsaying that the crisis associated with opioid abuse in Africa results in economic losses due to reduced productivity especially among the youths, and working-class populations. Governments and families face a heavy financial burden from medical and psychiatric care related to opioid misuse, as well as the costs of law enforcement and incarceration. Again, the widespread trade of illicit and counterfeit opioids, often sourced from Asia, diverts resources and attention from the legitimate medical needs of the population. For UNODC (2020) this creates a dual-crisis situation; a surge in recreational misuse alongside a severe shortage of opioids for legitimate medical use, such as pain management for cancer patients in Africa.

In regions like Northern Nigeria, opioids such as tramadol have been linked to conflicts, with insurgent and vigilante fighters using the drug to boost courage and reduce fear before committing violent acts. Porous borders and corruption enable international and local criminal networks to traffic opioids, fueling violence and illicit financial flows, while poorly enforced regulations on the sale of prescription opioids allow black markets to thrive, contributing to the escalation of the crisis (UNODC, 2020). From the foregoing it is obvious that the abuse of Opioids in Africa has led to the untimely death of some Africans. This unwholesome situation can be remedied if the leaders of contemporary African families, religious institutions, governments, as well as the people completely align with the genuine spirit of the African traditional values which promotes truth, commitment, respect for human life and dignity, etc.

### **The Role of the family, Religious Institutions and Governments in Checking Opioids Misuse in Africa**

Social institutions, in African traditional setting, are highly regarded, due to their commitment to the promotion of a society characterized by rectitude. Today, some Africans have little respect for the family,

religious institutions and the governments, as a result of the failure of some of their authorities, who have compromised the authentic African traditional standards, and values.

Families, religious institutions and governments are places where the genuine spirit of the African indigenous values of purity, respect for human life and dignity, loyalty, respect for constituted authorities, patriotism, etc., is nurtured and consecrated, in African traditional set up. It is the duty of the leaders of the above social institutions in contemporary Africa to ensure that their followers stay away from opioids abuse, since the misuse, as we have seen in this study, threatens the existence of African families. God created opioid for amelioration of health conditions. Therefore, religious leaders in Africa must ensure that they are used for positive health reasons, such as treatment and healing. Contemporary African governments can also contribute positively to the proper use of opioids by making laws, policies, and carefully implementing them to check the illegal influx of opioids from Asia, into Africa, and providing the people with life transforming social amenities, and infrastructure. Creating employment opportunities for the teeming African youths will go a long way to discourage opioid abuse in the continent.

## **Evaluation**

Opioids, ordinarily, are drugs with pain relieving properties that are used to treat pain. They have the capacity to boast healthcare in contemporary Africa, if properly and legitimately used. The current trend that encourages the misuse of opioids among certain Africa people, especially the youths, really questions our sense of respect for human dignity, and life. This is because opioids can lead to psychosis, and death when abuse. Rather than being recalcitrant contemporary African people and institutions must unite in the fight against the said trend that is fastly constituting a hydra in the continent. This is necessary for sustainable development in Africa.

## **Recommendations**

Opioids misuse has constituted a gigantic threat to the effort to enthrone sustainable development in Africa, today. Opioids abuse has also been linked to terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, armed conflicts, etc., which are ravaging contemporary Africa. A situation which has led to the untimely death of some Africans, leaving the continent bewildered, and underdeveloped. To remedy the said unfortunate situation we recommend the following:

1. Contemporary African political leaders must ensure that all African borders are adequately secured.
2. All African security apparatuses, especially those watching over African borders must discharge their duties diligently.
3. Sociocultural, and religious institutions in contemporary Africa must work in unison, promoting among Africans the genuine spirit of African traditional values which inter alia encourage decency, respect for human dignity, and life, etc.
4. All medical, pharmaceutical, etc., organizations in Africa, in synergy with contemporary African policy makers, must see to it that drugs like opioids do not fall into the wrong hands, or obtained without prescription from medical experts.

## **Conclusion**

Opioids, both the synthetic and non-synthetic ones, can be of great help in the treatment of all manner of cancerous diseases; and pain relief, in the continent if adequately used. Be that as it may, it (opioid) is like a two-edged sword. Opioids have the capacity to distort, destabilize and disintegrate man's sensibilities, dignity, life, and core values, also, if handled with levity-little wonder the fabrics of contemporary African systems are witnessing, to a very great extent, devastation made necessary by incessant armed conflict, kidnapping,

banditry, poverty, etc., which have somehow been linked to drugs misuse.

Though the said situation looks scary, it can be remedied, as long as all hands are on desk. The family is the nucleus of the society. While this is true, it is also true that religion occupies a very significant position in the lives of Africans; it permeates, especially in the traditional set up, every department of life of the African. Leaders of other institutions in Africa are not left out. They must work in synergy with the aforementioned institutions (the family, and religion) in the continent for proper promotion of African traditional values of discipline, respect for human life and dignity, respect for the sacred, resilience, respect for constituted authority, etc. This is indeed necessary to salvage the continent. African borders must be adequately monitored, and the governments must also ensure that poverty, in its entirety, is adequately uprooted in this part of the globe, for sustainable development.

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## **HATE SPEECH IN NIGERIA AND ITS IMPLICATION TO NATIONAL UNITY**

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### **Abstract**

Hate speech has become one of the most critical threats to social cohesion and democratic stability in Nigeria. It refers to verbal, written, or symbolic expressions that incite hatred, discrimination, or violence against individuals or groups on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender, or political affiliation. In Nigeria, hate speech is deeply interwoven with the country's pluralistic composition, weak institutional frameworks, and fragile democratic culture. The spread of social media and partisan politics has further amplified the impact of hate speech, often triggering violence, electoral disputes, and deepened ethnic divisions. This paper examines the nature, causes, and consequences of hate speech in Nigeria, with emphasis on its sociopolitical, legal, and ethical dimensions. It also explores regulatory responses, challenges of enforcement, and the need for balanced strategies that protect free speech while mitigating harmful rhetoric.

**Keywords:** Hate speech, Nigeria, ethnicity, religion, social media, democracy, national unity

### **Introduction**

Nigeria is a heterogeneous society with more than 250 ethnic groups and multiple religious affiliations. While diversity should ordinarily serve as a source of strength, in Nigeria it has frequently been manipulated by political elites and extremist groups to achieve selfish ends. One of the manifestations of this manipulation is hate speech,

which fuels stereotypes, mutual suspicion, and at times outright violence.

In an increasingly pluralistic world, the phenomenon of hate speech has emerged as a profound threat to peace, social cohesion, and democratic values. Defined broadly as any expression that denigrates individuals or groups based on intrinsic characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, nationality, or gender, hate speech erodes the moral fabric of society and engenders discord. In the Nigerian context, a nation marked by immense ethno-religious diversity and historical tensions, hate speech has assumed particularly potent dimensions. It manifests not only as verbal abuse but also as a strategic political instrument, especially during elections, civil unrest, and national crises. Understanding the multifaceted nature of hate speech in Nigeria requires an exploration of its roots, mechanisms, and the grave implications it poses for national unity and development.

Hate speech has become a subject of increasing concern across the globe, particularly in societies with fragile democratic institutions and deep-seated divisions along ethnic, religious, or political lines. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, presents a complex case where the interplay of diversity and division creates fertile ground for hate rhetoric. The problem of hate speech is not entirely new; however, its contemporary manifestation exacerbated by social media and political competition, poses fresh challenges to national unity and peaceful coexistence. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with over 250 ethnic groups and two dominant religions, Christianity and Islam. While this diversity should ordinarily serve as a source of strength, it has frequently been manipulated by political elites and extremist groups to advance parochial interests. In such contexts, hate speech often emerges as a tool to mobilize followers and discredit opponents. Consequently,

inflammatory rhetoric has become part of Nigeria's socio-political landscape, particularly during election seasons and in the context of ethno-religious conflicts.

Globally, hate speech has been identified as a catalyst for violence and mass atrocities. The genocide in Rwanda (1994) and the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans (1990s) have shown how words can fuel acts of mass violence when combined with prejudice and weak institutional safeguards. In Nigeria, while the magnitude may differ, the underlying patterns remain similar: words spoken in hate often escalate into actions that threaten peace, stability, and national integration. The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) the post-election violence of 2011, and recurrent ethno-religious clashes all bear testimony to the destructive power of hate rhetoric.

The rise of social media has transformed the dynamics of communication in Nigeria, amplifying both positive and negative messages. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X) WhatsApp, and Instagram have become spaces where misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech spread rapidly, often without adequate regulation or accountability. This digital amplification of divisive rhetoric has heightened tensions among communities, making the regulation of hate speech more complex and urgent. Furthermore, Nigeria's legal and institutional frameworks for addressing hate speech remain weak and inconsistent. Although provisions exist in the Constitution, the Electoral Act, the Cybercrime Act, and the codes of the National Broadcasting Commission, enforcement is hampered by political interference, selective application of laws, and a lack of clarity in defining what constitutes hate speech. This ambiguity creates a delicate dilemma: how can the state regulate hate speech without stifling freedom of expression, which is a fundamental democratic right?

The consequences of unchecked hate speech are dire. Beyond provoking violence, it erodes mutual trust, entrenches stereotypes, and weakens the social fabric of the nation. When people are constantly bombarded with derogatory messages targeting their ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation, it becomes difficult to foster national unity and collective identity. Over time, this erodes democratic culture, polarizes communities, and undermines Nigeria's development aspirations.

Scholars and policymakers have debated the best strategies for addressing hate speech in Nigeria. Some argue for stricter legislation and punitive measures to deter offenders, while others advocate for civic education, interfaith dialogue, and inclusive governance as sustainable solutions. Both approaches underscore the need for a multidimensional strategy that balances regulation with the protection of civil liberties.

This paper therefore examines hate speech in Nigeria by exploring its definitions, historical roots, drivers, and consequences. It also assesses the adequacy of existing legal and institutional frameworks while proposing recommendations for a balanced approach to mitigating the menace. Ultimately, the paper argues that addressing hate speech is not only a legal or political necessity but also a moral and social imperative for Nigeria's survival as a diverse yet united nation.

A permanent feature of every democratic society is the recognition and protection of fundamental human rights. These rights are generally non-derogable and are safeguarded by the *grundnorm* of the state. They cut across civil, political, economic, and socio-cultural spheres and form the foundation upon which democratic governance rests. Indeed, one might ask: what is a democracy

without the guarantee of fundamental rights? Among these rights, the freedom of speech occupies a central place.

Freedom of speech is a principle that ensures the ability of individuals and communities to articulate opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal sanction. Closely related is the concept of freedom of expression, which extends beyond spoken or written words to include any act of seeking, receiving, and imparting information or ideas through any medium. Both freedoms are recognized as cornerstones of democratic societies, as they enable open discourse, accountability, and participatory governance (Barendt, 2005).

International law has long acknowledged freedom of expression as a fundamental human right. Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR, 1948) affirms that “everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference” and that “everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression,” which includes the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas across frontiers and through any medium. Similarly, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR, 1966) reinforces this right but emphasizes that its exercise carries duties and responsibilities, thereby permitting certain restrictions in the interest of protecting the rights of others, national security, public order, health, or morals.

In Nigeria, the 1999 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression under Chapter IV, Section 39, titled “*Right to freedom of expression and the press*” (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, Section 45 of the same Constitution allows for restrictions where the exercise of this right is deemed prejudicial to defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health. This reflects the global recognition that freedom of speech, though fundamental, is not absolute.

In practice, common limitations to free speech include libel, slander, obscenity, sedition, incitement, classified information, copyright infringement, breaches of privacy, perjury, and, notably, hate speech. The justification for such restrictions is often grounded in John Stuart Mill's "harm principle," articulated in *On Liberty*, which argues that the only legitimate reason for limiting an individual's liberty is to prevent harm to others (Mill, 1859/1978). Within this framework, hate speech is particularly problematic because it not only undermines the dignity and rights of its targets but also poses a direct threat to peace, security, and social cohesion.

Hate speech has become one of the most pressing socio-political challenges confronting Nigeria in recent decades. As a country with deep ethnic, religious, and political pluralism, the nation's diversity has often been weaponized through divisive rhetoric that incites fear, prejudice, and hostility. While freedom of speech is constitutionally guaranteed under Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the growing misuse of this right in the form of hate-driven utterances threatens the very democratic ideals it was designed to protect.

The problem is further compounded by the advent of social media, which has provided an unrestricted platform for the rapid dissemination of inflammatory content. Unlike traditional media, digital platforms often lack effective gatekeeping, thereby amplifying derogatory messages, fake news, and hate propaganda. This unregulated spread of hate speech has contributed to electoral violence, communal clashes, and even terrorist recruitment, with grave implications for national peace and stability.

Another dimension of the problem lies in Nigeria's weak institutional and legal response. Although there are provisions within the

Constitution, the Electoral Act, the Cybercrime Act, and the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission's code, these frameworks are often inconsistently applied and sometimes misused for political gains. Consequently, the lack of clarity in the definition of hate speech, selective enforcement of laws, and political interference have eroded public trust in state institutions, making regulatory mechanisms appear ineffective or biased.

The persistence of hate speech in Nigeria therefore raises fundamental questions: How can a balance be struck between protecting freedom of expression and curbing speech that threatens public order? To what extent do weak governance structures and political manipulation fuel the entrenchment of hate speech? And what strategies can be employed to mitigate this phenomenon without undermining democratic freedoms? Addressing these questions is essential, as unchecked hate speech continues to endanger national unity, democratic consolidation, and the peaceful coexistence of Nigeria's diverse population.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Definition of Hate Speech**

The term "hate speech" lacks a universally accepted definition. According to the United Nations, hate speech encompasses "any kind of communication in speech, writing, or behavior that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are" (UN, 2019). In Nigeria, the National Human Rights Commission defines it as expressions capable of inciting violence, discrimination, or hostility against individuals or groups based on religion, ethnicity, or political identity (NHRC, 2019). Citing Neisser (1994, p. 337). Alakali, Faga, and Mbursa (n.d., p. 164) define hate speech as "... all communications (whether verbal, written, symbolic) that insult a racial, ethnic, and political group, whether by suggesting that they are inferior in some

respect or by indicating that they are despised or not welcomed for other reasons.” This definition implies that hate speech refers to utterances directed against a group or race. Similarly, Weber (2009) defines hate speech as “... speech that attacks, threatens, or insults a person or group on the basis of national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, gender, identity, sexual orientation or disability” (p. 9). Weber’s definition underscores that an individual may also be a victim of hate speech, particularly on account of his or her association with, or belonging to, a particular group, colour, or origin.

Downs and Cowan (2012) further emphasize that hate speech is a dangerous weapon capable of demeaning the victim’s ego, terrorizing, wounding, and causing both mental and physical harm. In the same vein, Özarşlan (2014, p. 70) observes that “... hate speech is sometimes accompanied by violent acts against the targeted individual.” He therefore maintains that it is not merely hate speech but also a “hate act.” Özarşlan’s observation aligns with Austin’s theory of perlocutionary acts, which demonstrates that speech does not merely state but also performs actions. In this regard, Butler (1994) affirms that hate speech constitutes a form of “linguistic injury,” producing effects that can be as damaging as physical harm.

### **Distinction from Free Speech**

A major challenge in the discourse on hate speech lies in distinguishing it from the constitutionally guaranteed right to free speech. Freedom of speech is a cornerstone of democratic governance, ensuring that citizens can express their opinions, criticize government policies, and participate in political debates without fear of censorship or retaliation (Barendt, 2005). However, this liberty is not without limits. Hate speech crosses the boundary from legitimate expression into harmful communication when it incites violence, discrimination, or hostility against individuals or groups based on ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, or other

identity markers. Thus, while free speech serves the purpose of fostering democratic participation, hate speech undermines democracy by eroding tolerance, social trust, and peaceful coexistence.

In international human rights law, this distinction is clearly articulated. Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR, 1948) guarantees freedom of expression, but Article 20(2) of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR, 1966) mandates the prohibition of “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.” This demonstrates that while expression is protected, speech that poses real harm to individuals or society does not enjoy the same protection. In practice, the challenge lies in drawing the line: what constitutes acceptable dissent or criticism, and what qualifies as hate speech? This question remains central in both legal and political debates in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Constitution also reflects this tension. Section 39 guarantees freedom of expression and the press, yet Section 45 provides for restrictions where the exercise of such freedom is prejudicial to defense, public order, morality, or health (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). This dual provision indicates that free speech is not absolute and that derogatory or inciting expressions, such as hate speech, can be legitimately curtailed. However, the ambiguity in defining hate speech within Nigerian law has created opportunities for selective application. At times, governments have invoked hate speech laws to silence critics or opposition voices, raising concerns that the fight against hate speech could be weaponized against free expression (Ojo, 2020).

From a philosophical perspective, John Stuart Mill’s harm principle provides an important framework for distinguishing between free and

hate speech. Mill (1859/1978) argued that freedom of expression should only be limited where it directly harms others. Hate speech, by its very nature, not only inflicts psychological and emotional injury but also creates conditions for physical violence, discrimination, and social exclusion (Butler, 1997). In this sense, hate speech cannot be defended under the banner of free speech because it contradicts the very rationale for protecting freedom of expression: the promotion of reasoned debate, mutual respect, and democratic engagement.

### **Historical and Sociopolitical Context of Hate Speech in Nigeria Colonial and Post-Colonial Roots**

The roots of hate speech in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial period, when British colonial administrators employed policies of “divide and rule” to manage the country’s vast ethnic and cultural diversity. The colonial strategy of indirect rule, particularly in Northern Nigeria, entrenched ethnic and religious divisions by privileging certain groups over others in governance, education, and access to resources (Falola & Heaton, 2020). This unequal system fostered mutual suspicion among ethnic communities and laid the foundation for discourses of superiority and inferiority that later manifested as hate-driven rhetoric in politics and social relations. Thus, the colonial legacy created fertile ground for ethnic chauvinism and divisive communication.

As Nigeria approached independence in 1960, political elites amplified these inherited divisions for partisan advantage. Political parties were largely organized along ethnic and regional lines, such as the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) in the North, the Action Group (AG) in the West, and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) in the East. Political campaigns frequently employed language that demonized rival groups, portraying them as threats to regional identity and survival (Coleman, 1958). Such

rhetoric deepened mistrust among ethnic groups and normalized the use of inflammatory speech in public discourse. The effect was that political competition became less about ideology or policy and more about identity and exclusion, thereby setting a precedent for hate speech as a tool of political mobilization.

The post-colonial period further reinforced these patterns. Following independence, Nigeria experienced a series of crises that exposed the fragility of national unity. The January 1966 coup and the counter-coup that followed were both framed in ethnic terms, with speeches and propaganda accusing certain groups of domination and treachery (Siollun, 2009). Hate-filled rhetoric contributed significantly to the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) during which both the federal government and the secessionist Biafran leadership employed language that dehumanized the other side. Such speech not only justified violence but also perpetuated long-term grievances that continue to resurface in contemporary Nigerian politics and social life. Even in the decades following the Civil War, the legacy of colonial and early post-colonial rhetoric has persisted. Political elites, media houses, and even ordinary citizens often resort to ethno-religious slurs and divisive speech, especially during moments of political contestation. The post-colonial state's inability to construct an inclusive national identity has meant that inherited divisions remain potent sources of conflict. Hate speech, therefore, cannot be seen as a purely modern phenomenon in Nigeria; rather, it is deeply embedded in historical processes of colonial governance and post-colonial state formation. Understanding these roots is critical for explaining why hate rhetoric continues to resonate so strongly in Nigeria's political and social context.

### **Civil War and Beyond**

The Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970) marked a critical juncture in the history of hate speech in the country. The secession of the Eastern

Region as the Republic of Biafra was accompanied by intense propaganda and inflammatory rhetoric from both sides. Federal government broadcasts often framed the secessionists as “rebels” or “traitors,” dehumanizing them as enemies of national unity. Conversely, Biafran propaganda portrayed the federal side as “genocidal oppressors” bent on exterminating the Igbo people (Madiebo, 1980). These narratives were not mere words; they served as tools of psychological warfare, justifying military campaigns and mobilizing ordinary citizens to accept prolonged violence. Hate speech thus became instrumental in sustaining the war effort and deepened ethnic hostilities that have persisted for decades.

After the war, the Nigerian state declared a policy of “No Victor, No Vanquished,” aimed at fostering national reconciliation. However, the scars of hate-filled wartime rhetoric continued to shape social relations. Many communities that experienced mass killings, starvation, or displacement retained deep resentment, which found expression in language portraying rival groups as perpetual enemies (Achebe, 2012). The inability of successive governments to adequately address these grievances created an environment where hate speech thrived, particularly during political campaigns and moments of ethnic competition. Thus, the Civil War not only entrenched hate rhetoric but also normalized its recurrence in the post-war political landscape.

In subsequent decades, Nigeria’s transitions between military and civilian regimes further exposed the centrality of hate speech in political and social life. Military rulers often censored free expression but tolerated or even promoted rhetoric that delegitimized perceived enemies of the state. Meanwhile, in the democratic era, hate speech became a common feature of multiparty politics, especially during election seasons. Politicians frequently invoked divisive language to consolidate ethnic or religious support, portraying rivals as threats to

community survival or national stability (Suberu, 2001). The media, both traditional and modern, amplified these narratives, giving hate rhetoric a wider reach than ever before.

The rise of ethno-religious violence in the late 20th and early 21st centuries further illustrates the lingering power of hate speech. From the Maitatsine uprisings of the 1980s to the Boko Haram insurgency and farmer-herder conflicts in the 2000s, hate speech has been a recurrent driver of violence. Preachers, politicians, and online influencers have often used inflammatory language to demonize opposing religious or ethnic groups, inflaming tensions and leading to deadly clashes. In this sense, the legacy of the Civil War lives on in contemporary Nigeria, where hate rhetoric continues to undermine national cohesion. To fully understand present-day challenges, it is essential to recognize how the war and its aftermath institutionalized hate speech as part of Nigeria's political and social fabric.

### **Contemporary Politics and Elections**

With the return to democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria entered a new era of political liberalization and expanded civil liberties. Freedom of expression, guaranteed under the 1999 Constitution, encouraged vibrant political discourse but also opened avenues for hate speech to thrive unchecked. Elections in particular became fertile grounds for divisive rhetoric, as politicians often mobilized ethnic, regional, and religious sentiments to gain electoral advantage (Ojo, 2014). Campaign speeches, political jingles, and even billboards sometimes portrayed opponents as existential threats to particular communities. Instead of fostering constructive debate, political communication in democratic Nigeria has frequently resorted to inflammatory statements that deepen social cleavages.

The proliferation of media platforms has further intensified the problem. While traditional media—radio, newspapers, and

television—still serve as channels for political messaging, the rise of digital and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter (now X) and WhatsApp has amplified hate speech beyond previous limits. Unlike in the colonial or military eras, ordinary citizens now have access to tools of mass communication, enabling the rapid spread of inflammatory rhetoric (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2018). Social media anonymity and weak regulatory frameworks have emboldened individuals and groups to circulate divisive messages that would have previously been censored or punished. This democratization of speech has, paradoxically, expanded opportunities for hate speech to undermine peace and security.

The contemporary context has also seen hate speech intersect with insecurity and violent extremism. The Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast has not only relied on physical violence but also on a rhetoric of hate against Western education, Christians, and moderate Muslims, fueling recruitment and justifying attacks (Walker, 2012). Similarly, farmer-herder clashes in the Middle Belt, as well as secessionist agitations in the Southeast, are often preceded or accompanied by hostile speech that portrays opposing groups as invaders, enemies, or threats to survival.

These narratives inflame tensions, legitimize violence, and create a cycle of retaliation that makes conflict resolution more difficult. Government responses to hate speech in democratic Nigeria have been mixed and often controversial. On one hand, authorities have proposed and occasionally enforced laws against hate speech, arguing that such measures are necessary for national security and unity. On the other hand, critics argue that these efforts are sometimes politically motivated, targeting opposition voices and shrinking democratic space (Onapajo & Uzodike, 2019). This tension between curbing hate speech and protecting free speech highlights a key dilemma in Nigeria's democratic experiment. While the state must

safeguard against inflammatory rhetoric that could spark violence, it must also avoid using “hate speech” as a pretext for silencing dissent. This balancing act remains one of the most pressing challenges in contemporary Nigerian politics.

## **Causes and Drivers of Hate Speech in Nigeria**

### **Ethnic and Religious Polarization**

One of the most profound implications of hate speech in Nigeria is its role in deepening ethnic and religious polarization. With over 250 ethnic groups and a fairly even split between Islam and Christianity, Nigeria is a highly pluralistic society where identity politics plays a central role. Hate speech often weaponizes these identities, framing ethnic or religious groups as either superior or inherently antagonistic to others. This has led to entrenched divisions in which individuals prioritize ethnic or religious loyalty over national identity. For instance, derogatory labels such as “infidels,” “terrorists,” “tribalists,” or “bigots” are frequently used to stigmatize groups, reinforcing mutual suspicion and hostility (Osaghae, 1998).

In political contexts, hate speech magnifies existing cleavages by exploiting ethnic and religious sentiments for electoral gain. Politicians frequently appeal to ethnic blocs or religious constituencies using inflammatory rhetoric that paints opponents as threats to group survival. This strategy not only undermines issue-based politics but also entrenches zero-sum thinking where victory for one group is perceived as loss for another (Suberu, 2001). The result is a fragmented polity where trust in state institutions erodes, and citizens become more likely to align with ethno-religious networks rather than national structures. In extreme cases, such polarization has erupted into violence, as seen in the Jos crises of the early 2000s or the recurring farmer-herder clashes in the Middle Belt.

Religious polarization, in particular, has been aggravated by hate speech spread through sermons, media broadcasts, and social media platforms. Extremist clerics sometimes frame religious “others” as enemies of faith, invoking scriptural justifications for hostility or violence. Similarly, online platforms amplify divisive rhetoric that demonizes either Christians or Muslims, portraying them as intolerant, violent, or politically manipulative. Such portrayals deepen mistrust between communities and make interfaith dialogue difficult. The cumulative effect of this polarization is a society where cooperation across ethnic and religious boundaries becomes increasingly rare, thereby undermining Nigeria’s democratic experiment and prospects for sustainable peace.

### **Social Media and Technology**

Hate speech in Nigeria has become a recurrent instrument of political manipulation, particularly during election cycles. Politicians and their supporters often deploy divisive rhetoric that appeals to ethnic, regional, or religious sentiments, framing elections as existential battles between “us” and “them.” This strategy distracts from policy-based debates and instead fuels identity politics where voters are mobilized not by programs or manifestos but by fear of domination or marginalization by rival groups (Ojo, 2014). Inflammatory speeches at rallies, derogatory campaign advertisements, and hostile radio broadcasts are often designed to delegitimize opponents and consolidate support within ethnic or religious constituencies. Such practices not only undermine democratic ideals but also perpetuate a culture where political competition is framed as a zero-sum game.

The consequences of hate speech during elections often transcend rhetoric and escalate into physical violence. Electoral contests in Nigeria are frequently accompanied by clashes between rival supporters, destruction of property, and in some cases, loss of lives. Hate-laden messages create an atmosphere of hostility that primes

communities for confrontation, making violent outbreaks appear both justified and inevitable (Omotola, 2010). For instance, the 2011 post-election violence in northern Nigeria, which claimed over 800 lives, was fueled by speeches and messages portraying the election as fraudulent and engineered to marginalize certain groups. Hate speech therefore not only poisons the political climate but also transforms elections—supposedly the hallmark of democracy—into triggers for instability and bloodshed.

In the digital age, social media has further amplified the link between hate speech, political manipulation, and electoral violence. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter are often flooded with inflammatory memes, videos, and fake news targeting political opponents or entire communities. These messages, sometimes spread by organized “troll farms” or partisan influencers, are capable of going viral within hours and inciting anger among millions. The anonymity and speed of digital platforms make it difficult for electoral regulators to track and sanction culprits, leaving society vulnerable to mass mobilization around divisive narratives (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2018). Consequently, hate speech has become not only a tool for elite manipulation but also a grassroots weapon that ordinary citizens use to perpetuate electoral hostility. The cycle of hate speech and violence thus continues to threaten Nigeria’s fragile democracy.

### **Weak Institutions and Impunity**

Hate speech has also played a critical role in fueling Nigeria’s persistent security challenges and insurgencies. Violent groups often rely on inflammatory rhetoric to justify their actions, demonize their opponents, and recruit followers. For instance, Boko Haram’s ideology is deeply rooted in hate-filled narratives against Western education, Christians, and moderate Muslims who are branded as traitors to Islam (Walker, 2012). Such narratives not only legitimize violence but also create an “us versus them” mindset that sustains the

group's militancy. Similarly, secessionist movements in the Southeast employ rhetoric that portrays other regions as oppressors, fostering a siege mentality among their supporters and intensifying calls for violent resistance. Hate speech thus serves as both the ideological foundation and the mobilizing tool for insurgent groups across the country.

The spread of hate speech in conflict-prone areas further complicates efforts to restore peace and security. In communities affected by farmer-herder clashes, for example, hate narratives portraying herders as "terrorists" or farmers as "invaders" reinforce stereotypes that justify reprisal attacks. This language dehumanizes entire communities, making it easier for violence to escalate and harder for peacebuilding initiatives to succeed. The result is a cycle of attack and counterattack in which hate speech both precedes and follows violence, leaving little room for reconciliation. Security forces also face challenges when hate speech circulates, as it increases distrust between them and local populations, often leading to accusations of bias in handling conflicts (Ibeanu, 2019).

Social media platforms have amplified the role of hate speech in Nigeria's security landscape, enabling extremist groups to disseminate propaganda quickly and widely. Videos, audios, and posts containing hate-filled messages circulate across WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, and Twitter feeds, radicalizing individuals and normalizing violent rhetoric. In many cases, these messages reach vulnerable youths who are easily swayed by narratives of persecution and victimhood. The inability of regulatory bodies to effectively monitor and curb online hate speech has allowed insurgent and extremist groups to expand their reach beyond physical territories into virtual spaces (Ezeibe, 2020). Consequently, hate speech has become not just a by-product of insecurity but a driver of

Nigeria's insurgency problem, complicating counterterrorism and deradicalization efforts.

### **Economic Deprivation and Youth Unemployment**

The advent of social media has radically transformed the dynamics of hate speech in Nigeria, giving it unprecedented speed, reach, and impact. Unlike traditional media platforms that are subject to editorial scrutiny and regulatory oversight, social media provides an unfiltered avenue for individuals and groups to disseminate inflammatory content instantly. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X) Instagram, and WhatsApp have become fertile grounds for the spread of hate narratives, memes, and videos targeting ethnic, religious, and political groups. The viral nature of these platforms means that a single post containing hate speech can reach millions of users within hours, amplifying tensions and shaping public opinion more swiftly than ever before (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2018).

One of the most troubling aspects of social media amplification is its ability to blur the lines between fact and fiction. Fake news and doctored content—often laced with hate speech—circulate widely, fueling misinformation and deepening mistrust among communities. During elections, for instance, false stories depicting rival candidates as enemies of certain ethnic or religious groups are spread deliberately to polarize voters and incite hostility. Similarly, in times of communal conflict, videos and audios portraying attacks (sometimes even from unrelated contexts or countries) are shared to stoke fear and provoke reprisal violence. This digital manipulation ensures that hate speech is not only more pervasive but also more emotionally charged, making it harder for individuals to critically assess content before reacting.

The anonymity and interactivity of social media further embolden perpetrators of hate speech. Users can create fake accounts, hide

behind pseudonyms, or operate in encrypted groups where they feel shielded from legal consequences. This anonymity allows hate propagators to act without accountability, while algorithm-driven echo chambers reinforce divisive content by showing users more of what they already believe. Consequently, hate speech becomes self-reinforcing in online communities, creating digital enclaves where intolerance and hostility are normalized. The Nigerian government and civil society actors have struggled to find effective responses to this challenge, as efforts to regulate social media often collide with concerns about censorship and the suppression of free expression. Nonetheless, the amplification of hate speech through digital platforms remains one of the most pressing threats to Nigeria's democracy, peace, and social cohesion.

### **Consequences of Hate Speech in Nigeria**

#### **Electoral Violence**

Hate speech has been a significant driver of electoral violence in Nigeria, as political actors often employ inflammatory rhetoric to mobilize support and discredit opponents. Such speech tends to emphasize ethnic, regional, or religious differences, thereby polarizing electorates. This was evident during the 2011 presidential election, where allegations of electoral malpractice were accompanied by inciting messages that triggered widespread violence in Northern Nigeria, leading to the deaths of over 800 people and displacement of thousands (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2011).

The instrumentalization of hate speech during campaigns undermines the integrity of elections by shifting political debates from policy-based discussions to personality and identity attacks. Political elites manipulate ethnoreligious identities to frame opponents as threats to group survival, thereby inciting voters to resort to violence (Omotola, 2010). This trend diminishes the credibility of Nigeria's democratic

processes and reinforces the perception of elections as zero-sum contests, rather than opportunities for collective progress.

Furthermore, hate speech often sets the stage for post-election crises by fueling resentment among losing groups. The continued deployment of derogatory and inciting rhetoric has entrenched a culture of intolerance in Nigeria's electoral landscape, with violence becoming a recurring outcome of elections (Ezeibe, 2020). Unless decisive steps are taken to regulate political communication, the cycle of hate speech and electoral violence will persist, jeopardizing democratic consolidation.

### **Ethno-Religious Conflicts**

Nigeria's multi-ethnic and multi-religious composition makes it particularly vulnerable to hate speech-induced conflicts. In regions such as Jos and Kaduna, the circulation of derogatory speech against particular ethnic or religious groups has escalated into deadly riots. Hate rhetoric often amplifies existing grievances, portraying minority groups as outsiders or threats to territorial claims, thereby fueling violent confrontations (Suberu, 2001). Such patterns highlight the direct link between language and violent expression in divided societies.

In Northern Nigeria, insurgent groups like Boko Haram have also relied heavily on hate narratives to recruit members and justify violence. By portraying Western education, Christians, and even moderate Muslims as enemies, Boko Haram's propaganda fosters deep animosity that sustains the insurgency (Walker, 2012). These hate messages not only radicalize followers but also create divisions that hinder community resilience against extremism.

Beyond direct violence, ethno-religious hate speech erodes intergroup coexistence and entrenches suspicion among

communities. The recurrence of such conflicts has devastated local economies, displaced populations, and destroyed interfaith relations (Ibrahim & Igbuzor, 2018). Addressing ethno-religious hate speech is therefore central to peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Nigeria's pluralistic context.

### **Threats to National Unity**

Hate speech undermines Nigeria's fragile national unity by perpetuating stereotypes and reinforcing group divisions. When politicians, media outlets, or community leaders resort to derogatory rhetoric, they delegitimize the idea of a shared national identity. This fuels distrust and resentment across ethnic and religious lines, making collective nationhood appear unattainable (Osaghae, 1998). Continuous exposure to such divisive rhetoric erodes the bonds of solidarity necessary for a cohesive state.

The persistence of hate speech also deepens regional polarization, with groups perceiving themselves as perpetual victims of domination or exclusion. This contributes to separatist agitations and secessionist movements, as seen in the resurgence of Biafra-related campaigns in the Southeast. By amplifying grievances and historical injustices, hate rhetoric feeds disillusionment with the Nigerian state, undermining unity and stability (Suberu, 2001).

Moreover, national integration initiatives such as federal character and unity schools are weakened when citizens are constantly bombarded with speech that delegitimizes other groups. Hate speech reinforces the perception that loyalty to one's ethnic or religious identity supersedes allegiance to the Nigerian state. This not only hampers nation-building but also undermines sustainable peace and development (Akinola, 2018).

### **Undermining Democracy**

Hate speech corrodes democratic culture by shifting political competition from substantive policy debates to identity-based antagonism. Instead of engaging with pressing issues like poverty, unemployment, and security, political actors exploit ethnoreligious sentiments to mobilize support. This trivializes democracy by reducing it to a contest of insults and delegitimization rather than constructive dialogue (Downs & Cowan, 2012). Such practices weaken the prospects of issue-based politics in Nigeria.

Furthermore, hate speech undermines public institutions by delegitimizing electoral bodies, security agencies, and even the judiciary. When political leaders incite followers with claims that institutions are controlled by enemy groups, public trust in governance erodes. This delegitimization not only breeds cynicism but also discourages citizen participation in democratic processes (Ezeibe, 2020). Without confidence in institutions, democracy cannot thrive.

Hate rhetoric also fosters a climate of fear and intimidation that suppresses dissenting voices. Journalists, activists, and minority candidates often avoid participation due to threats associated with hate-driven campaigns. As Butler (1994) observes, speech can constitute a form of injury, and in the political arena, it silences marginalized voices, thereby reducing pluralism. Ultimately, the prevalence of hate speech threatens the survival of democracy by entrenching exclusion, intolerance, and authoritarian tendencies.

### **Recent Media Reports and Their Relevance**

<b>Report</b>	<b>What It Says / Observations</b>	<b>Relevance to 5.1-5.4</b>
<b>CITAD Captured 653</b>	The Centre for Information Technology	Very useful for <b>5.4 Undermining</b>

<p><b>Hate Speeches in September</b>                  (CITAD via Kano, April 2025)  <a href="http://citad.org.ng">citad.org.ng</a></p>	<p>&amp; Development (CITAD) reported that in one month, they captured <b>653 instances of hate speech</b>, a majority from youths via social media. It warns that online hate can spill over into societal relations and threaten unity.  <a href="http://citad.org.ng">citad.org.ng</a></p>	<p><b>Democracy and 5.3 Threats to National Unity</b> — shows how hate speech online is widespread among youth and serves as a potential precursor to more serious conflict.</p>
<p><b>“Hate Speech, Disinformation, Fake News – Political Tools to Discredit Govt.”</b>                  (Federal Ministry of Information &amp; Culture, 2025)  <a href="http://FMINO">FMINO</a></p>	<p>The Minister warned that increasing hate speech and disinformation are being used by political actors (and their backers) as tools to destabilize the polity and discredit government. Claims the campaign is a well-funded project involving multiple actors. <a href="http://FMINO">FMINO</a></p>	<p>This report is directly relevant to <b>5.4 Undermining Democracy and 5.1 Electoral Violence</b> — showing that hate speech is not just incidental but part of deliberate political strategy.</p>
<p><b>INEC Cautions Political Parties on Abusive, Hate Speech</b> (Sept 2022)  <a href="http://Independent">Independent</a></p>	<p>Ahead of campaign flag-off for political parties, INEC’s chairman warned parties to avoid language that could injure religious, tribal, ethnic feelings. He explicitly said that campaign slogans etc. must avoid “abusive language ... likely to provoke violent reaction or emotions.”  <a href="http://Independent">Independent</a></p>	<p>Good for <b>5.1 Electoral Violence</b> and also <b>5.2 Ethno-Religious Conflicts</b> — shows regulatory institutions are aware that hate speech heightens risk of electoral tensions and intercommunal conflict.</p>
<p><b>NHRC Says Elections Fraught with</b></p>	<p>NHRC’s monitoring of Gubernatorial/State Assembly elections found</p>	<p>Very relevant to <b>5.1 Electoral Violence</b> and <b>5.4 Undermining</b></p>

<p><b>Irregularities, Including Hate Speech</b>                  (THISDAY, 2023)                  (<a href="#">THISDAYLIVE</a>)</p>	<p>many complaints regarding hate speech, ethnic division, threats from political parties &amp; supporters in many states (Lagos, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Rivers) ahead of 2023 elections.                  (<a href="#">THISDAYLIVE</a>)</p>	<p><b>Democracy</b> — this ties hate speech directly into irregularities and tensions in elections.</p>
<p><b>NHRC Warns Against Hate Speech; Threat to National Cohesion</b> (Daily Post / NHRC, Dec 2023) (<a href="#">Daily Post Nigeria</a>)</p>	<p>The NHRC issued an advisory warning that hate speech is a threat to national cohesion, peace, and security. It called on media, government, civil society to act in addressing it. (<a href="#">Daily Post Nigeria</a>)</p>	<p>Useful for <b>5.3 Threats to National Unity</b>, <b>5.4 Undermining Democracy</b>, and even <b>5.2 Ethno-Religious Conflicts</b> — especially as national cohesion is damaged by hate speech.</p>
<p><b>Use of Hate Speech by Politicians Seeking Political Patronage</b> (NHRC, Mar 2023) (<a href="#">Tribune Online</a>)</p>	<p>The NHRC observed that many politicians are using ethnic / religious hate-laced messages to win support, especially in lead-up to elections. Also noted that religious leaders are sometimes complicit. (<a href="#">Tribune Online</a>)</p>	<p>Very relevant to <b>5.2 Ethno-Religious Conflicts</b> and <b>5.1 Electoral Violence</b> — shows how politics, identity, and hate speech intersect.</p>

## Legal and Institutional Responses

### Existing Laws

Nigeria has a legal and regulatory framework designed to address the dangers of hate speech while balancing the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under Section 39, provides for the right to freedom of expression and the press. However, this right is not

absolute. Section 45 permits derogations where necessary to protect public order, morality, and national security (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). Thus, while speech is constitutionally protected, the law acknowledges the dangers of unregulated expression, including hate speech.

In addition to constitutional provisions, specific statutes address harmful communication. The **Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act of 2015** criminalizes online communications deemed false, threatening, or inciting, especially those capable of disrupting public peace or national security (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2021). Similarly, the **Electoral Act of 2022** explicitly prohibits campaigns that employ abusive or inflammatory language likely to incite violence. These legal instruments highlight the recognition of the link between hate speech and electoral instability in Nigeria's democratic trajectory.

Broadcast and media regulation also plays a critical role in combating hate speech. The **National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Code** sets ethical standards for broadcast content, prohibiting incitement, abusive commentary, or divisive programming that could threaten public order. Violations attract sanctions ranging from fines to suspension of licenses (NBC, 2020). Collectively, these frameworks reveal a multi-layered legal effort to regulate hate speech across both traditional and digital platforms.

### **Gaps and Challenges**

Despite these provisions, significant gaps remain in the fight against hate speech in Nigeria. Enforcement mechanisms are often weak due to institutional inefficiencies, corruption, and political interference. Agencies tasked with monitoring and sanctioning hate speech, such as the NBC or law enforcement bodies, are frequently accused of selective application of laws, often shielding political elites while

targeting dissenting voices (Falola & Heaton, 2020). This undermines public trust in institutions and weakens the deterrent effect of legal provisions.

Another challenge is the blurred line between regulating harmful speech and suppressing legitimate political dissent. Governments, under the guise of combating hate speech, have sometimes weaponized laws to silence journalists, opposition politicians, and activists. This creates a chilling effect on free expression and fuels concerns about authoritarian overreach (Ojo, 2020). Such misuse raises questions about whether hate speech regulation protects citizens or merely entrenches political power.

Furthermore, Nigeria's pluralistic society complicates the enforcement of hate speech laws, as what is deemed "offensive" is often context-dependent. Different ethnic and religious groups interpret speech acts differently, making the definition and prosecution of hate speech highly contested (Ezeibe, 2020). Coupled with the proliferation of social media, which facilitates rapid spread of inciting content, regulatory agencies often lack the capacity to effectively monitor, detect, and sanction offenders. Addressing these challenges requires both institutional strengthening and the development of context-sensitive, transparent mechanisms that uphold freedom of expression while curbing incitement.

### **Emerging Institutional Initiatives**

Beyond formal legal frameworks, a range of institutional and civil society initiatives have emerged to combat hate speech in Nigeria. The **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** recognizing the threat of hate campaigns to electoral integrity, has increasingly emphasized issue-based campaigns and cautioned political actors against inflammatory rhetoric. INEC's guidelines ahead of the 2023 elections, for instance, explicitly prohibited

political parties from using language capable of provoking violence or deepening divisions (Independent National Electoral Commission, 2022). Such preventive measures demonstrate how electoral bodies are attempting to integrate anti-hate speech norms into electoral processes.

The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** has also taken a leading role in monitoring and reporting on hate speech during election periods and in national discourse. Through election observation and civic education programs, the NHRC regularly warns against the dangers of hate rhetoric to cohesion and peace. In December 2023, the Commission publicly declared hate speech a major threat to Nigeria's unity, urging media, politicians, and citizens to exercise restraint (NHRC, 2023). This reflects a growing recognition that protecting human rights requires proactive responses to divisive speech.

Civil society organizations and media monitoring groups have equally contributed to emerging institutional responses. For example, the **Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD)** runs a hate speech tracking project that monitors thousands of online posts monthly, highlighting how social media platforms amplify divisive content (CITAD, 2025). International development partners, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have also supported Nigeria with programs promoting tolerance, peace education, and digital literacy. These initiatives collectively illustrate how institutional and non-state actors are filling enforcement gaps, raising awareness, and fostering a culture of responsible communication in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Nigeria's legal frameworks on hate speech remain fragmented and ambiguous, making enforcement

inconsistent (Article 19, 2018). A comprehensive law with a clear definition of hate speech, aligned with international human rights standards, is necessary to balance freedom of expression with public safety. Judicial and law enforcement training would further ensure consistent application and prevent misuse of the law.

- 2. Independent Regulatory Bodies:** Institutions such as the NHRC and NBC must be given operational autonomy and funding to reduce political interference. Transparent leadership appointments and adoption of modern monitoring tools would improve their credibility and efficiency. Stronger independence will foster public trust and ensure fair enforcement of hate speech regulations.
- 3. Civic Education:** Civic education that promotes tolerance, interfaith dialogue, and cultural literacy can reshape attitudes and reduce susceptibility to divisive ideologies. Schools, religious groups, and community programs should integrate peacebuilding initiatives into their curricula and outreach. Media-driven campaigns can further sensitize citizens to the dangers of hate speech and promote inclusive values.
- 4. Social Media Accountability:** Social media platforms amplify hate speech, requiring collaboration between regulators, civil society, and technology companies. Co-regulatory models, such as the EU's Code of Practice, offer examples of balancing free speech with accountability (European Commission, 2018). Digital literacy campaigns are also necessary to empower citizens to recognize and resist harmful online rhetoric.
- 5. Political Will:** Without strong political will, legal and civic interventions cannot succeed. Nigerian leaders must model inclusive rhetoric and commit to codes of conduct that reject hate speech. Bipartisan consensus and international support, as seen in Rwanda's post-genocide leadership, can reinforce unity and democratic resilience.

## **Conclusion**

Hate speech in Nigeria represents one of the most pressing threats to peace, democracy, and national integration. Rooted in colonial and post-colonial histories of ethnic and religious divisions, hate rhetoric has evolved into a tool for political manipulation, social polarization, and violent conflict. Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, the unchecked spread of hate speech—especially through digital platforms—has deepened mistrust among communities and weakened national cohesion.

The consequences are evident in recurring episodes of electoral violence, ethno-religious crises, and the rise of extremist narratives that thrive on divisive rhetoric. These outcomes not only undermine democratic processes but also perpetuate cycles of insecurity and underdevelopment. Unless decisively addressed, hate speech will continue to erode Nigeria’s fragile social fabric and obstruct the goal of building a truly inclusive nation.

While Nigeria has adopted legal and regulatory frameworks such as the Constitution, Cybercrime Act, and Electoral Act, enforcement remains inconsistent and plagued by political interference. The misuse of hate speech laws to silence dissent undermines their legitimacy, leaving citizens skeptical of state interventions. This gap necessitates a balance between safeguarding free speech and curbing rhetoric that incites violence or hatred.

Emerging institutional initiatives, including the roles of INEC, NHRC, and civil society groups, show promise in monitoring and addressing hate speech. Yet, these efforts require stronger autonomy, adequate resources, and partnerships with technology companies to address the challenges of online hate. Furthermore, grassroots civic education and interfaith dialogue remain crucial to reshaping social attitudes and building resilience against divisive rhetoric.

Ultimately, combating hate speech in Nigeria demands a multi-pronged approach anchored in legal reform, institutional independence, civic reorientation, digital accountability, and political will. Leaders, citizens, and institutions alike must embrace inclusive rhetoric, reject divisive narratives, and commit to building a culture of mutual respect. Only then can Nigeria safeguard its democracy, strengthen national unity, and create a peaceful environment for sustainable development.

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## **ENDING THE MILITANT CRISIS IN THE NIGER DELTA: THE WAY FORWARD**

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### **Abstract**

The Niger Delta conflict is one created and exacerbated by the oil and natural gas riches of the region. Great hydrocarbon wealth has been extracted over the past decades, yet Niger Delta residents continue to live in underdeveloped and polluted circumstances. This situation has fueled widespread, and often violent, conflict within the region. While the Nigerian government has made attempts to resolve the conflict, most recently with the 2009 amnesty program, these attempts have repeatedly failed. This paper will discuss these failures, as well as present a set of initiatives for the Niger Delta that, together, represent a possible path for regional rejuvenation, and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Niger Delta, Amnesty Program, Conflict, underdevelopment, violence.

### **Introduction**

The June 2009 amnesty program for Niger Delta militants offered by former Nigerian President Musa Yar' Adua represented an opportunity to stabilize the region for constructive conflict resolution negotiations. It was not the first time, however, that an amnesty initiative had been put forward to resolve the violence in the region. Yet it did seem to be an offer backed with solid proposals to end the

violence in the region, an effort to encourage necessary disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of the region's militants. Despite this the program was not able to assuage regional violence, largely due to the lack of attention to the peculiar type of conflict in the Delta. Thus, in order to fully appreciate the task of conflict resolution there, it is important to look at past attempts at conflict resolution as well as ideas for the future. In the coming years, the Delta may yet be stabilized and transformed into a region suitable for economic, social and political development.

In order to fully understand how best to address the possibility of future widespread violence in the Delta, it is important to first recognize the particulars of the conflict facing the Nigerian government. Simply, the conflict is one created and exacerbated by the oil and natural gas riches of the region. Hydrocarbon resources are the engines for Nigeria's economy, as oil provides 95 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings and 80 percent of the government's budgetary revenues. Yet the vast majority of the Delta's 30 million residents live with only the negative effects of oil and natural gas production; the environment and its degradation are daily features of life for many. This, in turn, has fueled decades of cyclical conflict that continues to devastate the region.

The petroleum industry is, globally, a dirty industry. Nigeria is no exception. Owing to the wealth of oil and natural gas under their feet, the Delta constitutes some of the "richest real estate" on the African continent.<sup>1</sup> Yet, despite this wealth, the region has degenerated into a "severely impaired coastal ecosystem" suffering from "damage from oil operations [that] is chronic and cumulative." The pollution from petrochemical exploration, extraction and refining poses a constant threat to those whose livelihoods have not yet been disrupted. Rural residents live with "no real development, no roads, no electricity, no running water and no telephones" while only scraping by

economically. Historically, Delta residents have engaged in farming and fishing as principal sources of household income, and livelihoods.<sup>7</sup> As the environment continues to be polluted, the traditional means of economic activity in the region continue to dwindle; there are few, if any, opportunities in their place.<sup>4</sup> Compensation, clean-up and monitoring practices - whether public or private - continue to be lackluster and hardly effective.

Thus, economic discrimination - including the marginalization of poverty, the creation of national sacrifice areas and a high level of international dependence - has become a pervasive aspect of life for Delta residents.<sup>3</sup> In response to their common challenges, communities have bonded with "considerable coordination" in order to strengthen the "quality, intensity and extent of articulation, aggregation and expression of demands... for equity and justice,"<sup>6</sup> In the Delta, as in other regions of Africa, this organization has culminated in the growth of a nascent civil society that seeks to address the claims of Delta residents against both the Nigerian government and multinational oil companies operating in the region.<sup>7</sup> Many of these groups are peaceful organizations seeking redress through legitimate channels. Others, however, act through violence and function in a world of gross illegality that further intensifies the conflict. The vast majority of the Delta's 30 million residents live with only the negative effects of oil and natural gas.

The Nigerian government is severely handicapped in addressing the demands of these groups. The country is a fragmented collection of over 250 ethnic groups, with each holding "certain basic political orientations" as well as an "unwillingness to alter" those orientations. Public attitudes and political culture are vehemently localized; history, language, culture, religion and political values stem from communal rather than national experience. Coupled with the country's history of military rule, the situation is one where Abuja views political pluralism as a "weapon of potential destruction" rather

than a force for good. The Nigerian state remains fundamentally weak and thus continues to be unable to adequately perform for its citizens, particularly for those in the Delta region.

In the Delta the government has successively failed to execute its duties, evident in a 2002 decision from the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights that found Nigeria to have violated its responsibilities as a government on multiple levels. Corruption is a pervasive problem, and much of the government's transparency issues are directly related to oil and natural gas activities.<sup>11</sup> The Delta continues to lack "adequate social services, viable employment opportunities, or economic growth and development." while oil funds continue to be diverted, wasted, or both.<sup>12</sup> By law, 13% percent of oil revenues are to be transferred to the oil producing states, yet residents of the Delta see few improvements in their socioeconomic situation. Far from being effectively appropriated, the financial wealth simply "seems to disappear."<sup>13</sup>

### **Clarification of Terms Niger Delta:**

Niger Delta is succinctly described as the Niger River Sitting directly on the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean in Nigeria. It is located within nine Coastal southern Nigeria states, which include; all six states from the south south geopolitical zone. It is also a petroleum a petroleum rich region in the center of International concern over a period of time.

### **Amnesty program**

This is simply the act of authority by which pardon is granted to large group of individuals (offenders) by the government. Amnesty program was therefore designed and established by the government to tackle the problem of insecurity and youth restiveness in the Niger Delta region and beyond; and it is granted usually for political crimes against the state, such as treason, sedition, or rebellion. In 2009, the

Nigerian government under Late. President Umaru Musa Yar-Adua established the Niger Delta Amnesty program (NDAP) to provide stipend payments, professional training, and the promise of job placement for militants.

**Conflict:** Conflict refers to the pursuit of the compatible goals or interest by nations or people. It involves some kinds of friction, disagreement or discord arising with a group when beliefs or actions of one or more members do not actually agree with that of another group.

### **Past Government Efforts**

Despite their geographic separation from the problem, Nigerian officials have consistently been faced with pressure to resolve the Delta conflict. The past efforts of a confounding series of panels, reports and commissions have overwhelmingly sought to address the root causes of conflict in the region and facilitate a situation in which substantive conflict prevention can take place. Two specific reports - the 2001 Ogomudia Report of the Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas and the 2004 Xiger Delta Regional Development Master Plan - are expressive of both the government's historical focus on trying to resolve the Delta conflict and its glaring inability to do so.

As the security situation in the Niger Delta began to deteriorate at the turn of the century, the Special Security Committee on Oil Producing Areas was set up so that the Nigerian government could, in the words of the panel, "beam a search light on the oil producing areas in the quest for a solution" to the region's deteriorating situation.<sup>14</sup> The resulting Ogomudia Report, released in 2001, comprehensively presented a proposed series of graduated steps with a heavy emphasis on ownership of problems by all involved. Yet it accomplished no

tangible gains in the region; the political will in Abuja was simply not present at the time.

The 2004 Xiger Delta Regional Development Master Plan was a second major attempt by the Nigerian government to address the situation in the Delta. Put forward by the Niger Development Commission, the plan was based on a careful examination of the day-to-day needs of Delta residents. The report sought a comprehensive "package of cross-sectoral, mutually supportive measures" that would effectively address the Niger Delta's challenges while taking full advantage of the region's opportunities.<sup>15</sup> The plan rightly focused on wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation, facilitated by an expansion of the private sector, the introduction of governance reforms and the development of a social development charter. Recognizing that previous reports were nothing but hollow political acts, the plan offered a specific funding schedule through 2020 and outlined the contributions needed from government and the private sector. It had however, little effect in reaching its goals.

Both the 2001 report and the 2004 plan expressed the government's belief that the resolution of the underlying causes of conflict in the region - socio-economic marginalization lack of adequate services and infrastructure, and governance issues - could act as a viable conflict prevention mechanism for the Delta. Yet only surface attempts at preventing conflict were achieved. The lack of progress can be attributed to the fact that the litany of reports, plans and committees have not adequately addressed the issue of militarism in the region. Without first addressing militarism, there can be little hope that proposed economic and political initiatives would be able to take root and develop into solutions.

Militarism is the violent culmination of "popular responses to economic mismanagement, economic marginalization and crime waves," which have historically been "prolific and controversial."<sup>16</sup> This is particularly true in regard to the emergence of youth-led, identity-based social groups. Social movements are a powerful force within the region, and the primary antagonists in the Delta are those whose leadership is dominated by militia and paramilitary members. As the environmental crisis destroyed the economic prospects of many young Delta residents, the ranks of these social groups swelled with youth seeking both recourse for grievances and group solidarity. Since these groups are responsible for the majority of violence and illegal activities in the region, any conflict prevention efforts must address their allure to Delta residents.

In order to address this fundamental obstacle to development in the region, in June 2009 then-President, Yar Adua, announced a policy of amnesty for any and all Delta militants, to last from August 4, 2009, until October 4, 2009.<sup>17</sup> The offer amnesty, and the subsequent plan for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of the militants, was widely accepted within the Delta. A daily food allowance, monthly stipend, the promise of professional education and training, and the personal involvement of the residents all contributed to the appeal of the amnesty proposal.<sup>18</sup> What should have been cause for celebration, however, was instead darkened by the memory of the historical failings of the government to follow through on its promises and obligations.

Unsurprisingly, the amnesty program was derailed by allegations of corruption regarding the handling of funds meant for former militants. A key militant group in the region, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) declared the ceasefire over in January 2010, less than six months after the amnesty program was implemented. In March 2010, MEND went further, claiming

responsibility for two bombs exploding adjacent to a government building in the city of Warri. The group succinctly stated its position with the announcement that the "deceit of endless dialogue and conferences will no longer be tolerated."<sup>19</sup> Abuja had again failed further eroding faith in government and leading to a renewal of violence.

### **The Way Forward**

In the Niger Delta, it will be especially important to take into consideration the stakes each side holds in the conflict, the attitudes of each side toward the other, and the tactics that each side uses to attain its goals.<sup>20</sup> Firstly, in moving forward, each side will make gains at certain times. Thus, it will be important to transition viewpoints away from zero-sum attitudes, so that all conflict participants will realize that development and regional stabilization are for their overall benefit. Secondly, by shifting the attitudes of the parties from "conflictual to accommodative," each will be able to better, understand the other's viewpoints and thus arrive at a more comprehensive and mutually beneficial solution.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, recognizing the importance of tactics in achieving goals will allow each side to understand the best overall methods to achieve mutual goals in the new positive-sum, accommodative environment. The first issue that must be addressed is the basic socio-economic needs and grievances of Delta residents. Economic development, save that required for oil and natural gas operations, is almost non-existent and those living in the area continue to lack access to clean drinking water, electricity and basic social services such as schools and health clinics. Unemployment and the perception of hopelessness in the region push "a huge number" of regional residents to "roam the streets feeling alienated and powerless" while making "youth activism, militancy and rebelliousness a common phenomenon."<sup>22</sup>

Socio-economic and political marginalization represents a significant "trigger cause" for conflict

"by deepening and expanding the feeling of relative deprivation among the people, and making the tool and means for confrontation... readily available.<sup>23</sup> while militants and other "modes of collective youth action" grow from the "topdown modes of governance and bottom-up responses to disorder," the level of socioeconomic marginalization in the region also represents a significant casual factor. By giving disenchanting youth education, access to basic services and economic opportunity, there would be a significantly lower appeal for opportunistic activities such as kidnapping, oil bunkering and the pursuit of general violence. A lack of consideration for economic empowerment of the youth population is a grave mistake; youth will soon be young adults, and without legitimate opportunities they will be young adults easily recruited into a new generation of militancy.

Related to this point is an emphasis on graduated development in the Delta. Since resolving the basic issues will likely be a series of long-term initiatives, special emphasis on short-term projects with immediate results should be pursued as 'good faith' measures. This would not only jump-start regional development, but would also galvanize popular support among residents who would see quick results that positively impact their everyday lives. Yet although short-term projects can facilitate popular support by providing residents with an immediate tangible impact, these must be successively built on by later projects.

The 2001 Ogomudia Report and the 2004 Master Plan discussed above have an appreciation for this fact. Each incorporates a tiered development process that, in addition to allowing the cost of development to be extended over time, would allow authorities to

periodically reevaluate circumstances and adjust development plans, accordingly. In the Delta, this is an especially important aspect of developmental, political and communal circumstances can rapidly change the situation in which development is taking place. Graduated development allows officials to refocus resources and attention as time goes on, since what was planned in the past may not be relevant, necessary, or desirable in the present.

A third initiative for the region is the prevention of environmental problems to the greatest possible extent. The costs to the regional population from petrochemical activities are two-fold. There is the immediate cost to well-being from environmental problems such as oil spills, gas flaring and the general toxicity of population. Yet there are also the long-term costs of diminished economic capacity, degraded rivers, lands and air hamper the ability of residents to earn a traditional living. By maintaining a high level of ecological awareness and protection there would likely be fewer bitter feelings, less economic marginalization and less reason for residents to turn to violence.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The study has that the Niger Delta oil and natural gas crisis has affected adversely the region's economic development as well as the entire nation. However, the finding of the study equally showed that; the situation has indeed funded the widespread of violence in the region, as well as conflict within the oil rich Niger Delta. But which the successive government have made traumatic attempt to checkmate and resolve the impasse, the crisis up till the present time, has remain devastating.

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## **PHILOSOPHY ON HUMAN EXISTENC**

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### **Introduction**

There are times in life when we have difficulty in deciding what course of action to take in solving a particular problem. The question to ask at such times and situations is always natural and comes in this manner-what do we ought to do? This is an ethical and metaphysical question that works behind all our consideration. Philosophy, as the queen of all knowledge, would be looked at from the view point without prejudice to any particular position of thought. Philosophy has been seen as a search for wisdom, an attempt to understand the universe as a whole. It is also an attempt towards a rigorous examination of the origin, extent of man's ideas and an examination of the values of truth, goodness and beauty. It became difficult for the philosophers from different epochs to generally have a common definition of philosophy. Despite all the differences, in definition, philosophy, according to Uduigwomen and Ozumba (2000) is the search for practical benefit of man. It is a guide for the enhancement of man's progress in life. Philosophizing, therefore, is an inner activity by which an individual knows and becomes himself. This is what Socrates emphasized by saying "man know thyself". There is need for man to have a deep self-reflection to achieve wisdom and a meaningful life (Agabi, Ogar, and Ekwok, 2025).

## **Objectives**

It is intended that a reader at the end of this study, should be able to:

1. Define philosophy
2. Define the concept of human existence
3. State and explain the impacts of philosophy on human existence.

## **Definition of Philosophy**

Etymologically, the word philosophy is a coinage from two Greek words – philos (love) and Sophia (wisdom or knowledge) literally, the word philosophy means love of wisdom.

In a popular sense, philosophy is also seen as people's or person's attitude to life "Our philosophy of life, determination makes a man". It is a general pattern or the habitual way of response of the person or the group to events. Philosophy, in this popular sense, is also used to characterize someone's view or people's world-view. It may be sum total of the people's assumptions, beliefs, attitudes and prejudices which are partly inherited and partly acquired in the process of living. It is also used to refer to as people's reason for actions, the reason behind the action of someone.

In a professional sense, philosophy is seen as an academic discipline usually taught in the universities and other higher institutions. A traditional scholastic definition of philosophy holds that philosophy is the science in which natural reason seeks an understanding of all things by the knowledge of their first principles (Ibekwe, 2008).

## **Concept of Human Existence**

Human existence means the ability of a human person to make personal decision out of deep personal reflection and free exercise of

his will power while being ready to take responsibilities for his subjective decisions than following the objective crowd.

It is also an innate ability in man to awaken the slumbering self to take responsibility and create his essence or meaning even in the face of existential predicaments.

The meaning of the concept of human existence is all about the origins and purpose of human life and our existence, and long term survival are predicated on one thing “intelligent-self-understanding”. We must decide what is the right thing to do and why? Philosophy on human existence should concern itself with questions such that confront individuals as existing beings such as: who am I? What is the meaning of life? How can I live a meaningful and useful life? How can I remain true to myself and others, what is the meaning of freedom for me? And How can I use my freedom. These questions confront man with the naked facts of his freedom and duty through which he makes the best out of his life as an individual.

According to Obinyam (2014) for the concept of human existence to be real, the following developments must be observed:

1. Man must first exist: An individual who strives
2. Man must realize his purpose of existence: thereby fashioning his own life through realization and reflection on himself by excluding himself from the crowd.
3. Man must actualize his essence: to be an individual who considers alternatives, who chooses, who decides and who makes a commitment, worthy of making the individual sound, critical, brave, courageous and analytically minded in making decisions for his very life.

### **Impacts of Philosophy on Human Existence.**

The following are the impacts of philosophy on human existence:

1. Philosophy has served as a veritable tool for the achievement of national development. Development does not descend on the people or/on the society without a critical reflection on existing belief system and the necessity to change them which can best be given by philosophy.
2. Philosophy stands to rediscover, through the searching mind of curiosity and make explicit that elusive and primordial realm of experience that underlies the whole of man's existence in the world.
3. Philosophy becomes a nutrient to our lives by edging us out of some animalistic tendencies and traits.
4. Philosophy tries to carve out what ought to be, from what is already.
5. Philosophy frees man's mind from bias and prejudice. By this, the scope of reasoning of individual is enlarged to perceive the world around them in a different way.
6. The role of philosophy in any society is to criticize the existing thought, culture and other situations in society with the aim of bringing new dimensions and wisdom in the lives and conduct of men and the society.
7. Plato once stated that, it is only when philosophers become kings, presidents, governors, administrators, commissioners will the country or state be well organized, led with transparency, accountability and national freedom and development and all forms of vices in the society like Fraud, 419, embezzlement, armed robbery, religious fanaticism, military in politics and corruption will disappear from the society and a meaningful National Development achieved (Uduigwomen, 2000).
8. Philosophy delivers man from narrow-mindedness. A narrow minded person is one who always thinks that his point of view is the only correct one. Philosophy helps man to appreciate and accommodate other people's opinion which makes him come close to the ultimate truth.

9. Philosophy helps man to satisfy his curiosity, know the meaning of the world, to understand and discover the purpose of life.
10. Philosophy is the mother of all knowledge. Spiritual development is the spring board of material development. All physical structures, engineering works, motor vehicles, sky scrapers, bridges, aeroplanes, equipped hospitals are all product of ideas that metamorphosed into physical realities. Aristotle was quoted by Omoregbe in saying that “actuality is form while potentiality is matter. Form is the state of the realm of idea from which all knowledge flow, while matter is the innate capacity in all things to change, to develop towards a goal (Omoregbe, 1996).
11. Philosophy also determines the material needs of man and determine the corresponding values to be pursued while the physical and biological sciences get directly involved in the production. Thus, philosophy directly and indirectly influences the progress of the sciences.

## **Conclusion**

It is a point without contest that philosophy is very relevant to practical life as it changes society from what is to what ought to be which is when a critical and rational examination of our lives comes into play. If philosophers are kings or kings take the study of philosophy, and we follow the Socratic dictum “man know thyself” the life of man and the well-being of society would be excellent.

## **Review Questions**

1. What is philosophy
2. What is the concept of human existence?
3. State and explain the impacts of philosophy on human existence.

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**CHRISTIANITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS:  
TRANSMISSION OF SACRED KNOWLEDGE AND  
ECOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

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**Abstract**

The contemporary ecological crisis has provoked renewed theological reflection on humanity's relationship with the natural environment. Christianity, as a faith tradition grounded in sacred revelation, offers a rich ethical framework for environmental responsibility through its doctrines of creation, stewardship, incarnation, and eschatological hope. This paper examines Christianity's contribution to environmental ethics by analyzing how sacred knowledge is transmitted and how ecological consciousness is cultivated within Christian theology, scripture, tradition, and praxis. Drawing from biblical texts, patristic thought, ecclesial teachings, and modern ecological theology, the study argues that Christian environmental ethics is not a peripheral concern but an integral expression of faith and discipleship. The paper further explores the

pedagogical and communal mechanisms through which ecological values are communicated, emphasizing the church's role in shaping moral consciousness for sustainable living.

**Keywords:** Christianity, environmental ethics, sacred knowledge, ecological consciousness, stewardship, creation theology

## **Introduction**

Environmental degradation, climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecological injustice have emerged as defining moral challenges of the twenty-first century. These crises are not merely scientific or economic issues but deeply ethical and spiritual concerns that question humanity's understanding of its place within the natural order. Religious traditions, particularly Christianity, have increasingly been called upon to articulate moral frameworks capable of inspiring ecological responsibility and sustainable practices (Berry, 2009). Christianity as a monotheistic religion centered on faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, grounded in the biblical revelation of God as Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer of the universe. The Christian worldview affirms the goodness of creation and humanity's unique role within it (Genesis 1–2).

Historically, Christianity has been accused of fostering anthropocentrism and ecological exploitation, especially through interpretations of the biblical mandate to “subdue” the earth (Genesis 1:28). Genesis 1 repeatedly declares creation as “good,” culminating in God's assessment of creation as “very good” (Gen. 1:31, New Revised Standard Version). Humanity, created in the *imago Dei*, is entrusted with dominion (Gen. 1:26–28) a concept that has often been misinterpreted as exploitative control. Genesis 2:15 further clarifies humanity's ecological vocation, stating that God placed humans in the garden “to till it and keep it.” The Hebrew terms *abad* (to serve) and *shamar* (to preserve) suggest a relationship of service and protection rather than domination. The Psalms and prophetic

literature also reflect ecological consciousness by portraying nature as participating in the praise of God (Ps. 104; Ps. 148) and condemning environmental destruction as a consequence of human sin (Hos. 4:1–3). In the New Testament, ecological concern is implicit in Christology and eschatology. The incarnation affirms the material world, as God enters creation in bodily form (John 1:14). Pauline theology presents Christ as the cosmic reconciler through whom “all things” are restored (Col. 1:15–20) indicating that salvation encompasses both humanity and the wider creation (Moltmann, 1993).

However, a theological reading situates dominion within responsible stewardship, care, and accountability to God (Wright, 2004). The contemporary Christian theology has re-examined these interpretations, recovering a more holistic and relational understanding of creation. This paper, however, investigates how Christianity transmits sacred knowledge that informs environmental ethics and nurtures ecological consciousness among believers. The contemporary ecological crisis—manifested in climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and environmental degradation—poses a profound moral challenge to humanity. Within this context, Christianity has increasingly engaged environmental issues through ethical reflection and practical action. Christian environmental ethics is grounded in biblical theology, shaped by doctrinal traditions, and expressed through concrete environmental praxis. This paper examines the relationship between Christianity, ethics, and environmental praxis, arguing that Christian faith provides a robust moral framework for ecological responsibility rooted in stewardship, justice, and love of neighbor.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

The basic concepts of this study which include; environmental ethics, sacred knowledge in Christianity, and ecological consciousness, is

clarified here for proper understanding of the researchers' convictions of the subject. Environmental ethics here refers to the moral principles governing human interactions with the natural environment. It addresses questions of responsibility, value, justice, and sustainability in relation to ecosystems and non-human life (DesJardins, 2013). Ethics generally refers to the systematic reflection on moral values, principles, and norms guiding human conduct. Christian ethics derives its moral vision from Scripture, tradition, reason, and lived experience, emphasizing obedience to God's will and responsibility toward others, including future generations (Gula, 2010). Within religious contexts, environmental ethics often emerges from theological reflections on creation, divine sovereignty, and moral obligation.

Sacred knowledge in Christianity encompasses divinely revealed truths transmitted through scripture, tradition, reason, and lived faith. This knowledge shapes moral norms and worldviews, guiding believers' understanding of reality and ethical responsibility (McGrath, 2017). When applied to environmental concerns, sacred knowledge provides theological meaning to ecological care. Ecological consciousness on the other hand denotes an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life forms and a moral sensitivity toward environmental integrity. In Christian thought, ecological consciousness is rooted in the recognition of creation as God's handiwork and humanity's vocation as caretakers rather than exploiters (Conradie, 2011).

### **Biblical Foundations of Christian Environmental Ethics**

The Bible provides a rich and coherent foundation for Christian environmental ethics. Through the doctrines of creation, stewardship, covenant, sin, redemption, and eschatological hope, Scripture affirms the intrinsic value of the environment and humanity's moral responsibility toward it. Christian environmental ethics, grounded

biblically, calls believers to faithful stewardship, ecological justice, and participation in God’s redemptive care for the whole creation. Christian environmental ethics is rooted in the biblical vision of creation as God’s purposeful and valuable work, entrusted to humanity for responsible care rather than exploitative domination. The Bible provides a coherent theological framework that grounds environmental responsibility in doctrines of creation, stewardship, covenant, sin, redemption, and eschatological hope. From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture affirms that the natural world belongs to God and that human beings are accountable moral agents within creation.

The scriptural texts which is basically contained in Genesis narratives provides the primary foundation for Christian environmental ethics. Genesis 1–2 presents the world as created intentionally by God and declared “very good” (Gen. 1:31, New Revised Standard Version [NRSV]). Creation is not accidental or morally neutral; it reflects divine wisdom and purpose. The repeated affirmation of goodness underscores the intrinsic value of the non-human world apart from its utility to humanity (Horrell et al., 2010).

Nature is not a product of chance but a sacred reality imbued with divine purpose. This theological vision confers intrinsic value upon the non-human world, independent of its utility to humanity (Horrell et al., 2010). Biblical stewardship emphasizes responsible care rather than domination. The Hebrew concept of *radah* (dominion) is best understood as governance modeled after God’s benevolent rule—protective, sustaining, and just. Humanity’s role as steward (*oikonomos*) implies accountability to God for the use of creation. Psalm 24:1 reinforces this theology by affirming divine ownership: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.” This confession establishes a moral limit to human exploitation of nature, as the environment is ultimately God’s possession, not humanity’s property. Genesis 1:26–28 has often been misinterpreted to justify ecological domination. However, the biblical mandate to “have

dominion” (radah) must be interpreted within the broader canonical and cultural context. In Genesis 2:15, humanity is placed in the garden “to till it and keep it,” terms that connote care, service, and preservation rather than destruction (Wright, 2004).

Scripture also presents a covenantal vision that includes the natural world. God’s covenant with Noah explicitly encompasses “every living creature” (Genesis 9:9–10) underscoring creation’s participation in divine purposes. This inclusive covenant challenges narrow anthropocentric ethics and supports ecological responsibility. The Bible remains the primary medium through which ecological ethics are transmitted. Liturgical readings, sermons, catechesis, and theological education serve as channels for interpreting scriptural teachings on creation care. When ecological themes are emphasized, scripture becomes a powerful catalyst for moral transformation.

Christian tradition, including patristic and medieval theology, offers valuable ecological insights. Church Fathers such as Basil the Great and Francis of Assisi articulated a sacramental view of nature, perceiving creation as a reflection of God’s glory. These traditions continue to inform contemporary eco-theological discourse (Santmire, 2000). Modern ecclesial documents have reinforced Christian environmental ethics. Encyclicals and synodal statements emphasize environmental stewardship as a moral and spiritual obligation. Such authoritative teachings function as formal mechanisms for transmitting sacred ecological knowledge to the faithful.

The stewardship model emphasizes responsibility, accountability, and restraint. Humans are vice-regents who manage creation on God’s behalf, reflecting divine care and justice. This ethical vision challenges anthropocentric and utilitarian approaches to the environment. Biblical covenants extend beyond humanity to include the whole created order. In Genesis 9:8–17, God establishes a

covenant not only with Noah and his descendants but also “with every living creature.” This inclusive covenant affirms God’s enduring concern for animals and ecosystems, thereby grounding ecological responsibility in divine promise (Bauckham, 2010).

The Mosaic Law further expresses this concern through environmental regulations such as Sabbath rest for the land (Lev. 25:1–7) and protections for animals (Deut. 25:4). These laws demonstrate that environmental care is integral to covenant faithfulness. The biblical narrative associates environmental degradation with human sin. Genesis 3 depicts how disobedience fractures relationships between God, humanity, and the earth, resulting in toil, suffering, and alienation. The prophets often link ecological devastation to moral failure and injustice (e.g., Hos. 4:1–3; Jer. 12:4).

This theological connection suggests that environmental crises are not merely technical or economic problems but also spiritual and ethical ones. Christian environmental ethics therefore calls for repentance, moral reform, and renewed obedience to God. The New Testament expands environmental ethics through the doctrine of redemption. Romans 8:19–22 portrays creation as groaning in anticipation of liberation, bound to humanity’s redemption in Christ. Salvation is thus cosmic in scope, encompassing both humanity and the natural world (Moltmann, 1985). Christ’s reconciling work is described as restoring “all things” to God (Col. 1:15–20) indicating that ecological renewal is part of God’s redemptive plan. Christian environmental ethics is therefore eschatological, grounded in hope for the renewal rather than the annihilation of creation. Biblical eschatology does not legitimize environmental neglect. Revelation 11:18 warns of divine judgment against those who “destroy the earth,” affirming accountability for ecological harm. The vision of a new heaven and new earth (Rev. 21–22) portrays continuity and

transformation rather than total replacement, reinforcing the ethical obligation to care for creation in the present.

### **Ecological Consciousness in Christian Theology**

Ecological consciousness refers to an awareness of the intrinsic value of the natural environment and humanity's ethical responsibility toward its preservation and flourishing. In Christian theology, ecological consciousness is rooted in biblical revelation, doctrinal reflection, and moral theology. Contemporary ecological crises—such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation—have compelled Christian theologians to revisit traditional teachings on creation, stewardship, and human responsibility. Far from being a modern imposition, ecological concern is deeply embedded within the Christian theological worldview, which understands creation as God's good gift and humanity as a responsible participant in its care (Conradie, 2015).

Ecological consciousness in Christian theology is not a peripheral concern but a central implication of biblical faith, doctrinal reflection, and ethical responsibility. By affirming the goodness of creation, recognizing humanity's role as steward, and envisioning cosmic redemption, Christian theology provides a robust framework for addressing contemporary ecological challenges. In a world facing unprecedented environmental crises, Christian ecological consciousness calls believers to faithful action grounded in reverence for God, love for neighbor, and care for creation.

Christian ecological consciousness finds practical expression in environmental ethics. Stewardship remains a central ethical principle, calling believers to manage natural resources responsibly for present and future generations. Love of neighbor, a core Christian ethic, extends to future generations who will bear the consequences of environmental neglect (Deane-Drummond, 2008). Ecological

degradation disproportionately affects the poor and vulnerable, particularly in the Global South. Christian theology therefore links ecological concern with social justice, emphasizing that care for creation is inseparable from care for humanity (Pope Francis, 2015). This perspective resonates strongly within African Christian contexts, where environmental harm directly threatens livelihoods, culture, and communal well-being.

Modern Christian theology has increasingly engaged ecological issues through movements such as eco-theology and creation spirituality. Theologians have called for ecological conversion—a transformation of attitudes, values, and lifestyles in response to environmental crises (Francis, 2015). Churches and Christian institutions are now integrating ecological awareness into worship, education, and social action, reflecting a growing recognition that ecological responsibility is an essential dimension of Christian discipleship.

In African theology, ecological consciousness is often reinforced by indigenous cosmologies that emphasize harmony between humanity and nature. When integrated with Christian theology, these perspectives enrich ecological ethics and promote sustainable practices rooted in both faith and culture (Conradie, 2015).

The doctrine of the Incarnation affirms the material world as a legitimate locus of divine presence. By taking on flesh, Christ sanctifies material reality, challenging dualistic tendencies that devalue nature. This incarnational theology fosters ecological reverence and ethical responsibility (Edwards, 2006). Christian theology recognizes ecological degradation as a manifestation of human sin—greed, exploitation, and alienation from God and creation. Redemption, therefore, encompasses not only human salvation but the healing of the entire cosmos (Romans 8:19–22).

Christian doctrines significantly shape ecological consciousness. The doctrine of creation emphasizes that the world belongs to God, not humanity (Ps. 24:1). This theological conviction challenges anthropocentric attitudes that treat nature as mere property or resource. Creation theology thus grounds an ethic of reverence, humility, and responsibility toward the environment (Santmire, 2000). The doctrine of sin explains ecological degradation as a manifestation of disordered human relationships—with God, neighbor, and nature. Environmental destruction is therefore not merely a technical or economic problem but a moral and spiritual crisis (Horrell et al., 2010). Conversely, the doctrine of redemption offers hope for ecological restoration. Christian eschatology envisions not the annihilation of the earth but its renewal, as expressed in the promise of a “new heaven and a new earth” (Rev. 21:1). Trinitarian theology also contributes to ecological consciousness by emphasizing relationality. The interconnectedness within the Trinity provides a model for understanding the interdependence of all creation. This relational ontology encourages Christians to view the ecological community as a network of mutual dependence sustained by God’s sustaining presence (Edwards, 2006). Above all, Christian eschatology envisions the renewal rather than the annihilation of creation. The promise of a “new heaven and new earth” (Revelation 21:1) encourages active participation in ecological restoration rather than passive indifference.

### **Christianity, Ethics, and Environmental Praxis**

Environmental praxis denotes the practical application of ethical and theological insights to environmental action. It involves lifestyle changes, advocacy, policy engagement, and communal efforts aimed at ecological sustainability and justice (Deane-Drummond, 2017). Christian worship shapes ecological consciousness through prayers, hymns, and sacramental practices that affirm gratitude for creation. Liturgical seasons, such as harvest thanksgiving, reinforce

environmental awareness and moral responsibility. Christian environmental praxis translates ethical principles into action. Churches and faith-based organizations engage in tree planting, waste management campaigns, climate advocacy, and environmental education. In African contexts, including Nigeria, Christian communities increasingly address issues such as deforestation, erosion, oil pollution, and climate-induced poverty through ecumenical and grassroots initiatives. Liturgical practices, such as harvest thanksgiving and creation-focused worship, also reinforce ecological consciousness. Theological education and sermons play a vital role in shaping environmental awareness among clergy and laity alike, fostering an ethics of care for the earth.

The church functions as a moral community where ecological values are nurtured through collective action, advocacy, and lifestyle transformation. Faith-based environmental initiatives demonstrate how sacred knowledge translates into ethical praxis. The Bible provides the foundational framework for Christian environmental ethics. The creation narratives portray the world as God’s good creation (Genesis 1:31) entrusted to human care. The mandate to “till and keep” the garden (Genesis 2:15) implies responsible stewardship rather than exploitative domination. The Psalms celebrate creation as a testimony to God’s glory (Psalm 24:1) while the prophets condemn environmental destruction linked to injustice and moral decay (Hosea 4:1–3). In the New Testament, Jesus’ teachings emphasize love, humility, and care for the vulnerable—principles that extend to ecological concern. Pauline theology further affirms the cosmic scope of redemption, envisioning the reconciliation of all creation in Christ (Romans 8:19–22).

Stewardship is central to Christian environmental ethics. Humans are caretakers of God’s creation, accountable for how they use natural resources. This principle challenges unsustainable exploitation and calls for conservation and responsible management of the

environment (Wright, 2006). Environmental justice is integral to Christian ethics, as ecological degradation disproportionately affects the poor and marginalized. Christian ethics insists that environmental policies and practices must promote fairness, equity, and the protection of vulnerable communities (Conradie, 2015). The commandment to love one's neighbor (Mark 12:31) extends beyond present human relationships to include future generations. Environmental harm today threatens the wellbeing of those yet unborn, making ecological responsibility a moral obligation (Horrell, Hunt, & Southgate, 2008). Formal theological education and religious instruction play a critical role in embedding environmental ethics within Christian moral formation. Integrating ecological themes into curricula ensures the continuity of sacred ecological consciousness across generations.

### **Challenges in Transmitting Ecological Ethics**

Despite its rich resources, Christianity faces challenges in effectively transmitting ecological ethics. These include theological literalism, economic pressures, and the persistence of anthropocentric worldviews. However, the growing field of eco-theology and interfaith environmental collaboration presents opportunities for renewed engagement and relevance. In African Christian contexts, including Nigeria, integrating indigenous ecological wisdom with Christian theology can deepen environmental ethics and promote sustainable living. This contextual approach enhances the transmission of sacred knowledge in culturally meaningful ways.

The transmission of ecological ethics—the moral principles guiding human interaction with the natural environment—has become a pressing concern in the face of climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation. While religious traditions, particularly Christianity, possess rich ethical resources for environmental stewardship, the effective transmission of these ecological values

faces significant challenges. These challenges arise from cultural, theological, educational, socio-economic, and institutional factors that hinder the internalization and practical application of ecological ethics. This section examines the major obstacles confronting the transmission of ecological ethics in contemporary society. One of the foremost challenges in transmitting ecological ethics is the lack of conceptual clarity surrounding environmental responsibility. In Christian contexts, divergent interpretations of biblical texts—especially Genesis 1:26–28—have often promoted an anthropocentric worldview that legitimizes domination rather than stewardship of nature (White, 1967). Although contemporary eco-theologians advocate reinterpretations emphasizing care, responsibility, and covenantal relationships with creation, these perspectives have not been uniformly integrated into popular religious consciousness (Horrell, Hunt, & Southgate, 2008). The persistence of exploitative readings continues to undermine ecological ethics at the grassroots level.

The transmission of ecological ethics also encounters resistance from theological frameworks that prioritize spiritual salvation over material and ecological concerns. In some Christian traditions, environmental issues are perceived as secondary or even irrelevant to the core mission of evangelism and eschatological hope. This dualistic separation between the sacred and the material world weakens ecological moral teaching and discourages sustained environmental engagement (Conradie, 2011). Moreover, apocalyptic interpretations that anticipate the imminent end of the world may reduce motivation for long-term ecological responsibility. Another critical challenge lies in inadequate environmental education, particularly within religious institutions. Many theological curricula, catechetical programs, and sermons fail to integrate ecological ethics systematically. Where environmental themes are addressed, they are often treated as optional or peripheral rather than as integral to moral

formation and discipleship (Orr, 2004). The absence of interdisciplinary approaches that link theology, ethics, science, and local ecological realities further limits the effectiveness of ecological ethics transmission.

Socio-economic realities significantly affect the reception and practice of ecological ethics. In many developing contexts, including parts of Africa, poverty, unemployment, and resource insecurity compel communities to prioritize immediate survival over long-term environmental sustainability. Practices such as deforestation, bush burning, and unregulated resource extraction may persist despite ethical awareness because economic alternatives are lacking (Gathogo, 2017). Under such conditions, ecological ethics may be perceived as elitist or impractical, weakening their moral appeal. Ecological ethics transmission also faces challenges arising from cultural dissonance. Ethical frameworks developed within Western environmental discourse may fail to resonate with indigenous worldviews unless carefully contextualized. While African Traditional Religions often embody strong ecological sensibilities, colonial and missionary legacies sometimes displaced these values without adequately replacing them with constructive Christian ecological ethics (Daneel, 2001). The failure to integrate indigenous ecological wisdom into contemporary ethical teaching hampers effective moral communication.

Institutional inertia and weak policy implementation further obstruct the transmission of ecological ethics. Religious institutions may issue environmental statements or declarations, but these often lack enforcement mechanisms or practical follow-through. Additionally, limited collaboration between religious bodies, governments, and civil society organizations reduces the societal impact of ecological ethical teachings (Francis, 2015). Without institutional modeling and advocacy, ethical principles remain abstract and disconnected from lived realities.

## **Conclusion**

The transmission of ecological ethics is confronted by multifaceted challenges that span theological interpretation, education, socio-economic realities, cultural contexts, and institutional commitment. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that integrates sound theological reflection, contextual education, economic justice, and institutional accountability. For ecological ethics to be effectively transmitted and embodied, they must be presented not as optional moral add-ons but as central to human identity, faith, and responsibility within the community of creation. Christianity offers a robust and holistic framework for environmental ethics grounded in sacred knowledge and ecological consciousness. Through scripture, tradition, theology, and communal praxis, the Christian faith transmits values that affirm the intrinsic worth of creation and humanity's moral responsibility toward it. Far from being an optional concern, environmental ethics is central to Christian discipleship and witness in a world facing ecological crisis. Renewed theological reflection and intentional ethical formation are essential for translating Christian belief into transformative ecological action. Christianity, ethics, and environmental praxis are inseparably connected. Grounded in biblical revelation and ethical reflection, Christian environmental ethics calls believers to responsible stewardship, justice, and love expressed through concrete ecological action. In responding to the global environmental crisis, Christianity offers not only moral critique but also transformative praxis capable of contributing to sustainable and just human–earth relationships.

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## **CREATIVE THINKING AND CRITICAL THINKING**

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### **Introduction**

Creative thinking and critical thinking are essential skills for students. Creative thinking in-values generating new ideas and possibilities, which critical thinking involves analyzing, evaluating and refining those ideas to reach reasonable conclusion. These skills are interconnected and can be fostered through active purposeful learning experiences that encourage inquiry, collaboration and a culture teachers multiple perspectives are welcome.

### **Objectives**

This study intends to:

1. Define the concept of creative thinking
2. State and define the components of creative thinking
3. Define the concept of critical thinking
4. State and define the components of critical thinking

## **What is Creative Thinking?**

Creative thinking is an invaluable skill with ability to generate new, novel or useful ideas, original and solutions through the process of imagination and critical analysis. It is a skill that involves being sensitive to problems, finding multiple solutions and adapting to challenges through a cycle of idea generation, testing, refinement and communication. According to Australian Institute of Professional Counselors (2021). The person who follows the crowd will get no further than them, but the person who walks alone is likely to discover places no one has ever been before. Creative thinking is a companion to critical thinking as they are complementary skills that work together to solve problems. Creative thinking generates new ideas, while critical thinking analyses, evaluates and refines them into viable solution. Creative thinking focuses on possibility while critical thinking focuses on logic and assessment.

## **Components of Creative Thinking**

The following are the components of creative thinking:

1. **Sensitivity to Problems:** It is the ability to identify and recognize problems, gaps in knowledge or areas for improvement.
2. **Idea Generation:-** It is the ability to produce a variety of ideas which is known as divergent thinking.
3. **Mental Flexibility:** It is the ability to look at things from multiple perspectives.
4. **Testing and Refinement:** It is the ability to evaluate, modify and test ideas through critical analysis and experimentation.
5. **Communication:** It is the ability to share effective ideas through communication to others.

## **What is Critical Thinking?**

Critical thinking refers to analysis and evaluation of ideas. According to Robert (2016) critical thinking involves analysis and evaluation, interpretation and judgment. It is a kind of thinking in which you reflect, analyze when making decisions and solving problems. It defines problems, identifies competing arguments, uses relevant data, raises key questions and uses information effectively to make reasoned judgment.

The word “critical” is derived from the Greek word “kritikos” which means “judgment”.

## **Characteristics of Critical Thinking**

The following are the characteristics of critical thinking:

1. Noticing perceptively and establishing careful connections.
2. Asking probing questions and making meaningful distinctions.
3. Involvement in analysis, interpreting and evaluating evidence.
4. Applying knowledge and thinking independently and interdependently.

## **Components of Critical Thinking**

The following are the components of critical thinking:

1. **Analysis:** Analysis is considered a core component as it is the breaking down of complex information into its basic elements, making it more manageable and comprehensible how different parts contribute to the whole. This step is essential for forming clear and accurate understanding of complex issues (Ashveen, 2025).
2. **Evaluation:** It is also a core component because it ensures that the information and arguments you use are credible and relevant.

Evaluating the quality and reliability of sources helps maintain the integrity of your reasoning and supports well-informed decision-making without this step, you risk basing your decisions on faulty or biased information, which can lead to incorrect conclusions.

- 3. Inference:** It is a key component because it enables you to draw logical conclusions based on the evidence you have analyzed and evaluated. This is crucial for making reasoned judgments and solving problems effectively. To implement effective inference, ensure that your conclusions logically follow from the evidence you have gathered.
- 4. Explanation:** This is fundamental because it allows you to clearly articulate your reasoning and conclusions to others. Effective communication of your thought process is essential for persuading others and facilitating constructive discussions. By presenting your reasoning in a clear and organized manner, you help others understand and evaluate your arguments.
- 5. Self-Regulation:** This involves monitoring and reflecting on your own thought processes and biases which enhances your objectivity. This component helps you recognize and correct personal biases that could distant our reasoning. Regular self-assessment and feedback contribute to more accurate and unbiased thinking.
- 6. Perception:** It is the recognition of personal biases influencing judgments, being aware of those influences helps you to adjust and make more accurate decisions. By perceiving how various factors affect your thinking, you can mitigate the impact of personal biases and improve your overall judgment.
- 7. Fallacy Recognition:-** It is a component of critical thinking that involves spotting logical errors that weaken arguments and lead to faulty conclusions. Identifying these fallacies ensures arguments are based on sound logic, not misleading reasoning. This skills is crucial for evaluating argument, maintaining argument integrity and making rational decisions. Having identified and explained the core components of critical thinking, we should understand that all these

components interact to shape the effectiveness of reasoning and decision-making.

## **Conclusion**

Generally, creative thinking correlated to critical thinking for problem-solving. According to Bengi (2015) there are three dimensions through which creative thinking relate with critical thinking in problem solving and these are the processes of, synthesizing, articulation and imagination. Synthesizing is a dimension which includes various activities as getting benefit from analogous thinking, deducing various activities such as small parts, presenting novel and authentic suggestions to the solution of the problem.

Articulation: it involves forming the old and new knowledge or expanding the current knowledge with the help of the new one imagination. This dimension is consisted of constructing relationship between valid and reliable thoughts, presenting flexible ways of thoughts during idea producing process. Hence, creative thinking is related to critical thinking for problem-solving.

## **Review Questions**

1. Define the concept of creative thinking
2. State and define the components of creative thinking
3. Define the concept of critical thinking
4. State and define the components of creative thinking

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**MMETUTA AKWAMOZU ODINAALA NYE AHUIKE:  
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**Umjedemede**

Isi okwu nchocha a bu mmetuta akwamozu nye ahuike n'Igbo Ezaa. Mbunuche nchocha a bu imata etu akwamozu Ezaa si akwada ahuike ndi mmadu. E bukwu n'uche isite na nke a tuputa aro ga-enye aka

n'ihazi usoro akwamozu na-agaghị emegide ahụike ndị mmadụ. Nchọcha a bụ nke nkọwa. Ndị nchọcha gbasoro abụmoke na agbata afọ sere mmadụ iri na ise Dịka ndị njiri-mee nchọcha a. E ji njumaza, nleta nsonyere na mkparịta ụka nweta njatule nke orụ a. Ya bụ, e ji ajuju abụọ mere ihe. Mbunuche ajuju abụọ ndị ahụ bụ imata emereme akwamozu nke na-emegide ahụike n'Ezaa nakwa ụzọ e nwere ike isi hazigharịa ha n'ụdị na-agaghizi emekpa ahụike ndị mmadụ ahụ. A gbasoro atụtụ mmetụta odimara tuchaa njatule ndị e nwetara. N'ikpeazu, a chọputara na akwamozu odinaala Ezaa nwere otutu emereme na-emegide ahụike ndị mmadụ. Emereme ndị ahụ gunnyere: ilifu ozu, inu nri onyi ovu, ifuchi aka l'onu, inyaghari ozu, iwebe ozu ekwa na okpu, ihapu ozu n'ulo otutu ubochi, onodu igba mkpe nke umu nwaanyi, ikiri ozu na ime ekwa. A chọputakwa na o buru na ndi nhazi na nchekwa omenaala, ndi isi ochichi obodo, ndi oru ahuike nakwa ohanaeze tinyeko aka, a ga-enwe ike ihazighari ememere ndi ahu n'udi ha agaghizi enwe ihe mmekepa ahu nye ahuike ndi mmadu.

**Okpurukpu okwu:** akwamozu, ahuike na mmetuta ahuike.

### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the health challenges associated with traditional burial in Ezaa Igbo. The aim is to identify and understand how some traditional burial activities in Ezaa pose health challenges. The work also aims at suggesting alternative ways of reforming the traditional burial systems that are detrimental to health, for the general health of the people. The study adopted observation, interview and dialogue in data collection. Fifteen (15) participants were selected across different communities as research informants. Meanwhile, two research questions were used to achieve the research objectives. Functionalist approach was used as the analytical frameworks of the work. Meanwhile, it was observed that Ezaa traditional burial has a lot of events that hamper the health of the participants. It was also

observed that solution to the problem lies heavily on government's intervention.

**Key words:** funeral, health and health challenges.

### **Mkpólite**

Akwamozu so n'omenaala pụtakarịsiri ihe n'ala Igbo gbaa gburu gburu. Emereme na-apụtagasị ihe na ya nakwa usoro emereme ndi ahụ dabere na mba di iche iche. Okeke (2024) kwadoro na usoro akwamozu Igbo bu odibendi. Nke a bu maka na ndi mba o bu la n'ala Igbo nwere usoro puru iche ha na-agbaso, nke na-adị iche n'usoro ndi ozọ na-agbaso.

Nchoputa ufodu egosila na usoro akwamozu abughi ihe a ga-asị na o bidoro taa na mba o bu la. O nweghikwa onye ga-asị na o mara mgbe nke mba o bu la bidoro. Ugwu (2021) na-akwado na usoro akwamozu nke mba o bu la di okpu. O rutukwara aka na nke mba o bu la nwere etu o si emetuta ndu ndi mba nwe ya. Mana Nana (2022) na-esi agugo na akwamozu odinaala nwere ajo mmetuta karja ezi mmetuta.

Ka o di, nchoputa ufodu na-agba ama na ajo mmetuta nke akwamozu odinaala n'ala Igbo kariri akari ma dikwa n'udi di iche iche. Nke a emeela ka e nwee otutu nchocha n'ajo mmetuta nke akwamozu n'udi di iche iche. Mana imirikiti na nchoputa si na nchocha ndi ahụ narutukari aka n'ajo mmetuta nye aku na uba na mmeorita ohanaze. O nwebeghi nchocha putara ihe n'uzo doro anya ikwu ihe banyere mmetuta akwamozu nye ahuike ndi mmadu. Nke a mere e ji elefere otutu emereme di iche iche anya na-amaghi na ha so n'ihe na-etinye ndi mmadu n'udi orja di iche iche nakwa onwu nkwobi n'udi di iche iche ta a.

Nchoputa egosila na ozu o bu la site n'onwu o nwuru bu orja na nje orja di iche iche. Emume a na-eme n'akwamozu nwere ike ime ka e bute nje orja ma o bu orja n'amaghi ama. O mee, o buru na e si n'ikwa

ozu nye ohere maka ọnwụ ndị mmadụ. Nke a bụ nnukwu nsogbu, ma burukwa nsogbu kpaliri nchocha a.

Ebe usoro akwamozu Igbo bu odibendi, o di mkpa na e mere nchocha a na mba na mba. O bu naani oge e mere ya na mba na mba ka a ga-enwe ike imata etu akwamozu nke mba o bu la si akwada ahuike ndi mmadu nakwa uzọ a ga-esi kwọ nwaanyi ukwu wara. Ike kwe, o buru na e meela nchocha n'igosiputa mmetuta ya bu akwamozu nye ahuike ndi mba ufodu. Mana a bia n'Igbo Ezaa, o nwebeghi ka e si mee nchocha doro anya n'udi a. N'ih i nke a, mbunuche nchocha a gunyere:

- i. imata etu akwamozu odinaala Ezaa si akwatu ahuike ndi mmadu n'Igbo Ezaa
- ii. imata etu a ga-esi gbochie nkwatu akwamozu odinaala Ezaa na-akwatu ahuike ndi mmadu

Ya bu, o bugh ihe niile banyere akwamozu ka nchocha a lebara anya. O lebara anya naani n'emereme akwamozu odinaala Ezaa na-akwatu ahuike ma tutakwa aro ga-enye aka n'imeghari emereme ndi ahụ etu ha agagh i emegidezi ahuike, o bugh i so n'Ezaa kama n'ala Igbo na mpuga ya.

## **Ntuleghari agumagu**

### **Okwu njimaru**

#### **Onwu**

Okpalaeke (2018) mere ka a mata na e nwere uzọ onwu anọ n'ala Igbo. O guputara onwu ndi ahụ di ka: onwu onye e chiri echichi, onwu nna, onwu nne na ajo onwu. O kwuputara na o bu udi onwu onye nwuru na-egosi udi okwukwa a ga-akwa onye ahụ. Dika o gbakwunyere, a na-akwa onye e chiri echichi n'uzọ puru iche kari ka e si akwa onye nna ma o bu onye nne. Metuta ajo onwu, Basden

(1966) kwuputara na ndi niile nwuru ajo onwu ka a na-etufu n'ajo ohia.

N'aka nke ya, Akaeze, Ezebube na Chukwuneke (2023) hutara onwu Dika mgbanwe site n'uwa anu ahụ gaa n'uwa ime mmuo. Ya bu, onwu bu myipu anu ahụ, ebe mmuo na-anogide. O buru na e wepu mmuo n'anu ahụ, ihe foro bu ozu. Ozu ahụ na-eretọ n'ime nwa obere oge. Nke a mere ndi o metutara na-eji agba mbo iwezuga ya bu ozu ka o ghara imekpa ha ahụ. Uzọ mwezuga ozu ahụ na-aputa ihe dabere n'udi nkwenye na usoro emume ozu nke ha. N'ala Igbo, nkwenye na emume ozu na-aputa ihe n'akwamozu.

### **Akwamozu**

Ogbonna (2005) kowara na akwamozu bu mmemme onwu nke a na-emere onye o bula nwuru anwu, iji nyere ya aka ka o laruo n'udo n'ebe nna ya no. Nke a putara na ihe o bula e mere n'aha onye nwuru anwu n'ihia onwu ya bu akwamozu. Mbiti (1970) na-esi agugo na ndi Afrika na-akpachapu anya n'okwukwa onye nke ha nwuru anwu. Ugwu (2021) mere ka a mata na o bu naani onye e nyere olili na okwukwa kwesiri ekwesi na-alaru ala mmuo. Nke ahụ na-egosi na elimozu na akwamozu na-agako. Ha ncha bu emume a na-emere onye nwuru anwu.

N'elimozu na akwamozu, a na-enwe otutu emereme di iche iche. Ofọ (2022) gbara ama na e nwere ihe e ji maka ha eli ozu. Ufodu n'ihia ndi ahụ ka o gosiputara dika: igbochi isi si n'ure ozu, igbochi ndi ezinaulo onye nwuru anwu ihu ka onye nke ha na-ere na ime ka onye nwuru anwu nwee ike ibanye na ndu na-esote onwu. Echiche ahụ na-egosi na otu na mbunuche elimozu bu maka ahike ndi di ndu. O buru na e lighi ya, isi ya ga-enye ndi di ndu nsogbu. O bughị so isi ya nwere ike imekpa ndi mmadu ahụ. Ebe e nwere otutu emume a na-emere ozu n'aha olili na okwukwa, ufodu n'emereme ndi ahụ nwere

ike imetuta ahũike ndi mmadu n'uzo ojoo, o kachasi site na ya bu ozu.

### **Mmetuta ahũike**

Chuchuma (1994) kwuputara na gburugburu mmadu na-emetuta ahũike ya n'ebe o di ukwu. O gbakwunyere na elerughi anya na ihe na-eme na gburugburu obibi ndi mmadu so n'ihe na-ebute oria di iche iche o kachasi n'ebe obodo ka na-emepe emepe dika ala Afrika no. Nke ahũ na-egosi na ihe o bula a na-eme na gburugburu ndi mmadu nwere ike imetuta ahũike ndi ahũ ma o buru na a kpachapughĩ anya. E were ya tunyere nchocha a, akwamozu so n'ihe a na-eme na gburugburu ndi mmadu. Akpachaghĩ anya nwere ike ime ka emume akwamozu mekpaa ahũike ndi mmadu ahũ n'udi ibo ha oria. O bu n'ikwado echiche ahũ ka Adeforiti (2023) ji kwuo na emume elimozu na akwamozu na-emekpa ahũike ndi mmadu ahũ. Dika o mere ka a mata, otutu emume akwamozu na-emebi ma na-emeto gburugburu obibi ndi mmadu. Nke ahũ na-enye ohere maka ibute oria n'udi di iche iche. Ya bu, o buru na a kpachaghĩ anya n'emume a na-eme gasi n'oge akwamozu, ufodu n'ime ha nwere ike iweputa ohere maka ndaputa oria ma sikwazia etu ahũ wetara ndi mmadu onwu.

### **Ntuleghari atutu**

Atutu mbu a tuleghari n'oru a bu Atutu ndinoru. Atutu ndinoru putara ihe site n'oru Parsons (1951). Mbunuche atutu a bu imata etu emume ntomaja si aputa ihe n'igosiputa omenaala na nkwenye ndi mba o bula. Sapkota (2025) kwuru na ndi kwenyere n'atutu ndinoru kwenyere na akuku omenaala Dika ntomaja, nsiniwu na ewumewu na-aruko oru iji gosiputa obodo o bula n'uju. Ya bu, atutu a nwere ihe e nwere ike igbado ukwu nyochaa etu emume omenaala nwere ike isi gosiputa agburu Dika opuru iche n'ebe agburu ndi ozo no. Akwamozu bu emume omenaala na-aputa ihe na mba na mba. O bu ezie na o bu ozuru-Igbo-onu. Usoro emereme ya na-adi iche na mba

na mba. Mgbe a na-eleru ya bu usoro akwamozu anya, a na-eleru anya na njirimara otu mba. Ka o di, Beck & Grayot (2021) kwuru na atutu ndinoru nwere ike ileba anya na njiko na nhazi nke omenaala na nkwenye, ma ghara ileru anya n'ogbo aghara na-esi na ha aputa nke na-eme ka e nwee ihe mgbaru ihu site na ya bu omenaala. Echiche ahụ so n'ihe mere ufođu ndi mmadu ji akato atutu a. O bu ezie na atutu ndinoru nwere ihe e nwere ike igbado ukwu nyochaa omenaala n'udi imata mba Dika opuriche, o nweghi ihe e nwere ike igbado ukwu tuchaa mmetuta nke emume omenaala o bula na mba. Nke a gosiri na atutu a enwezughi ihe niile e nwere ike iji ruo oru nchocha a. Nke a mere ka e lebaa anya n'atutu ozo a kporo atutu mmekorita odimara.

Akpulu (2023) mere ka a mata na atutu mmekorita odimara si n'aka George Herbert Mead puta. Rock (2016) mere ka a mata na otu n'ihe nleru anya nke atutu mmekorita odimara bu imata njirimara agburu. Ha gbakwunyere na ndi mba o bula na-egosiputa onwe ha site n'odimara di iche iche, nke na-ejiko ha onu, ma burukwa nke ha na-emeputa n'igosi ihe di iche iche banyere nsirihu uwa ha. Nke a na-egosi na atutu a nwere ihe e nwere ike iji nyocha omenaala ndi mba n'udi igosiputa mba ahụ Dika opuriche. Ka o di, Stryker (2017) gbakwunyere na atutu a na-akowa na echiche mmadu, ihe mmadu na-agabiga na omume mmadu na-emetukari oha. Nke a na-egosi na atutu a nwere ihe e nwere ike igbado ukwu nyocha etu emume omenaala o bula e nwere na mba nwere ike isi metuta ohanaze. Ebe oru a na-eleru anya n'omenaala mba, o putara na atutu a nwere ihe e nwere ike igbado ukwu nyochaa ya bu omenaala. Ozo, ebe oru a bukwa n'uche inyocha mmetuta nwere ike isi n'emume omenaala mba puta, atutu a nwekwara ihe e nwere ike igbado ukwu nyochaa mmetuta ahụ.

### **Nchọcha e merela n'isi okwu**

Nwokoḥa (2022) mere nchọcha n'isi okwu o kporo n'olu Bekee 'Socio-religious and economic implications of traditional funeral rites in Ezza land, Nigeria', nke ntughari ya bu 'Mmetuta akwamozu odinaala nye mmekorita ohanaze, okpukpere na aku na uba n'ala Ezza nke Naijiria'. Mbunuche nchọcha ahụ bu imata udi mmetuta nke akwamozu odinaala nwe nye obibi ndu na mba ahụ. Nchoputa si na nchọcha ahụ gosiri na akwamozu nwere ezi mmetuta na ajo mmetuka nye ndu. Nchọcha ahụ na nke a yitere. Oiyi putara ihe n'etiti ha bu na ha ncha na-eleba anya na mmetuta akwamozu nke otu mba. Mana ebe nke ahụ leruru anya na mmetuta n'izugbe ya, nke a bu n'uche imata ihe banyere naani otu udi ajo mmetuta.

N'aka nke ya, Ofọ (2022) mere nchọcha n'isi okwu a kporo n'olu Bekee 'Burial in Igbo land: its psychological perspectives and financial burden', nke ntughari ya bu 'Akwamozu n'ala Igbo: onodu ya nye uche na mmefu aku'. O nweghi atutu a gbasoro mee nchọcha ahụ. Nchoputa sitere na nchọcha ahụ di n'udi abuo. Nke mbu metutara ihe na-ebute oke mmefu aku n'akwamozu, ebe nke abuo metutara mmetuta nke oke mmefu aku nye obibi ndu. Nchọcha ahụ na nke a abughi otu ihe. Ka o di, e sitere na nchọcha ahụ huta mkpa ime nke a di.

Adeforiti (2023) mere nchọcha n'isi okwu a kporo n'olu Bekee 'Public health implications of government negligence in human corpse management in South-West of Nigeria', nke ntughari ya bu 'Mmetuta nlefero anya goomenti na-elefero emume ozu nye ahuike ohanaze n'odida anyanwu ala Naijiria'. Mbunuche nchọcha ahụ bu imata etu e si eme emume ozu n'akuku ahụ nakwa mmetuta ya nye ahuike ndi mmadu. O nweghi atutu a gbasoro mee nchọcha ahụ. Ka o di, nchoputa si na nchọcha ahụ gosiri na o nweghi iwu goomenti metuta emume ozu n'akuku mba ahụ niile. Ozo, a choputakwara na etu e si eme ozu na mba ahụ na-emebi mmiri ndi mmadu, na-

emetokwa ebe obibi ma na-ebonyekwa ndi mmadu nje orja di iche iche nke otu n'ime ha bu nje 'Covid-19'. Nchocha ahụ na nke a yiri. Mana ebe e mere nke ahụ n'odida anyanwụ Najjiria, a na-eme nke a n'akuku oṅwụwa anyanwụ Najjiria a kporo Igbo Ezaa.

### **Atutu nchocha a gbasoro**

Atutu a gbasoro mee nchocha a bu atutu mmetuta odimara. Atutu a bu atutu na-eleru anya n'emume omenaala Dika ngosi njirimara mba nakwa etu o si emetuta ndi mmadu. Atutu a dabara n'oru a maka na o nwere uzọ ihe abuo metutara oru a. Uzọ ihe abuo ndi ahụ bu emume omenaala na mmetuta ya nye obibi ndu. Site n'atutu a, e gosiputara mmetuta nke emume omenaala Dika o na-aputa ihe n'otu mba a ma ama n'ala Igbo. O bukwa nke a bu mbunuche atutu a ma burukwa mbunche nke oru a.

### **Nchikota ntuleghari agumagu**

Site na ntuleghari e mere, a choputara na akwamozu bu emume a ghaghị imere onye nwuru anwu. A choputakwa na o na-enwe otutu emume n'ime ya. Nke o bu la n'emume ndi ahụ nwere ike imetuta ndu n'uzo oma ma o bu n'uzo ojoo. Ka o di, ntuleghari ahụ gosiri na o nwebeghi ezi nchocha doro anya a hurula n'etu akwamozu si emetuta ahuike ohanaze n'Igbo Ezaa. Nke a kwadoro mkpa nchocha a di. E sikwa na ntuleghari a mata na igbado ukwu n'atutu mmetuta odimara bu ezi atutu putakarisi ihe Dika nke e nwere ike igbado ukwu nyochaa mmetuta nke emume omenaala mba o bu la. O bu nke a mere e ji horo ya bu atutu maka oru nchocha a.

### **Ngosiputa na ntucha njatule**

## **Etu emume akwamozu ọdịnaala si emetuta ahụike ndi mmadu n'Igbo Ezaa**

### **Itufu ozu**

Nke a bu ụzọ ọjọọ e si eme ozu n'Igbo Ezaa. Ezaaka n'okwu ọny ya (2025) kwuru na ụdị ozu a na-atufu bu ozu onye nwuru ajoye ọnwụ. O gara n'ihu gosiputa ajoye ọnwụ di ka: ida n'uzo nwuo, ida n'elu nwuo, iwepu ndu onwe onye, inwu n'amughị nwa, mmiri iri mmadu na ibu aru nwuo. Dika o kwuru, a naghị egwu ili miri emi lie ozu onye nwuru ụdị ọnwụ ahụ kama a na-ahapu ozu ya n'elu ala ebe o na-anọ rekaa n'achoghi ima mmetuta nke isi ya na akuku ahụ ya nye ndu ndi mmadu na ahụike ha.

### **'Inu nri onyi ovu' Inye nri ngafe**

Nke a bu inye onye no n'onu ọnwụ nri o ga-eri laa mmuo. Inyi ovu bu igafe n'ogige jikoro uwa mmadu na uwa mmuo. Mbunuche emume a bu ka ozu nwee ike o ga-eji na-ala mmuo. Onye a na-emere ya bu onye mutara nwa luru la di. Ozugbo a huru na onye ahụ choro ikubi ume ikpezu, ada ya nwaanyi ga-esi ụdị nri na-amasikari onye ahụ bia jiri aka ya nye onye ahụ nri ahụ. Uhwo (2025) mere ka a mata na onye ahụ na-akpu nri ahụ n'onu nwuo mgbe ufodu. Dika o kwuru, o bu nke ahụ na-abu uto nke ya bu emume. Mana Odoodu (2025) n'aka nke ya kwuru na emume ahụ otutu mgbe na-eme ka onye ahụ nyere nri ahụ daa n'oria. Dika o kwadoro, o buru na onye ahụ nwuru anwu bu oria na-eke eke, inye ya nri ahụ na-abu ohere ibonye onye o bu la nyere ya ya bu nri ya bu oria ma o bu nje oria ahụ. Nwaigwe (2025) gbakwunyekwara na o bughị so onye nyere ya nri nwere ike ibute oria kama onye ma o bu ndi o bu la mechara rie nri onye ahụ rifofo. Dika o kwuru, ndi mmadu na-emecha rie nri ahụ e nyeforo onye ahụ no n'oria. O kwakwara ariri na emume ahụ echeela otutu ndi mmadu n'oke ita ahuhu Dika ha na-eku onye oria na-ekuru isi ya mgbe ufodu tinyere ajoye mmiri ma o bu osiso nwere ike isi n'ahụ onye oria ahụ na-agbaputa.

### **‘Ifuchi ẹka l’ọnu’ Ikpuchi aka n’ọnu**

Nke a bụ emume e ji eme ka onye nọ n’ọnu ọnwụ jiri ọnu laa ala mmụọ. O bụ emume e ji enye onye ahụ anụ ikpeazụ o ga-eji na-ala mmụọ. Nwankwọ (2025) gbara ama na a na-ewere anụ etinye onye a hụrụ na o na-anwụ anwụ n’ọnu ka o kpurụ n’ọnu nwụọ. Dịka o kwuru, o na-abụ onye ahụ nwụọ, onye ma o bụ ndị nọ ya nso ewepụta anụ ahụ n’ọnu ya taa. Dịka o kwukwara, nke ahụ bụ iji gosi onye ahụ na a naghị asọ ya nsọ. Ezaka (2025) kwara arịrị na nke ahụ n’oge ahụ na-eme ka ndị mmadụ na-eri mmiri ozu. N’ezie, o bụ ajọ emume na-etinye ndị mmadụ n’ikere oke n’ọrịa gburu mmadụ. Nke a bụ maka na ndị ma o bụ onye riri ihe si n’ọnu ozu aṅụọla mmiri ozu. Onye nṅurụ mmiri ozu, ebuteela ọrịa na nje ọrịa o bula dị ozu ahụ n’ahụ, tinyere nke gburu ozu ahụ.

### **Ịnyaghari ozu**

Nke a bụ ịgbatị na ịdọghari ozu ka a ghara inwe nji ya o bula gasugọ asugọ. Mbunuche nke a bụ n’ihi nkwenye na o buru na e meghi ya, onye ahụ ga-enwe nkwaru n’ụwa ọzọ o ga-alọ. A na-eme ya ozugbo onye ahụ nwurụ n’ihi na e kwenyere na o juo oyi, a gaghi enwe ike ịdọghari ma o bụ nyagharia ya. Ozum (2025) kwuputara na umu nwoke na-eme nke a n’oge ahụ a naghị akwọ aka nke ha ji asa ahụ ma ha mechaa. Dịka o kwuru, ozugbo ha mechara, a na-enye ha ihe oriri nke ha na-ebido riwe ozugbo na-achoghi ima ihe si n’ahụ ozu ahụ metuta ha. Usulo (2025) kwuru na nkwenye ha bụ na ha anaghị asọ ozu ahụ nsọ. N’uche ha, ikwọ aka ma o bụ saa ahụ tupu ha eriwe ihe bụ akara iso ozu ahụ nsọ. O kwesighi ekwesi n’echiche nke ha. Mana ha anaghị ama na nke ahụ aburula ụzọ isi bute ọrịa o bula onye ahụ bu nwụọ. O bughị sọ ya, o bukwa ụzọ isi bute nje nwere ike ikpali otu ọrịa ma o bụ ọzọ n’ime ha.

### **Ihu ozu epuke**

Epuke bụ ntụ ngwakọ uhie, edo na mkpokoro ite e gwere egwe, nke e ji mmiri gwọọ n’udị di potọ potọ. A na-ete ya ozu onye nwurụ anwụ

n'ahụ iji mee ka akpukpọ ahụ ya kwọọ mụrurū. Ọ bụ ndị nne nwaanyi na-ete ya ozu. Nke a na-emetuta ahụike n'ihì na ndị ahụ na-ete ya anaghị enwe ụzọ ha si ekpuchi onwe ha ka ha ghara inwe mmetuta nke ozu ma ọ bụ ihe si ozu ahụ n'ahụ. Ọzọ, ha na-etecha riwa ihe n'achoghị ima ụdị ihe ha butere site na mmetuta nke ozu ahụ. E wezuga na nke ahụ bụ iyo, emume ahụ na-eche umu nwaanyi ahụ n'uzọ ajoya na nje oria di iche iche.

### **Iwebe ozu akwa na okpu**

Dika nchoputa gosiri, a na-ewebe ozu akwa n'ulo ma kpube ya okpu ozugbo e techara ya epuke. Otu nchoputa ahụ gosiri na ọ bụ ndi okenye umu nna na-eme nke a. Omaa n'okwu onu ya (2025), siri agugo na ndi na-ewebe ozu akwa anaghị enwe ụzọ ha si ekpuchi onwe ha ka ha ghara inwe mmetuta nke ihe sitere n'ahụ ozu ahụ. Nke ahụ ezuola ime ka ndi ahụ bute oria site n'ozu ahụ.

### **Idowa ozu n'ime ulo ka ndi o metutara zuchaa ma kpebie usoro olili na okwukwa ya**

Ogbuewu n'okwu onu ya (2025) kwuru na nke a na-abu nhuju anya n'ebe e mere ya. Dika o kwuputara, ozu ahụ nwere ike ino ubochi ole na ole n'ime ulo, ebe a na-eche ndi nwe ya ka ha zukochaa hu ya. Dika o ruru n'uka, nke a mgbe ufodu na-eme ka ozu ahụ ree, siwa isi n'ime ulo ahụ, ebe ndi mmadu ka bikwa n'ime ya bu ulo. Ikpọ ozu ihu na ikuru isi ozu ezuola ibonye ndi mmadu oria.

### **Onodu mkpe nke nwaanyi ajadu**

A choputara na nwaanyi di ya nwuru anaghị akpu isi rue oge a na-akwa di ya. Dika Onele n'okwu onu ya (2025) kwuru, o burugodu na o nwere ka ntutu isi nwaanyi ahụ si dapu, o ga-atuturu ya kpuchie n'oba, chekwaa ya rue n'oge okwukwa di ya. Nwaeke n'okwu onu ya (2025) gbakwunyere na a kwawa di nwaanyi ahụ, nwaanyi ajadu anaghị asa ahụ n'ime ubochi anọ. O mere ka a mata na ọ bụ ubochi anọ ahụ gachaa ka a ga-akpu ya isi ma sazie ya ahụ. Nwaanyi noro

ụbọchị anọ na-asaghị ahụ ga-ariariri orịa, ọ bughị koro koro, ọ buru ụdị orịa ozo na-eite n'iru inyi.

### **Ime ekwa/iye oku**

Nke a bu emume e ji enye ozu ihe oge e lichara ya. Ya bu emume na-ewe ụbọchị ise. A choputara na a naghị aza ngwuru ebe a na-eme ekwa n'ime ụbọchị ndi a na-abughị n'ụbọchị nke ise bu ụbọchị mmechi nke ya bu emume. N'agbanyeghi ka ebe ahụ nwere ike irudebe inyi, a ga-anọ n'ime na n'elu atutu na ureghure eme emume niile a ga-eme n'ime oge ahụ niile. Dika Ogbanja n'okwu onu ya (2025) kwuru, a na-anọ n'elu atutu niile di na ngwuru ahụ na-esi, n-eri ma na-anukwa. A na-etiwacha ma na-ata aki akwu na-akaghị aka a na-akpo akorocha n'olu Ezaa. Udi onodu ahụ ezuola ime ka ndi mmadu rite oria site n'isonye n'iri ihe oriri o bua batara n'ebe ahụ.

### **Etu a ga-esi gbochie nkwatu akwamozu odinaala na-akwatu ahuike n'Igbo Ezaa**

#### **Inye ohere ogwugwo n'efu**

Nke a ga-eme ka onye oria o bua nwee ike iga ulo ogwu. Odogu n'okwu onu ya (2025) ruru uka na nke a mee, o ga-ara ahụ onye oria inwu n'ulo. Dika o kwuru, o buru na mmadu nwuo n'ulo ogwu, a gaghizi enwe ohere ime emume inu nri onyi oву, ifuchi eka l'onu, inyaghari ozu na ihu epuke. O mere ka a mata na o buzi ndi ulo ogwu ka o diri idozi ozu onye o bua nwuru anwu karja ndi nkiti.

### **Inwe ndi oru ahuike ga na-ahu maka emume ozu**

Emume ozu n'ebe a bu emume e ji akwado ozu maka olili. Dika Onele n'okwu onu ya (2025) kwuru, a na-asa ozu ahụ, gbatja ya etu o ga-adi e tinye ya n'ala, yinye ya akwa, buru ya tinye n'akpati ma mechie. O gara n'ihu mee ka a mata na o buru na e nwee ndi oru ahuike na-ahu maka udi ihe ndi a, ndi ahụ ga na-akwado onwe ha n'uzo puru iche, nke ga na-ewezuga ha n'ibute oria ma o bu nje oria site na nkwado ha kwadoro ozu ahụ. Nke ahụ ga-emezi ka ndi mmadu

nkịtị ghara inwe ike ikwado ozu n'agaghị ọzuzu metuta usoro nkwado ozu.

### **Ndi goomenti iwegha oru nchekwa na nkwado ozu**

Nke a putara na o buru na mmadu nwuo, a ga-akpoturu ndi goomenti na-ahu maka ikwado na ichekwa ozu ka ha bia ruo oru ahụ. O buru ozu a na-eli ozugbo ahụ, ha ga-eji aka ha kwado ya maka olili, ka mmadu nkịtị ghara imetu ya aka. O burukwanu ozu a gaghị eli ozugbo ahụ, ha eburu ya gaa n'oba nchekwa ozu goomenti, ebe ha ga-echekwa ya rue oge goomenti nwere ike inyedebe maka ili ozu gara oba nchekwa ozu. Nke ahụ ga-emekwa ka ndi ozu nwulahuru zeere ihe o bu la ga-eme ka ha nwee mmetuta nke ihe sitere n'ozu ahụ. Usulo n'okwu onu ya (2025) kwuru na nke ahụ mee, a ga-agbanahu oria ma o bu nje o bu la nwere ike isi n'ozu ahụ fere ndi mmadu.

### **Inye ohere nchekwa ozu n'efu**

O bu ihe doro anya na dika omenaala si di, o siri ike ili ozu ozugbo o nwuru n'abughi ma ndi nwe ya bu ozu ha huru ya anya. N'ihia ya, goomenti ga-ewegha oru ihu maka nchekwa ozu o bu la na-anaghi ndi nwe ya bu ozu ego. O bughi so ya. Nwaoke n'okwu ya (2025) gbakwunyere na goomenti ahụ ga-etikwa iwu n'oge a turu anya na ozu o bu la agaghị anofe n'oba nchekwa ozu. O buru na oge ahụ gafee, goomenti ewere ozu ahụ Dika atiti na ureghure.

### **Goomenti iweputa oge maka emume akwamozu**

Nchoputa egosila na enweghi iwu na-achikwa emume akwamozu so n'ihe kpatara ndi o bu la ji eme ihe masiri ha n'akwamozu. Nwaite n'okwu onu ya (2025) kwara ariri etu e si ahapu ozu n'ulo mgbe ufodu isi ya achuo ndi agbataobi tupu e kwuwe maka olili ya bu ozu. O bughi so nke ahụ, o gbakwara ama na ihe nhuji anya nke umu nwaanyi di ha nwuru anwu na-agabige mgbe ufodu n'aha okwukwa na-eduba ha n'oria mgbe ufodu. Dika o kwuru, goomenti nwere ike ibata n'udi iwegha emume ufodu, iti iwu megide emume ufodu

nakwa inwe ndi ọrụ ahụike anya ha ga-adị n'emume akwamozu ọ bụla ihu na o nweghi ka e si si na ya megide ahụike ndi mmadu.

### **Goṣmenti iweputa oke ala a ga na-eli ndi nwuru anwu.**

Nwanja n'okwu ọnu ya (2025) mara amuma na nke a nwere ike ghara ibu maka ozu ọ bula nwuru anwu. Dika o kwuru, ọ ga-abu maka ozu a maghi ezinaulo o si ma ọ bu nke ezinaulo ya gbaghapuru. Nke a ga-eme ka a ghara inwe ozu a tufuru atufu ma ọ bu ozu a gbaghapuru ka isi ya na-emekpa ndi mmadu ahụ.

### **Nchikota**

Nchoputa si na nchocha a gosiri na e nwere otutu emereme akwamozu odinaala na-eche ndi mmadu n'oria na nje oria di iche iche n'Igbo Ezaa. Nchoputa ahụ gosikwara na emereme ndi ahụ ka dikwa ire rue taa. A choputakwara na e nwere uzọ e nwere ike isi gbochie emereme ndi ahụ mana o nwebeghi ihe e mere. Dika a choputara, imirikiti n'uzo ndi ahụ bu goṣmenti ka ha kuru isi n'aka. Nke a putara na ọ buru na goṣmenti tinye ọnu na aka n'emume akwamozu, a ga-enwe ike iwezuga emereme akwamozu ndi na-emegide ahụike ndi mmadu, ọ bughị so n'Igbo Ezaa kama n'Igbo dum na mpuga ya.

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## **FEDERALISM AND STATE CREATION IN NIGERIA: ISSUES AND PROSPECTS**

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### ***Abstract***

*The conundrum on Nigeria issue of state creation has continued to be a source of worry to many Nigerians despite the fact that Federalism as a prescriptive ideology has an ancient pedigree. This paper took an important view of state creation and Nigeria's Federalism with a view to proffering solution to Nigeria's National unity. Secondary data were employed in this study as data were collected from available literature. While adopting review and trends analytical approach, the paper revealed that state creation though brings even development, it has also been responsible for the major political delimitation in Nigeria such as ethnic crisis, inter and intra party crisis, religious bigotry, Boko Haram and attempted secession, etc. It therefore recommends among other things that the challenges of geo-political balancing can only be resolved by enthroning inclusive democratic governance. The implication of this is that there is no stability unless credible leadership is witnessed in the polity of Nigeria state.*

**Keywords:** *Federalism, State Creation, Geo-political balancing, Ethnic crisis.*

## **Introduction**

Nigeria gained political independence from British Colonialists on October 1, 1960 and opted for Federal system of government and the multi-system. Importantly, it should be noted that the factors that gave rise to a federal system of government in Nigeria were, among other things, the desire for political independence with the belief that it can only be gained through unity, the hope for economic advantage, the desire for administrative efficiency, the need to accommodate diverse groups, the share historical experiences coupled with similarities and differences in colonial and indigenous political and social institutions, and the influence of the British government in constitution making in the ex-colonies which was aimed at closer association between colonies and British policies (Awolowo 1947). The above factors played a very significant role in the establishment of a federal system of government in Nigeria in 1954 which was eventually ratified by the 1960 independence constitution. Essentially, the post-independence politics that triggered off could not sustain democracy sequel to political malnutrition, competition, struggle for power, inter and intraparty crisis and the electoral malpractices which eventually led to the termination of the shaky democratic governance under the weight of the military on January 15, 1966, barely five years after independence (Nkwede, 2010).

The military presence in the governance of the country was observed for thirteen years between 1966-1979 during which it plunged Nigerians into years civil war (Akaakuma, 2005). The military terminated its first outing in governance of the country and handed over power to a seemingly democratic set of civilian rulers

on October 1, 1979 but again collapsed after four years under another military *coup d'etat* on December 31, 1983. The military junta despite their failed promises to hand over power to democratically elected civilians ruled the country for another sixteen years (1983-1999) before returning power to civilian regime.

Empirically, the political competition arising from the experiment of governance so far eloquently indicated that the issue of state creation generally is not actually free from centrifugal and perifugal pulls. The persistent demands for state creation among other things have become one of the most intractable problems bedeviling Nigeria's federalism. It has thus been characterized by intense conflicting struggles for socio-economic and political development of all sections of Nigeria political system.

Successive regimes and leaders have attempted to implement programmes and strategies geared towards instituting and stabilizing democracy in the quest and pursuit of national integration in Nigeria but these efforts have not been able to enthrone sustainable national unity in the country. It is against this backdrop that the cardinal purpose of this article therefore, is to essentially understand and analyze federalism and state creation in Nigeria; and its implication on Nigeria's unity and national development. However, the specific objectives are;

- To ascertain whether state creation triggered off the problem of National disunity in Nigeria.
- To investigate whether state creation has implication on Nigeria's federalism.
- To proffer solution to Nigeria's national integration.

## **State Creation and the Changing Patterns of Nigeria**

The amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 was the major road map for Nigeria's federalism, even though the process was designed and tailored to aid the consolidation of the British colonial rule of the hitherto two Nigeria, because the amalgamation was designed to bring Nigerians under one administrative rule, it unwittingly caused some serious dislocation and contradiction in the structure of the traditional Nigerian society (Chukwu, 2002). As a corollary of this, then, came the brewing of nationalism spirit in a people that now saw themselves more as Nigerians with different cultures, religions and level of development were forced into a socio-political tango without consultation or preparation by the British and with little or no fallback options for the people involved.

In order to resolve the problems that inevitably reared their heads, the British colonialists, who were mostly astute in political treachery and subterfuge divided the country into three regions following Arthur Richard's Constitution of 1946. The rationale for the adoption of regionalism was not to rectify the consequences of their odious machinations but rather to pacify the natives to enable them continue to enjoy the latitude to continue the exploitation of the abundant resources (Ezechukwu, 2013).

The fact that fusing such entities with equally proud and self-accounting cultures, and administrative ideologies was disaster waiting to happen, did not bother the British overlord. In point of fact, the amalgamation and subsequent subdivision of the country into regions became an extension of what had happened at the Berlin

Conference of 1885 where and when European powers merely carved out and shared Africa on a map among themselves.

At independence in 1960, power over the regions was given to Nigerian-born citizens, and that sparked-off agitations of more political accommodation. Agitations to address the imbalance in the polity led to the creation of Mid-Western region from the already existing Western Region in 1962 making Nigeria a federation of four regions in accordance with the 1954 Lyttelton Constitution.

It was not long before the cracks became yawning canyons and the pretentious efforts of the post-independence leaders who had mounted slogans of “Unity” caved in under the impact of differences that were becoming impossible to manage. The political turmoil, imbroglio and tatty that surrounded the first republic (1960-1966) gave the military the impetus to intervene in the governance of the country on January 1, 1966. After the first coup and under the short-lived military government of Aguiyi Ironsi, the country was reorganized under a unitary or central system of government.

- Following the counter-coup of 29<sup>th</sup> July 1966, which resulted in Aguiyi Ironsi’s deposition and assassination, Nigeria was reorganized as a federal country, with the federating regions being divided into newer entities and all first-level subdivisions being renamed as state by General Gowon in 1967.

The subdivision of the four regions into 12 states in 1967 by General Gowon is hereunder recapitulated.

**1967:**

- Eastern Region was divided into East-Central (Enugu), Rivers (Port Harcourt) and South-Eastern (Calabar) States;
- Northern Region was divided into Benue-Plateau (Jos,) Kano (Kano), Kwara (Ilorin), North-Central (Kaduna), North-Eastern (Maiduguri), and North-Western (Sokoto) States;
- Western Region was divided into Lagos (Lagos) and western (Ibadan) States; Mid western region Bendel (Benin).

The subdivision of the four regions into 12 states in 1967 did not go down well with some regions and this culminated in the Mid-western and the State of former Eastern Region to call for secession from Nigeria as the states of Biafra and Republic of Benin, resulting in the Nigeria Civil War which lasted for 30 months and ended in 1970.

### **1976:**

In 1976, six years after the end of the 30 months Nigeria Civil War, the states, state/boundaries and names were further reorganized thus:

- Benue-Plateau state into Benue (Makurdi) and Plateau (Jos) states;
- East-Central State divided into Anambra (Enugu) and Imo (Owerri) states;
- Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) formed from parts of Niger and Plateau States;
- North-Eastern state divided into Bauchi (Bauchi), Borno (Maiduguri) and Gongola (Yola) states;
- Westen state divided into Ogun (Abeokuta), Ondo (Akure) and Oyo (Ibadan) states.

### **1987:**

- Akwaibom state was carried out from Cross-River,
- Katsina state was carried out from Kaduna

**1999:**

- Abia state was carried out from Imo;
- Bendel state was divided into Delta and Edo;
- Enugu state was carried out from Anambra;
- Gongola state was divided into Adamawa and Taraba;
- Jigawa state was carried out from Kano;
- Kebbi state was carried out from Sokoto;
- Kogi state formed from parts of Benue and Kwara;
- Osun state was carried out from Oyo;
- Yobe state was carried out from Borno;

**1996:**

- Bayelsa state was carried out from Rivers;
- Ebonyi state was formed from parts of Abia and Enugu;
- Ekiti state was carried out from Ondo;
- Gombe state was carried out from Bauchi;
- Nasarawa state was carried out from Plateau;
- Zanzfara state was carried out from Sokoto.

Consequently, the 1996 state creation exercise brought the total number of Local Government within the federation to 774 and Nigeria became a federation of 36 states including Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Abuja. Despite the creation of Nigeria into 36 states, Nigerians have been cacophonously demanding for the creation of more states. Similarly, irrespective of the 774 existing Local

Governments in the country, the demand for more local governments creation has been on the increase. However, since the 1996 state creation, no new states and local governments have been created. Though, the 1999 constitution part II section 8 (1) made provision for state creation subject to an act of the National Assembly approved by simple majority of all the states of the federation supported by a simple majority of members of the House of Assembly approved by a resolution passed by two third ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority of members of each House of the National Assembly.

### **Arguments for State Creation in Nigeria**

Several reasons have been adduced for the agitations of more states. One of the building blocks which has sustained the quest for state creation is the belief that development will obviously accompany state creation. The extent to which this logic is evidently amenable is a matter of checklist of artifacts since the meaning of development has not been comprehensively understood by many, hence the common man has been brainwashed and convinced to believe that economic dimension alone constitutes development. It has been argued that the creation of states focuses on the distribution process to the neglect of the production aspects thereby militating against the mobilization of the creative energies of the population toward growth through the transformation of the productive forces of the society (Orji, 1995).

Another argument advanced for the creation of states is that political stability cannot be achieved without it. But a veritable question that comes to mind is, has political stability been guaranteed in spite of the increase from twelve to 36 states? Obviously, political

stability of any nation is strongly championed by the unity of the groups of people in such a country. unity of purpose addresses the issues of stability but when the people are not united, probably because of tribalism, statism, ethic chauvinism and religious bigotry, and craze for power, political stability is wished away in such a country.

Similarly, the minority problem and political domination have been split out as one of the factors for demand for more states. Evidently, federalism advocates for the right of minorities to be identified as corporate units of the body politics of the nation. Unfortunately, the creation of states based on minority problems has led to the unlimited request for state creation as more minorities have continued to emerge. This was basically observed in Nigeria situation when 12 states were created in 1967, and by 1975 more minorities have emerged and were clamouring for states of their own. Awolowo (1975) disturbed by the minority problems and coupled with the 1952 Census-Report identified fifty one (51) minorities based on linguistic groupings. Implicitly, if states were to be created on the basis of minority problems, by 1975 we would have had fifty one (1) states, but only 19 were created based on the submission of Awolowo thus:

*It is clear, therefore, that under the linguistic principle, the number of states in the country cannot in the long run exceed 51. However regard to the size and wealth of the country, this should not by any manner or means be a worrying prospect. In the mean time, however, I have advocated eighteen states, simply because, from my knowledge of the minorities, I have thought that most of them would not be viable. And viability, in my considered view, is a matter of administrative relativity. Consequently, I have grouped together*

*minorities which are geographically contiguous, and which, I believed being together, would be administratively viable, and free from the fear of majority ethnic domination (Awolowo 175:167).*

From this stand point, therefore, minority areas which fear domination by others opine that the more the number of states into which an ethnic group is split, the better for that group taken as a whole since revenue is allocated to the states on the basis of equality and population. However, the baseline is that all will be well if ethnic groups are divided. Advocates of the dichotomy are basically the elites who cannot accomplish their political ambition in their present state of residence and hence the division of the state would be a viable option for carving out political empires for them.

Furthermore, state creation has also been connected to the impact on the equitable distribution of resources. But has been dismissed as untrue on the basis that the concentration of the country's banking system has been in the urban centers except pockets of banks located in the rural areas. Ake (1979), rightly observed that the creation of states in 1976 led to new growth points in the already relatively overdeveloped states.

Another argument penciled down is that in order to bring the government nearer to the people, there is need for creation of more states. Supporters to this reason believe that the distribution of important amenities obviously bring those areas closer to the seat of government. This argument is far from the truth because, in spite of the creation of 36 structure from 2 regions, the country has continued to witness an unprecedented period of crisis of development, irresponsible and inefficient representation, particularly at state and

local government levels. More so, the government white paper on Irikefe panel of 1976 pointed out that agitation for states led to bad governments and the second republic of 1979 is a living fact in Nigeria. Unarguably, the endless demands for more states should not be the only instrument of democratic government process in a federal system; rather an efficient and strict adherence to the democratic tenets and governance system that has the interest of the people in mind will be a better instrument for achieving this purpose.

It is therefore, reasonable to maintain that most of the arguments advocated for the creation of states are not quite convincing and leaves many questions unaddressed and as such may not be taken for granted. This is essentially so because these reasons are mere masquerading of the class interest in order to partake in the sharing of the national Cake and the booty of power. For Nnoli (1978), they are mere rationalizations of the interest of certain segments of the population which cannot be openly and publicly advocated.

### **Justification for State Creation in Nigeria**

Historically, the North and South divide is the major reason for state creation in Nigeria. This is so because prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960, the North and South conflict led to the creation of regions in 1946. The post independent crisis between the North and South again led to the creation of 12 states in 1967 which had a strategic significance. Ayida (1987) observed that:

*The most sensitive political threat to the stability of Nigeria's federalism was North/South confrontation and it was of strategic significance that the number of Northern states should be seen to be*

*equal to the number of southern states. This was the important consideration which could not be made explicit in the days of “gathering storm” in early 1967.*

The above statement provokes a lot of criticism which retaining its substance of truth as the issue was laid bare during the second republic when the Southern states agitators reacted vehemently against the imbalance posed by the 19 states structures.

Paradoxically, the essence of federalism is equality of states. Moreover, the historical frictions and constant/conflicts with high level of suspicious and fear of domination that characterized the relationships between and among component units of Nigeria’s federation in the past certainly make the provisions of section 126 (2-4) of the 1979 Nigerian Constitution and section 8(1) of 1999 Nigerian Constitution *functus officio* that a presidential candidate is elected only if he satisfies a minimum number of votes cast in  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the states. Implicitly, the number of states in each of the geo-political area acquires political relevance. For this reason, those agitating for more creation of states should tread with caution with a view to ensuring that the North and South have equal number of states.

Another justification for state creation is the economic significance of the role of states in a federal system. Experience has shown that if a particular state is split into two, more resources would be allocated to the area. The federal allocation or resources are evenly distributed to states on the basis of 50% federal equality and 50% on population. Economically, the state that is split into two would be entitled to these resources at the peril of the other state that is left behind.

Importantly, additional states would offer opportunities for political participation through representation or through appointments. Politically, this stems from the fact that a state like Ebonyi if divided into two states would get more representatives in the National Assembly since each state has equal representation in the National Assembly. Again, the creation of new states would mean accelerated promotion of the civil servants and bureaucrats of the newly Created states and massive contract awards, and eventually led to proliferation of elite formation (Oji, 1995, Ogunlola, 2013).

Furthermore, additional states as noted by scholars would lessen the resource base of states and make them financially nonviable and solvent. This has been noticed in the past state creation. For instance, Eastern Region accounted for 65.4% of the output of oil by 1967 and the Mid-west 34.6%. The bifurcation of the former Eastern region in 1976 into 3 states, drastically reduced the output of the oil producing areas thus; Rivers 57%, Bendel 34.6%, East central state 2.8% (Oji. 1995). With the new arrangement, East Central state had its resources base adversely eroded, while the new Rivers state acquired more resources and its eldorado.

### **Arguments Against State Creation in Nigeria**

Creation of states in Nigeria was a common feature of military governments which ruled Nigeria at different periods. Now the matter of state creation has come up again, with members of the National Assembly debating the bill for the creation of some proposed states. But at this critical political juncture in Nigeria, and given the happenings in our polity, do we need more states in Nigeria? The indisputable fact is that most of Nigeria's 36 states are

economically unviable and unsafe. For example, while people are starving in some states, insurgents, bandits, and terrorists are abducting people for ransom in other states of the country.

Before the creation of states started in Nigeria in the late 1960s, we had four regions: Northern, Eastern, Western, and the Mid-Western. Regionalism, which was practised in Nigeria then, was a component of our parliamentary system of government that lasted between 1960 and 1966. At that time, all the regions in the country strove to outpace one another in diverse areas of national development.

So while the Northern Region was known for groundnut pyramid, the Western Region excelled in cocoa production. And the Eastern Region excelled in palm oil produce.

More so, then, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of the Western Region, who tended towards the left, espoused the principle of democratic welfarism, and implemented free education policy in the Western Region. In the east, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was instrumental to the establishment of University of Nigeria Nsukka. He also played a significant role in the establishment of the financial institution, African Continental Bank (ACB).

But it is incredulous that those notable politicians who inhabited our political space in the First Republic couldn't solve our country's ethnic and religious problems. As a result, we had the bloody coup of January 1966 and the counter-coup of July 1966, which threw Nigeria into a cauldron of violence. That political violence snowballed into the Nigeria civil war, which lasted for three years.

In order to stop the secessionist bid of the Eastern Region, General Yakubu Gowon split the country into a 12-state structure. His deft maneuvering (creation of states) could be rationalised on the grounds that it was done to prevent the disintegration of Nigeria. But successive military rulers, who ruled the country, created more states so as to ignite our country's development and ensure the inclusion of all Nigeria's tribes and ethnic groups in the governance of Nigeria.

Cultural and religious affinities, economic viability, landmass, and population were believed to be the factors which our past rulers considered when they created new states. But our scrutiny of the states has shown that our leaders created the states whimsically. Or they might have created them to achieve their own ends and please their friends.

Take for example, a town in Enugu State whose indigenes have their kith and kin in Kogi State. So it can be seen that the creation of states in Nigeria has divided a people who share the same ancestral roots instead of uniting them. And a great majority of the states in Nigeria are so financially emasculated that they depend on the centre, perpetually, for their survival and sustenance.

However, the proponents of the creation of new states have argued that creating new states in Nigeria would bring government nearer to the people and ensure that there is balance or parity as to the number of states in the geopolitical zones. And they posit that the creation of new states in Nigeria will lead to the establishment of states' civil service, which will employ new workers, thereby reducing the number of unemployed people in Nigeria.

But they had glossed over the fact that the creation of states brings about the vexed matter of boundary adjustment and the sharing of jointly-owned properties. Matters that border on demarcation of boundaries and sharing of jointly owned properties by two states are not resolved easily. Often times, the matter would degenerate into violence and shedding of blood. The breakout of violence in any part of the country can lead to the destruction of infrastructures, loss of human lives, and, possibly, the disintegration of Nigeria.

Again, state creation will, no doubt, lead to increase in the number of National Assembly members, which will jerk up the cost of governance in Nigeria. At present, Nigerian lawmakers receive humongous wages when compared to their counterparts in other countries. Reducing the cost of governance in Nigeria is the clarion call of well-meaning Nigerians. Our leaders should execute deeds that will better the lot of the hoi polloi instead of carrying out policy actions that will stall our national development.

So the stark fact is that the proponents of creation of new states in Nigeria want fiefdoms or political empires over which they will preside in order for them to have the opportunity to loot our public exchequer. State governors are being accused of seizing financial allocations meant for local governments. To continue exercising control over the local governments, many state governors are dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying regarding the conduct of local government elections. In many states of Nigeria, appointed local government chairmen are holding sway over local council areas, and not elected local government chairmen.

Yet the local government, which is the grassroots government, is pivotal to the development of rural towns in Nigeria. Starved of money, the appointed local government chairmen, who are political puppets, cannot perform their statutory functions and execute policies for the people. And they live in mortal fear of the state governors, who can relieve them of their posts.

But it is the entrenchment of true local government autonomy that will ignite the rapid development of the semi-urban areas and rural towns in Nigeria. Not many rural towns in Nigeria have customary and magistrates courts, which should handle judicial matters that border on petty crimes, marital matters, and others. And trunk roads in those towns, the maintenance of which fall under the local government areas, are neglected.

Therefore, the Federal Government should make the third tier of government in Nigeria, that is, the local government (as the supreme court ruled recently), truly autonomous rather than create new states in the country. It should also return the country to the practice of regionalism by collapsing the states into regions or geopolitical zones, each of which will have a leader. However, the Nigerian Constitution should be amended or a new one written to accommodate proposals. Making a new constitution for Nigeria has become an overriding imperative based on the fact that new political realities and conundrums have cropped up in the country.

Now, it should be obvious to all right thinking and patriotic Nigerians that the proponents of creation of new states in Nigeria are egoistical and unpatriotic politicians, who are seized with the feelings of insularity and clannishness. They want political empires over

which they will preside in order for them to have unhindered access to the public treasury.

## **State Creation, Economic Crisis and Good Governance in Nigeria**

In the colonial period towards the independence, the various nationalist bourgeois political class, as away of ensuring their political influence had canvassed for regional governments as the best means of bringing their 'people' into the limelight of civilization. But aside the fact that the regionalization of the country was not a product of democratic decisions of the oppressed people, the demand played into the manipulative hands of the colonial administrations, which was seeking exit route from the self-created contradiction of granting self governance to the colonies and sustaining control of the colonial economy in favour of imperialism and capitalism. It took very little time before the self-interest of the nationalist bourgeois politicians truncated their own regional arrangement as exemplified by a new contradiction of who to control the central government, and the internal schisms within each region. This eventually led to the military take-over in 1966 and Civil War which lasted 30 months.

The continuation of the bankrupt policy of dividing the country as a way of curtailing internal strife amongst the political class, led to the creation of 12 states in 1967. When the strife could not be curtailed by this policy, the country was further divided into 19 states by the Murtala/Obasanjo military government in 1976. The central argument was to give identity to the minorities and create a sense of nationalism as against sectional interests. But the reality is that the real reason for the balkanization is to divide the people along

artificial geographical enclaves so as to make the undemocratic rule over the people easier. Thus, between 1987 and 1996, the Babangida and Abacha's military regimes increased the number of states from 19 to 36 without taken into account the opinion of Nigerians. Ironically, none of the official reasons for more state creation has been justified by reality. On the issue of unity, the country has been divided more than ever with crises such as the Aguleri/Umuleri, Warri/Itsekiri. Ife/Modakeke etc., arising from such division of the country. We are witnesses to how indigene-ship is used by state political actors to determine distribution of scholarship, employment, appointments, etc. Despite creation of states, the country is bedeviled with serious internal strife, most of which occur within states as exemplified bythe recent Jos crisis.

Moreover, virtually all these states are dependent on petrodollar from the federal purse; thus they are unviable economically. Withholding of state allocation for just a month is enough to cause total economic standstill in many states. Meanwhile, unlike in the late 1970's and early 1980's, when as a result of the existence of welfare state and Stalinist Soviet system, states invested in the economy and industry, the current neo-liberal system with a mix of the worst neo-colonial/imperialist spices, have meant destruction of the minimally functional economy of many states no thanks to privatization of state industries, commercialization of public service and pervasive corruption of the political class, among others. Creation of more states is just another means of siphoning public resources and resolving sharing formula crisisamong the corrupt political class. Already, just 17, 474 politicians in power consume over N1.3 trillion of the nation's wealth. Therefore, creating more states, aside providing

some few jobs will only be another means of looting public resources by a new political class in these new states. This explains why politicians and big businessmen are the arrowhead of the agitation.

Also, the point that more state creation will assuage the feeling of marginalization by various ethnic groups is a ruse. The fact is that the process that leads to creation of states is usually undemocratic as no platform or forum is provided for people to decide democratically whether they want new state or not. In other words, state creation usually only reflects the self-interests of the capitalist who want their own empire. Sooner rather than later, this will give way to further quest by other political class for control. It should be stressed that the growth of ethnic feeling is a reflection of economic and political isolation of the working class, and absence of viable pan-Nigeria's working class political alternative to galvanize the anger of the working class and poor people for genuine political change. With the absence of this political platform of agitation, the masses are left with no other choice than expressing their frustration and disillusionment through sectional, ethnic, communal and religious means, which are generated by the bourgeois political class but sooner than later can consume the whole society with multiplicity of sectional crises. This is why the labour movement must lead workers, and masses generally in building a fighting bottom-to-top that will chase the current capitalist politicians and enthrone a working government committed to massive development of human and material capacities of the country.

## **Conclusion**

It was observed that state creation has often expressed itself in terms which are opposed to national unity and integrity, and sometimes challenging to the legitimacy of the state. It is crucial to understand that state creation greatly consolidates federalism in mature democracies of the world. More importantly, state as a political structure is more compatible with the empowerment of a multiplicity of ethnically diverse groups. It may be true to some extent that the popular clamour for state creation in Nigeria is deeply rooted in manifest diversity of languages, tribes, cultures, religions and nationalities, which are fuelled by a sense of deprivation. It must equally be noted that the brain box of state creation is strongly supported by Nigerian foremost political leaders, progressive and scholars of unquestionable patriotic integrity, because of the consensus that state is a necessity in Nigerian political engagement.

In ensuring that our tomorrow becomes better than our today and our yesterday, Nigerians and their institutions must gird their lions to believe in ourselves and stop apportioning endless blame and compunction on Lugardian contraption. The Nigerian civil war should perhaps be a wake-up call, which Nigeria needed to value the contraption and re-examine its promises. We should all rather make up our minds to make this political marriage, which like most Catholic marriages, have become almost indissoluble. We should all strive to make it a marriage that would not be that of the Jonah in the belly of the Whale but that of the marriage in Canaan. While that of Jonah brings about excrement, the other brings about offspring and progress. I subscribe to this because governance is a sine qua non in effecting the compromises that the federal process demands.

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**THE TEACHING OF PAUL ON THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT  
OF MARRIAGE AND HOME:  
THE RELEVANCE TO THE CHURCH**

BY

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**Abstract**

*Marriage, which is essential to Gods plan of happiness was instituted among our first parents Adam and eve, even before the fall. In every dispensation, prophets bearing the holy priesthood have taught Gods internal plan and have been witnesses to the central nature of marriage and the family or the home in that plan. One of those prophets was Paul. During his ministry in the meridian of times, Paul encountered a church membership that was changing with the influx of Gentile converts. These converts many of whom were Greek, had been read in a morally corrupt society and were often undisciplined and self-conceited. At times, their background created disorder within their branches and prompted numerous questions as they struggled to understand what true discipleship entailed. Questions arose regarding marriage. Paul responded with sensitivity yet directness as he clarified the relevant doctrines. It is evident from the frequency of Paul's council on marriage and family that he placed great importance on the subject of marriage and the home. Paul's teachings on marriage and home centered on mutual love, honour*

*and fidelity viewing marriage as a sacred covenant reflecting Christ and the church, he highlights marriage as honorable encouraging sexual intimacy within it to avoid temptation, while also valuing singleness for devoted service to God. The home is to be characterized by mutual submission and sacrifice. Paul exhorts the women in the Ephesians branch of the church to submit themselves to their own husbands (literarily becomes subject or obedient to), as they would to the lord, comparing the husband and the family to Christ and the church. And he also charges the husbands to love their wives (Ephesians 5; 25), as their savior loved the church, so that they might sanctify and perfect their families through love. Paraphrasing one of the great commandments, ‘so ought men to love their wives as their own body, he that loveth his wife loveth himself’ (Ephesians 5; 28). A husband is not to rule as a tyrant over his wife but is to preside in love. Methodology, primary and secondary sources are used for data collection while multidimensional approach is used for the interpretation of data. The purpose of the study is to investigate the relevance of this teaching to the society. One of the findings of the research is that marriage and the home is the bases upon which the larger society is built. It is recommended that marriages should be patterned according to Christ and the church relationship.*

**Keywords:** Paul, Teaching, Biblical, marriage, Home

## **Introduction**

Thus the need to discuss how we should make “Paul’s teaching on Marriage and Home” relevant to the church, based on our cultural setting. “If the gospel of Jesus Christ is to have a deep impact on the African people, so that ‘they have life and have it abundantly’, then we must allow the Gospel to speak in cultural situation of the Africans. Marriage is a good venture, just as undertaking a leadership role is also a good venture. Paul says in I Cor. 7:8, “To the unmarried... I say that it is well for them to remain single... but if they

cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflamed with passion.” From the above statement, it is obvious that Paul advocates a chastity and purity style of life that is not marred and stained by sexual immorality. Paul opines that the purity of the body should be maintained. He therefore “warns in I Cor. 6 against sexual looseness.” He drives home the truth that the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord (v.13). Paul thus makes a valid distinction between the need of the body for food and satisfying sexual appetite. The body cannot exist without food, but it can exist without sexual indulgence. The body, unlike food, will not be destroyed but will be transformed and glorified.

The youths who are involved in pre-marital relationships have a different concept of sex. A female girl who plays at sex for which she is not ready, what she fundamentally wants is love, and a body who plays at love, for which he is not ready, what he wants is sex. This is not the way for two people of opposite sex to satisfy their sexual urge. Not only is the body for the Lord, but the Lord is for the body. The spirit of God and sensual appetites struggle to dominate man’s desire. It is man’s responsibility to accept one or to reject the other. Christ wants to be Lord over man’s total being. Thus marriage should be done properly, and decently. Why? This is because “sexual union constitutes a permanent bond between two parties.” The act is incorporated into their lives and can never be removed. “Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For as it is written, the two shall become one flesh”.

Though marriage is a “legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife... it does not matter whether the marriage was contracted prior to or after conversion, whether it is a customary or court or church marriage”. To Paul, marriage is more than just a legal contract, it is a spiritual contract also, which is established through sexual intercourse. Therefore whether both of them are Christians or not, neither of them can renounce this union. They are

psychosomatically one. It is a mystical union that can be likened to that which takes place between a believer and Jesus Christ (v.17). A believer being the wife, and Christ the husband and metaphorically – a believer is one body with Christ.

As for the Yoruba people of West Africa, it is a taboo for a lady to be disvirgined before she is legitimately given in marriage to her husband. The tradition is that, until the night of the marriage the couple were not to have sex together. On the night of marriage a white cloth would be spread on the bed to receive the virginity blood. This blood-stained cloth would be sent to the parents of the bride with keg(s) of Palm-wine and some other gifts in appreciation of the fact that the parents took a good care of their daughter. Her parents too would bless her for not bringing shame upon the family. But if it happened otherwise, it would become a dance of shame, and the lady might be cursed. In order to check the spread of HIV/AIDS, high rate of divorce and broken homes, unwanted pregnancies and bastards, all of which the occidental civilization has brought to us, we need to return to our cultural heritage of premarital chastity.

### **The Concept of Marriage and Home**

“Paul’s teaching about marriage as presented in I Corinthians 7 is multifaceted and somehow complex. His remarks need careful examination. His ideas of marriage was a reaction to the Corinthian situation and cannot be regarded as Paul’s total view of marriage.” According to Erdman;

It seems certain that some Christians regarded marriage as an absolute duty. Others considered the marriage state as an inferior moral condition, a weak concession to the flesh. Still others held that by accepting Christ all existing social relationships, including marriage, were dissolved.

“In simple terms, Paul considered that marriage was to be maintained as inviolable.” This idea of marriage was so much a part of Paul, that almost without “thinking” he could use it as an illustration while discussing another subject altogether. He writes;

Do you not know brethren – for I am speaking to those who know the law that the law is binding on a person only during his life? Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as she lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband.

Paul reiterates this same understanding of the life-long permanence of marriage union, repeating and affirming the law of Christ (Rom. 7:1-2, cf I Cor. 7:10-11).

Paul also considering there should be order, harmony and decorum within any Christian group, small or large, and that within the marriage relationship the husband is head of his wife, did not fail to acknowledge the existing cultural norms of his day and to stress the equality that should exist between husband and wife and the mutual responsibilities of both of them.

The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule his own body, but the wife does.

### **Key Aspects of Paul’s Teachings On Marriage:**

#### **Monogamy**

Paul’s advocacy of monogamy and abstinence from fornication and adultery is very strong. Many scholars agree that polygamists should not be prevented from becoming members of the Church and should not be denied the right to sacraments. But people who are already Christians should be encouraged not to become polygamists. If not

for any strong reason, but for the now-prevalent venereal diseases and especially the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In the past polygamy was prevalent in Africa because of infantile mortality and it allowed individuals to have many children to work on the farm. However this is no longer the case today. Paul does not deny the romantic aspect of marriage neither does he regard marriage as a concession to fleshly appetite, nor as an escape mechanism for those too weak to bridle their passions.

### **Christians Are Members of the Body of Christ**

For Paul marriage is honorable (Eph. 5:25-27), and that one of the practical results of marriage is the avoidance of temptation in the area of sex. Christians are members of Christ's body and concerning this Paul says, "shall I therefore take the members of Christ (i.e. Christian bodies) and make them members of a prostitute? (I Cor. 6:15b; cf. 12:27). In this statement Paul included "an incidental prohibition of polygamy". Thus, the husband and wife should not give chance to anything that will lead either, the husband to another woman or the woman to another man, either in remarriage or for temporary enjoyment. For Paul, the prevailing circumstances as well as the inviting and enticing societal pressure should not be allowed to hold a believer captive. Therefore, a Christian couple should not engage in a prolonged abstinence from each other. To Paul, celibacy means abstention (I wish that all were as I myself am, but each has his own special gift from God, one of one kind and one of another), and marriage means no deprivation from one another. Why? Because, both celibacy and marriage are gifts (charisma – gracious gift) from God. Therefore just as abstinence, is important to celibacy so also is sexual relation important to marriage. "For Paul, the marriage bed is both a union (cf 6:16) and an affirmation that the two mutually and totally belong to one another." Sex is a way of expressing physically the inner unity of two made one flesh. It is a way of sharing oneself

with the beloved and of being fused together in union and communion.

### **Believers Not To Marry Unbelievers**

Another problem at Corinthian Church is the issue of ‘mixed marriages between believers and unbelievers. If the unbeliever refuses to remain with the believer in marriage the Christian is free from obligation to sustain the marriage, but Paul is silent on the issue of remarriage. Paul’s opinions on divorce conform with Jesus’ injunction in Mk. 10:12; Mt. 5:31; 19:9; Lk. 16:18). Here Paul gives no room for a Christian to give a letter of divorce, but to remain with each other for life and for better for worse. But initiation of divorce must come from the unbelieving partner. In that case, the Christian partner would no longer be under any obligation (I Cor. 7:15). There is no consensus about what Paul precisely meant. Paul was probably saying to the Christian husband or wife: “if you find yourself abandoned by your non-Christian spouse, you are no longer bound by the constraints of the divinely given laws that govern marriage. You are free to remarry”.

The high standard of marriage viewed by Paul is not lowered at all in Ephesians (Eph. 5:22-23). Thus, Paul uses marriage relationship between husband and wife as an analogy for the bond that has been forged between Christ and the believing community. Concerning this mystical union Paul says: “this is a profound mystery but I am talking about Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:32). Why, of all human institutions that existed at that time, did he select the institution of marriage as an illustration of the relationship between the believing community and the Lord? The answer would seem to be that Paul held marriage in high esteem as the perfect example of “oneness” forged through love between two parties.

## **Marriage of Church Leaders/Priests**

On marriage of church leaders Paul says that each of them must be above reproach, and husband of one wife. This is a notoriously difficult expression, and consequently it has resulted in various translations and interpretations:

(1) It has been understood as prohibition of second marriages (e.g. Tertulian);

(2) It is an enforcement of monogamy for Christian ministers as opposed to polygamy often practiced in the contemporary heathen world;

(3) It means simply that a bishop should show an example of strict morality (Scott). It can therefore be deduced here that Paul advocates in strong terms a return to the kind of marriage which God instituted; a marriage of one husband to one wife. Thus I advance the view that polygamy is the daughter of sin, and it can only thrive outside the will and control of God. Now that the marriage contract has been signed and agreement reached, it is required that the home be maintained and sustained. There must be harmony and peace that makes the home enjoyable and lively. (Col. 3:18-4:1)

## **Paul's teaching On the Home**

This issue of mutual submissiveness in marriage is part of the ethical teachings of Paul (Rom. 12:9-16; Phil. 2:3-4). Thus, in the sections of Ephesians 5:22-6:9 and Col. 3:18-4:1, the Christian wife is enjoined to be submissive but this is a virtue which all Christians are encouraged to show to one another. Paul says: "Be subject to one another out of reverence of Christ. Wives be subject to your husbands as to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:21-22). According to Bruce:

The household (familiar) was recognized as a stabilizing element in ancient society, and treatises on household administration were

common. The household was wider than the nuclear family of the Western world today. It included all who were under the authority of its head.

In New Testament times the head of a household might be a woman, like Lydia of Philippi (Acts 16:1), Chloe of Corinth, who may or may not have been a Christian (I Cor. 1:11), and Nymphas of the Lycums valley (Col. 4:15).

But usually the head of the household was a man, who exercised within it the authority of a husband, a father, and a master. In the literary treatment of household administration, codes of domestic behaviour were a regular feature. In these, the mutual duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves, and so forth were prescribed.

Obviously, the inclusion of such summaries of domestic responsibilities here and in (Eph. 5:22-6:9), shows a sense of values of the closest and most familiar relationships of daily living that the reality of one's Christian profession will normally manifest. This is called "house-tables" or "house-hold tables" or "family-tables". They are here divided into three correlative parts of discussions.

### **Husbands and Wives (Col. 3:18-19)**

This aspect deals with the mutual duties of wives and husbands. The family was a long-established social unit, as the church was not. The church was God's new creation, and provided a setting in which the principles of the new creation could be put into practice. "In the church, women had equal status with men and slaves with free persons, just as Gentiles had with Jews". But the structure of the family was already in existence and it was no part of the business of early Christianity to destabilize society, which would have been the effect of a radically changed family structure. The introduction of the new principle "as is fitting in the Lord" later happened to be indeed

more revolutionary in its effect than was generally foreseen in the first Christian century. “The authority of the husband, father, and master continued to be exercised, ‘as was fitting in the Lord’, and it was this principle which continued to govern the relationships between the husband, wife, children and household slaves”. Whatever method may be adopted for Paul’s view in regard to marriage and home it should be governed by “as it is fitting in the Lord”.

It is not suggested anywhere in the New Testament that the woman is naturally or spiritually inferior to man, nor the wife to the husband. The phrase “as is fitting” has a thoroughly stoic ring; but it ceases to be stoic when it is baptized into Christ by the added words, “in the Lord”. When the relationship between man and woman, husband and wife, is viewed in the context expressed by these words, the essential dignity of women in general, and of wives in particular, is placed on a firm foundation.

Paul believed that there was a hierarchical order in creations, and that in this order, the man was the ‘head’ of the woman (I Cor. 11:3). But when he speaks his own language instead of reproducing Christian household codes, he shows himself to be ahead of his time in the liberality with which he insists on equal rights between husbands and wives, (I Cor. 7:3-4).

The wife’s subordination to her husband has as its counterpart; the husband’s obligation to love his wife. This is not simply a matter of affectionate feeling or sexual attraction, “it involves his active and unceasing care for her well being”. Outside the church in Paul’s days, a husband’s legal authority over his wife was such that she had little hope of redress at law for harsh or unfeeling conduct on his part. But such should not arise in a Christian household, the forbearance and forgiveness which are enjoined in the preceding section of the letter together with compassions, kindness, humility, gentleness, and

patience, forbid a Christian man to be harsh in his treatment of anyone, especially of his own wife. In homes where there is love, good children who become good leaders in the future are produced and reared.

### **Parents and Children**

As harmony between husband and wife is established, come the duties of children and parents. Children are enjoined to render obedience to their parents, as something, which is acceptable "in the Lord". When obedience "in all things" is laid of His the Christian family that is in view. The situation is not created here in which parental orders might go contrary to the law of Christ. In such a situation the law of Christ would have to take precedence even over parental orders, but in a spirit of love, not of since the law of Christ is the law of love. In the household forever, children and parents are bound together, "in the Lord" by the ties of natural kinship.

Children are exhorted to render obedience, parents and fathers, are urged not to irritate their children by being so little in their demands so as to make the children lose heart and think that it is useless trying to please their parents. It is Africans especially the Yoruba to train their children to be kind and humble.

### **Important Notes on Marriage and Home**

**Purpose and Sanctity:** Marriage is seen as honorable and in many cases, a necessary, God given state to manage sexual desires or burn with passion.

**The 'One Flesh' Union:** Marriage creates a new unit, with spouses leaving their original families to form a new inseparable bond.

**Mutual obligation and intimacy:** Paul emphasizes that both partners have a duty to fulfill each other's sexual needs, with neither depriving the other unless by temporary mutual consent for prayer

The ‘Christ and the Church’ model: Husbands are commanded to love their wives unconditionally, sacrificially and as their own bodies, just as Christ loves the church. Wives are urged to respect or reverence their husbands.

Permanence: Marriage is intended to be for life, with divorce discouraged.

Singleness: Paul who was likely single or widowed himself, regarded singleness as a valid, sometimes preferable, gift that allows for greater devotion to the lord, though not superior to marriage.

### **Teachings on the Home and Relationships**

Household Order: in Ephesians 5 and other letters, Paul outlines a structure where wives submit to their husbands and husbands lead with love rather than tyranny.

Sanctification of the Home: Paul notes that a believer can sanctify an unbelieving spouse, encouraging believers to stay in mixed faith marriages if the partner is willing.

Fidelity: Absolute sexual faithfulness is demanded within marriage, reflecting the purity required of the church.

Paul’s writings particularly in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7, Ephesians 5, 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3, provide a comprehensive, practical and spiritual guide for Christian relationships and family lives.

### **Conclusion**

One of Paul’s most misunderstood and misquoted teachings relates to marriage. His most extensive discourse on this subject is found in the first epistle to the Corinthians, as he responded to their belief that ‘it is good for a man not to touch a woman’ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7; 1. Addressing multitude groups, Paul defended marriage as a conventional relationship.

In studying Paul's epistles, it becomes clear that Paul had a high regard for marriage. In a latter letter, Paul even described marriage as a mystery (Ephesians 5: 31-32). This word was carried over into English from the Greek word *mysterion* – was originally understood to describe the sacred rites associated with some kinds of temple worship. As such throughout all of Paul's writings marriage is to be seen as a sacred covenant connected with a temple ordinance.

To avoid misunderstanding or misconstruing Paul's counsel regarding marriage in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7, these passages must be placed in their proper context. Both missionary service and marriage were held in great esteem by Paul and were needed in their own time with nuanced recommendations given for different circumstances. Ultimately, according to Paul, 'neither is the man without the woman, neither is the woman without the man, in the lord' (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:11).

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## **RAILWAY POLITICS IN NIGERIA; ISSUES AND PROSPECTS**

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### **Abstract**

Rail transport in most developing countries like Nigeria is usually the least developed mode. In Nigeria the vibrant fortune of nut transport operations and development has been on decline since mid-1970s. The development of gap in rail transport in Nigeria is responsible for a significant level of access denial to a safer, affordable and environmentally friendly mode of transport. Through critique of past railways development projects and policies, this paper was able to identify the principle factors responsible for its intangible contributions to the socio-economic development of Nigeria, highlight the role(s) politics of inconsistency policies and somersault play, assess the challenges and suggest some prospects. Data were obtained from secondary sources like books, journals, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, internet, etc. In analyzing collected data, content analysis was used while agency theory propounded by Jenson and Meckling (1976) was adopted as the theoretical framework. Findings reveal that discontinuity, incoherence in policy implementation by past governments, policy reversal, uncoordinated national transport policy goals and objectives are some of the factors necessitating negativism in railways development in Nigeria. In all,

the paper concludes that world over, rail transport system is considered the best platform for massive haulage of goods and services on land, as a result, suggest that government should address the present predicaments of railways in Nigeria headlong by tackling the above identified principle factors responsible for rail transport woe in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** *Railways, Prospects, Challenges, Haulage, Corporation.*

### **Introduction**

The railway in Nigeria was established in 1898, thus ranked among the first generation of world railways. Notably, the first train ran in London in 1863, while the first in Japan according to Martin (2010) ran in 1872. The centenary historical background of the railway in Nigeria notwithstanding, the spate of its development and growth is conspicuously slow, while its colleagues have advanced technologically and operationally such that the average speed of their trains is put at 150 km/hr, that of Nigeria currently ranges between 30-40 km/hr. In terms of infrastructure these other railways have in their stocks titling train, satellite control information systems, but the Nigerian railway is still largely being manually operated using key token instrument, semaphore signals, 3,505 km of narrow gauge rail network to mention a few (Khera 1979).

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to evaluate the contributions of government interventions in improving operational performance of railway in Nigeria. In doing this, the paper analysed the operational performance recorded by various railway reform programmes with a view to suggesting the appropriate policy options for a cost-effective railway system in Nigeria.

The invention of the rail transport system redefined the movement of people and goods across the globe as it is convenient, safe and cheap. The system enables seamless transportation that engenders robust economies, anchored on human resources, and services within limited regulatory intervention by government or its bodies. Rail transport system creates jobs and enhances the growth and development of cities. Employments are created through the building of tracks, furniture foundries, coaches and others. Agricultural produce, clothing, animals, petroleum products and equipment can easily be transported within and across countries with the railway system. Rail transport had immense impacts on the industrial revolution in Europe and America and it was a viable alternative to steamboats that were employed for traveling through canals and rivers. Martin (2010) notes that "before the development of modern highways and airports in Nigeria, railways were the only means to travel efficiently and move goods from one point to another". This created the leeway for the modest development witnessed from the colonial times and before the early 1970s. The railways in Nigeria were conceived and constructed from Lagos to the furthestmost parts of Northeastern part of the country to open the hinterland of southwestern Nigeria along its corridor.

In 1896, "railway construction began from the Iddo area with extension made along the Lagos route which stops at Ota, Ifo, Aribajo, Papalanto, Abeokuta and Ibadan in 1901" (Nwanze 2002). However, the development of the Southern Nigeria railway was delayed due to limited finance. Proposals linking Benin, Sapele in 1906 and Ibadan with Oyo in 1907 did not materialize. Records indicate that the Lagos railway terminal at Iddo was constructed to connect Lagos Island with Lagos mainland and serve as a transit stop for trains using the railroad bridge constructed along two major road networks that link the island with other parts of Lagos such as the Carter and Denton bridges. However, "in 1904, the colonialists

decided to construct the rail linking Ibadan with Osogbo and Ilorin in 1907. It was approved to begin construction from Ilorin to Jebba" (Martin 2010). "An act establishing the railway system was enacted by the parliament in January 1955 and the railway became a statutory corporation known as Nigerian Government Railway" Abioye (2016) observes that, "this act was followed by the "Nigerianization of the corporation in 1960 after the attainment of independence". With the incorporation of the Nigerian Railway by the Act of 1955, and as amended by Act No: 20 of 1955, it became a corporate body with perpetual succession and a common seal with power to sue and be sued in its corporate name, and to require, hold and dispose off movable and immovable property for the purpose of its function under the Act.

In 1978, the Obasanjo administration engaged the services of an Indian group: Rail India Technical and Economic services to operate the railways. Izuwah (2017) noted that, 'the Indian experts met only a few functional locomotive engines in the system. By the time they were leaving in the early 1980s, the number had increased to 173. This contract led to a modest positive change which did not last as the contract was not renewed. By the end of the 1980s, reduced funding from the government, import bans, and managerial problems reduced the performance of the railways which almost went into extinction.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

A virile rail transport system plays a significant role in the sectoral development and overall growth of any economy. It opens up regions, hinterlands and rural areas by facilitating agricultural development as well as the growth of cottage/large scale industries. Also, "it attracts residential, commercial, educational and recreational activities and development around its axis" (Nwanze, 2002). Unfortunately for the railway system in Nigeria, there has

been a continuous decline in its performance over the years with attendant operating deficits in its accounts. After about sixty-five years (65) of independence, the railway system in Nigeria is still static in structure and is highly unresponsive to the emerging socioeconomic and political challenges. This transport subsector no longer exerts a strong influence nor plays a competitive role in present day Nigeria. The dilapidated nature of the present day railway infrastructure is caused by years of neglect by successive governments which accorded the transport system a very low position in their programmes.

In addition to the above neglect, Izuwah (2017), outlines other challenges of the Nigerian Railway System like poor funding, huge operating losses/ poor response to emerging rail transport needs, inadequate locomotives, rolling stock and other facilities, weak political will and commitment, poor productivity and its negative effect on staff morale, retention and maintenance of unremunerative routes, huge wage and pension bills, etc. These challenges have contributed immensely to the failure of the railway system to meet the needs of Nigerian populace, a development that is quite worrisome. As the Ahmed Bola Tinubu's administration appears poised to reactivate the ailing subsector, the extent to which its efforts can go in realizing this noble feat is a matter of concern to this study. Hence, the study seeks to assess railway politics, issues and prospects.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The assessment of railway politics, issues and prospects is the major objective of this study. Its other objectives include:

- a. To assess the extent to which the Nigeria Railway can be reactivated.
- b. To evaluate the issues militating against realization of the project.

### **Research Questions**

This study will provide answers to two questions which include:

- a. To what extent can the Nigeria Railway be reactivated?
- b. What are the issues militating against the realization of an improved railway project?

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Railways:** Railway transport is a means of transferring passengers and goods on wheeled vehicles running on rails, also known as tracks. It is also commonly referred to as train transport. In contrast to road transport where vehicles run on a prepared flat surface, rail vehicles (rolling stock) are directionally guided by the tracks on which they run. Tracks usually consist of steel rails, installed on ties (sleepers) and ballast on which the rolling stock, usually fitted with metal wheels moves. According to Martin (2010), "Railway constitute an essential component of the intermodal supply chain". The Railways have played a critical role in catalyzing the pace of economic development and continues to be an integral part of the growth engine of countries like India. "A good and reliable transport system can contribute and improve the economy of a particular country" (Rodrigue and Notteboom, 2013).

### **Public Corporation**

Public corporation means an entity that is created by the state to carry out public mission and enterprises. In order to carry out these public missions and services, a public corporation participates in activities or provides services that are also provided by private enterprises. Such a corporation is granted increased operational flexibility in order to best ensure its success while retaining principles of public accountability and fundamental public policy. The board of directors of a public corporation is appointed by the president and confirmed

by the senate but is otherwise delegated the authority to set policies and manage the operations of the public corporation. Hansen (1954) states that, "public enterprises mean state ownership and operation of industrial, agricultural, financial and commercial undertakings"- while Friedman (n.d.), defines public enterprise more comprehensively as "an institution operating a service of an economic or social character, on behalf of the government, but as an independent legal entity, largely autonomous in its management, though responsible to the public, through government and parliament and subject to some direction by the government, equipped on the other hand with independent and separate funds of its own and the legal and commercial attributes of a commercial enterprise". According to Khera, (1979),

*By public enterprise is meant the industrial, commercial and economic activities carried on by the central government and state government and in each case solely or in association with private enterprise, so long as it is managed by self-contained management.*

**Haulage:** Haulage is the business of transporting goods by road or rail. It includes the horizontal transport of ore, coal, supplies, and waste also called cartage or drayage. Haulage fees sometimes also are simply referred to as "haulage", include the charges made for hauling freight on carts, drays, lorries, or trucks and is incorporated for example in the cost of loading raw ore at a mine site and transporting it to a processing plant. A railway supplying cars, may negotiate rates with customers located on another railway line, the road granting haulage rights. This differs from tracking track age rights in that the host railway operates the trains for the other railway, where with track age rights, the secondary railway operates trains over the host's tracking.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts the Agency Theory by Jensen and Meckling (1976). They suggest a theory of how the governance of company is based on the conflict of interest between the company's owners (shareholders), its managers and major providers of debt finance. Each of these groups has different interests and objectives:

- i. The shareholders want to increase their income and wealth. Their interest is with the returns that the company will provide in the form of dividends, and also in the value of their shares. Such value of their shares depends on the long-term financial prospects for the company shareholders are therefore, concerned with dividends, but they are even more concerned with the long-term profitability and financial prospects, because these affect the value of their shares.
- ii. The managers are employed to run the company on behalf of the shareholders. However, if the managers do not own shares in the company, they have no direct interest in future returns for shareholders, or in the value of the shares. Managers have an employment contract and earn a salary. Unless they own shares, or unless their remuneration is linked to profits or share values, their main interests are likely to be the size of their remuneration package and their status as company managers.
- iii. The major providers of debt are interest in sound financial management by the company's managers, so that the company will be able to pay its debts in full and on time.

Jensen and Meckling (1976) define the agency relationship as a form of contract between a company's owners and its managers, where the owners (as principal) appoint an agent (the managers) to manage the company on their behalf. As part of this arrangement, the owners must delegate decision-making authority to the management. The owners expect the agents to act in their best interest. Ideally, the 'contract'<sup>1</sup> between the owners and the managers should ensure that the managers (agents) affect their own personal welfare as well as the interests of the owners. This raises a fundamental question. How can

managers, as agents of their company, be induced or persuaded to act in the best interests of the shareholders?

**Research Methodology:** This study is a qualitative descriptive analysis of assessment of railway politics, issues and prospects. Data for this study was obtained from primary and secondary materials while analysis is by content analysis (secondary data). This analysis runs in the following order:

**Research Question One (1):** To what extent can the Nigeria Railway be reactivated?

A study on "sustainability as a critical criterion for success in the current Nigeria Railway Project underscored the point that in order to contribute to national development, there is need for sustainability by subsequent governments". In line with this view, the paper observes that President Ahmed Bola Tinubu wish to also reassure Nigerians that most state capitals and major commercial and production centers will be linked with railway system as a way of bringing rapid social-economic development and improving the quality of life of Nigerians and promoting social and regional integration.

It is therefore, heart-warming and reassuring to note the revelation by the President that, more than \$16 billion was needed to actualize some of the federal government's plans for the railways sector, especially as the Port Harcourt railway industrial park.

In addition, the president emphasized what he called "the priority attached to railway development", "the Lagos-Kano and Calabar-Lagos lines could cost an estimated \$6 billion and \$11.1 billion respectively to construct" . He made it clear that funding world come from the Chinese Exim Bank (Nwanze 2002).

The above claims by the President notwithstanding, the prospects of establishing, activating or re-activating the hitherto failed Railway Corporation in any country rests to a great extent, on the legal framework backing it. Interestingly there are good prospects judging from the comments promises of the president. This hope is promised more on the legal framework which may be captioned, The Nigerian Railway Corporation Act. The act reads:

An act to provide for the establishment of a corporation to be known as the Nigeria railway Corporation, from the transfer to the corporation of the railway undertaking of the government of the federation, for the functions of the cooperation and for the purpose connected therewith. (1955 No. 26) [parts *I, II, V, IX* (except section 56) and *XIV*, section 10-14 inclusive, 47,48,58,59 and schedule: *9<sup>th</sup> June, 1955.*]

The Act stipulates the general powers of the corporation which range from carrying goods and passengers by rail, road and water within Nigeria, store goods within Nigeria, whether or not those goods have been or are to be carried by the corporation; consign goods on behalf of other persons from any place within Nigeria to any other place, whether within Nigeria or elsewhere; to provide both for passengers carried by the corporation and for other persons, hotels, hostels, other living accommodations and places of refreshment; to acquire, construct, manufacture, maintain and repair plant for generating electrical energy and any other works, plant or apparatus necessary or desirable for the generation, transmission and supply of electrical energy, for the purposes of the corporation, etc. These provisions are not only far-reaching but also encapsulating and offer the needed platform for establishment, activation or reactivation of the Railway. In the area of funding, the partnership with the Chinese gives some ray of hope. However, how long the funding would continue to flow from these partners is a question to answer.

## **Research Question Two (2)**

What are the issues militating against the realization of an improved railway project? There is no doubt that current projects have generated employment for Nigerians contrary to popular beliefs of firms importing their own labor; the Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Corporation's (CCECC) localization strategy mandates a ten-to-one ratio of local to Chinese workers. The company estimates that the construction of the Abuja-Kaduna line itself created four thousand local jobs approximately employed in operating the line. Even at that, lack of local engineering capacities necessitates that the Chinese continue to be involved in management and maintenance. The company is known to be involved in training Nigerians overseas on railway maintenance, signals and communication systems. This notwithstanding, however, technology and skills transfer require long-term systematic investment in local capacity building, which entails the prolonged participation of Chinese companies.

Railway projects may benefit Chinese investors by providing the economic and social benefits of connectivity, but they will also entail security risks. For instance, regional security threats have been a roadblock to the development of a national railway network, particularly in the north east and a potential risk in the southern coastal line. Secondly, the construction of large infrastructure works opens the door to corruption and political capture, and the political weight of some regions may lead to inefficient allocations.

Izuwah (2017), made a startling revelation when he stated that, "infrastructure's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in emerging economies was 11% to 6%, but in Nigeria between 1 to 3

% (unknown). Sometimes it is maintained that, a developed country is not a place where the poor have cars; it is a place where the rich use public transport. Unfortunately, our rail system in Nigeria is yet to attract the patronage of the rich due to a number of problems bothering on management. It is on this aspect that many believe that funding (money) may not be the problem. This paper also believes that most of the problems of the railway system in Nigeria revolve around managerial issues. How long will the Chinese remain to manage our railways?

### **Findings**

The Analysis in this study reveal the following:

1. It is interesting to note that the president and the government of Nigeria have the required political resolve to reactivate the railway.
2. Government has a good knowledge of the actual measure of funding needed to reactivate the railway.
3. The master plan is to cover the 36 states of the federation and the federal capital territory.
4. The partnership with the Chinese covers the area of equipment and manpower training which is currently ongoing.
5. The nature of the partnership is such that the Chinese will stay long enough and this will go a long way in transferring the required technology.
6. The major issue of the new railway project is that of sustainability in funding and management as the Chinese cannot continue to run the railway forever.
7. A good prospect of the reactivation of the Railway project is the legal framework which is encapsulated in the Nigeria Railway Corporation Act of 1955.

### **Conclusion**

Infrastructure provided the necessary springboard to launch a country into the class of developed nations. In many developed nations, the state of infrastructure leaves much to desire as most nations suffer from a great deal of decay and impoverishment. Transportation occupies the centre stage in the infrastructural development policies of emerging economies. Nigeria suffers from such infrastructural poverty and this justifies the effort of the current administration towards the reactivation of the railways sector. It is therefore, interesting to observe the strong political will and resolve of the current administration to revamp the sector. Reasonable estimates of the required funding have been articulated, contracts awarded to the Chinese and adequate funding have been arranged. In addition, the extent of work on the Abuja railway project is encouraging and other measures are being taken to effect the reactivation of the defunct rail system. The implication is that expectations are high and the prospects are good. However, judging from the fact that earlier partnership with the Indians and Chinese collapsed for obvious reasons, this paper is still skeptical about the realization of the current dream. Therefore, sustainability is the watchword.

The sustenance of the gains of the railway system requires continuity of adequate funding, management skill acquisition and technology transfer which takes very long period to come through. This raises the question as to how long the Chinese will remain to manage the affairs of the Railway Project. This paper postulates that efforts should be doubled by the current dispensation to forestall a repeat of the defunct corporation. This is to say that although the prospects are there for all to see, it is obvious that the issues are also there.

### **Recommendations**

Against the background of the findings, this study wishes to recommend the following:

1. Government's political will to reactivate the failed rail project must not be allowed to grow faint.
2. The partnership with the Chinese should be sustained with caution to eschew the constitution of a threat to national security.
3. The issue of manpower -training in the sector and process of transfer of railway technology should be adequately and meticulously managed.
4. Sustainability of the rail way project should be accorded the priority it deserves.
5. Plans to link the 36 states of the federation with railway must not stop at the level of political campaign. Genuine efforts should be made to realize them.
6. There is need to revisit the legal framework which enables the establishment of the railway periodically.

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**INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' INFORMAL DIGITAL  
LANGUAGE (SOCIAL MEDIA ENGLISH) ON THEIR  
FORMAL ACADEMIC WRITING**

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the influence of students' informal digital language on their formal academic writing. It focused on second year students in the Department of English Language and Literature, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri. The study aimed to; (i) identify common features of informal digital language,

(ii) examine their occurrence in academic essays, (iii) assess students' awareness of register differences, (iv) determine the relationship between social media use and the transfer of informal language into formal writing. A **mixed-methods research design** was employed. It combined quantitative analysis of 180 academic essays with qualitative data from questionnaires and semi structured interviews involving 90 students. Findings revealed that students frequently use social media for extended periods, with 61.1% spending four hours or more daily, which reinforces habitual informal writing practices. Common digital language features included abbreviations, conversational tone, incomplete (fragmented) sentences, and nonstandard spellings. Analysis of academic essays indicated that 50% contained at least, one informal feature, with abbreviations and conversational tone being the most prevalent. A **strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )** was observed between the frequency of social media use and the presence of informal features in academic writing. Although, students were generally aware of the differences between social media and academic writing, they often failed to regulate their language, particularly under time constraints. The study validates **Halliday's Register Theory**. It demonstrates that language use is context dependent and influenced by habitual engagement with informal registers. The findings underscore the need for explicit instruction on register differentiation, integration of digital literacy into academic curricula, and institutional support through writing centers and workshops. Such interventions can enhance students' academic writing competence and prepare them for effective communication in both academic and professional contexts.

**Keywords:** Academic writing, Informal digital language, Language transfer, Register awareness, Social media.

## **Introduction**

Language, in all its forms is dynamic, social, and deeply tied to the contexts in which it is used. Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2011) add that, "..., language is the source of human life and power" (p.284). Over the past two decades, rapid advances in digital communication have reshaped how people, especially young people, write, interact, and construct meaning. "Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have birthed a distinct variety of written communication often referred to as informal digital language, social media English, or net speak" (Crystal, 2011, p. 25). "This variety is characterized by abbreviations (e.g., *u* for *you*, *b4* for *before*), orthographic creativity (e.g., emojis, unconventional punctuation patterns), and linguistic innovations that depart from traditional grammar rules" (Tagg, 2015, pp. 78–79).

While these features serve important sociolinguistic and pragmatic functions in online social spaces, questions have emerged among educators and researchers about "their influence on students' formal academic writing, particularly within higher education" (Baron, 2008, p. 64). Sadly, universities continue to operate within the framework of formal academic literacy. A situation where writing is expected to conform to established standards of grammar, structure, coherence, cohesion, and appropriate register. Academic writing requires clarity of thought, logical organization, adherence to grammatical conventions, and discipline specific rhetorical practices. Students are assessed based on their ability to present ideas in formal Standard English, construct arguments, reference scholarly sources, and maintain an appropriate academic tone. In English medium institutions, proficiency in academic writing is central to students' success, as it affects their performance in assignments, examinations, research projects, and professional communication.

In Nigerian universities, "where English serves as the official language of instruction and assessment" (Bamgbose, 1995, p. 112),

formal academic writing proficiency is both an academic requirement and a professional asset. Yet educators increasingly, observe patterns in student essays, reports, and examination scripts that resemble informal digital language features. This is raising concerns about linguistic transfer from social media contexts into academic genres (Ibrahim, 2017, pp. 143–145). Sadly, this phenomenon is not unique to Nigeria alone. Research in diverse contexts shows that students’ informal digital writing practices coexist with their academic literacy identities, sometimes supporting and other times complicating the development of formal writing skills (White, 2013, pp. 201–202; Thurlow, 2017, p. 35). This widespread engagement with digital communication means that Nigerian students, regularly navigate multiple varieties of English. This ranges from Standard English, Nigerian English, Pidgin English, and informal digital English.

Certainly, the interaction of these varieties creates a rich but complex linguistic environment. Without deliberate instruction on how to distinguish between these registers, students may struggle to maintain appropriate boundaries between informal and formal writing styles. Informal digital features may surface in contexts where formal academic conventions are expected. The relationship between informal digital language and academic writing proficiency has become a significant area of inquiry within applied linguistics, literacy studies, and educational research. Scholars seek to understand whether social media English facilitates creativity and language awareness, or whether it undermines students’ ability to apply conventional grammar, vocabulary, and rhetorical organization in formal academic contexts (Werry, 1996, p. 117; Miller and Shepherd, 2004, p. 132). According to Androutsopoulos (2011), “Some researchers argue that digital writing practices reflect adaptive linguistic competence, where users innovate to negotiate meaning efficiently in fast paced environments” (p. 144). On the other hand, Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) claim that, “Others emphasize that

features such as truncated syntax, nonstandard orthography, and emoji use can become habits that negatively influence formal writing when unmonitored by instruction” (pp. 190–192).

Given the rapid proliferation of smartphones and mobile internet access across Nigeria, a growing number of students engage with social media daily. “This raises important questions about how their informal writing practices may transfer to academic genres” (Odetunmibi and Ogunsiji, 2020, p. 237). In this context, it becomes imperative to examine both the linguistic features of students’ informal digital language and how these features surface in their formal academic writing. Such an investigation will contribute to understanding how digital communication ecologies intersect with academic literacy development in Nigerian universities. It is good to note that informal digital language encompasses a broad set of linguistic practices that emerge from computer mediated communication (CMC). According to Crystal (2011), “these practices often prioritize efficiency, identity expression, and interpersonal alignment over standard written norms” (p. 28). Furthermore, Danesi (2017) adds that, “Common features include acronyms and initials (e.g., *LOL*, *BRB*), phonetic spellings (e.g., *thx*, *gr8*), unconventional punctuation (e.g., repeated exclamation marks), and the use of emoji and stickers to convey emotive meaning” (p. 45). Herring and Androutsopoulos (2015) stress that, “These features reflect the affordances of digital platforms, where users negotiate meaning in abbreviated, visually driven, and interactive communicative contexts” (p. 56).

Importantly, digital language practices are not random deviations from standard language. According to Tagg (2015), “They represent rule governed systems that index social identity, group membership, and pragmatic purposes” (p. 82). For example Thurlow and Brown (2003) explain that, “the use of specific acronyms may signal in

group solidarity, while creative orthography can serve both stylistic and conversational coordination functions” (p. 296). Informal digital language thus functions as a legitimate register within particular discourses, even as it diverges from formal academic conventions. Hyland (2009) stress that, “Academic writing, by contrast, emphasizes clarity, precision, grammatical correctness, and adherence to disciplinary conventions” (p. 12). Biber (2006) adds that, “Proficiency in academic writing enables students to construct arguments, engage critically with sources, and demonstrate disciplinary knowledge. In English-medium universities, these skills are foundational for success in coursework, research, and professional communication” (p. 224).

Academic writing encompasses multiple genres including essays, research reports, literature reviews, and reflective journals, each with distinct rhetorical expectations. Research on academic literacy development highlights that mastering academic writing is a complex process involving cognitive, social, and linguistic dimensions. Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) emphasize that, “Students must not only learn grammatical structures but also how to position themselves within academic debates, organize ideas logically, and use appropriate register” (p. 8). Lillis and Scott (2007) add that, “These skills are often developed through explicit instruction, practice, feedback, and reflection, processes that may be at odds with the fast, informal, and often idiosyncratic communication patterns of social media” (p. 85). The concept of linguistic transfer provides a useful lens for examining how features of informal digital language might influence formal academic writing. According to Odlin (1989), “Linguistic transfer refers to the phenomenon where linguistic habits or knowledge from one communicative context influence performance in another” (p. 27). In the case of digital language and academic writing, “transfer can occur when students unconsciously apply orthographic patterns, syntactic simplifications, or rhetorical

styles learned in social media contexts to academic tasks” (Seargeant and Tagg, 2014, p. 10).

Empirical studies have documented this kind of transfer. For example, Leppanen et al. (2014) found that Finnish university students’ text messages contained numerous nonstandard abbreviations that occasionally appeared in their academic writing (pp. 98–99). Similarly, a study by Wang and Vásquez (2012) involving Chinese EFL learners showed that participants sometimes used emoticons and abbreviated forms in formal writing when they did not fully differentiate between digital and academic registers (pp. 55–56). These findings suggest that students may not always compartmentalize writing styles effectively, especially when digital communication practices are deeply habitual. However, not all research suggests negative effects. Some scholars argue that digital writing practices can enhance certain aspects of writing development. For instance, “studies have shown that frequent writing on social media can increase writing fluency, vocabulary experimentation, and metalinguistic awareness” (Stockwell and Harrington, 2003, p. 341). When students reflect on differences between informal and formal writing, they may develop stronger register awareness and self-monitoring skills (Thorne, 2013, p. 211). The challenge, then, is not inherently the existence of informal digital language, but how students navigate multiple registers and transfer appropriate skills across contexts.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The rapid expansion of digital communication technologies has significantly altered how university students write and interact with language on a daily basis. Through platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, X (Twitter), and other social networking applications, students engage in continuous written communication

characterized by brevity, informality, creativity, and nonstandard linguistic forms. This variety of writing, often referred to as informal digital language or social media English, has become deeply embedded in students' everyday communicative practices. While these digital writing practices serve important social and interpersonal functions, concerns are increasingly emerging within academic environments about their possible influence on students' formal academic writing. Academic writing in the university context demands clarity, grammatical accuracy, logical organization, appropriate register, and adherence to established conventions of Standard English. Students are assessed through essays, examinations, reports, projects, and research assignments that require them to demonstrate competence in formal academic discourse. However, lecturers across departments increasingly report encountering features in students' academic scripts that resemble the informal structures typical of social media communication. These include the use of abbreviations like *u*, *b4*, and *d*, omission of punctuation, incomplete sentence structures, conversational tone, emotive expressions, and other nonstandard orthographic patterns. Such occurrences raise questions about whether students are unconsciously transferring habits developed in digital communication into formal academic contexts. This situation presents a serious concern because academic writing proficiency is central to students' academic success and future professional opportunities. When students' writing reflects informal digital patterns rather than formal academic conventions, it affects clarity of expression, coherence of arguments, and overall quality of written work. More importantly, it suggests that students may lack adequate awareness of register differences between informal digital writing and formal academic writing. This lack of awareness may hinder their ability to switch appropriately between writing contexts, a skill that is essential for academic literacy.

In Nigerian universities, the issue becomes even more critical due to the status of English as the official language of instruction, assessment, and scholarly communication. Mastery of formal written English is not optional but foundational to students' academic progression. At the same time, the proliferation of smartphones and affordable internet access has made social media communication a constant presence in students' lives. University students spend a substantial part of their day writing messages, comments, captions, and posts using informal digital language. This sustained exposure and habitual use of nonstandard forms create a linguistic environment where informal patterns may become internalized as default writing habits. Despite the growing visibility of this issue in classrooms, there is a notable gap in systematic empirical research that examines how students' informal digital language practices influence their formal academic writing in Nigerian universities. Most of the existing observations remain anecdotal, based on lecturers' personal experiences of marking scripts rather than structured analysis of students' writing samples. Without empirical investigation, it is difficult to determine the extent of this influence, the specific digital features that appear in academic writing, and the level of students' awareness regarding these features.

Furthermore, existing global studies on digital language and academic writing present mixed conclusions. Some researchers suggest that digital writing can enhance students' writing fluency and creativity, while others argue that it weakens students' control of formal grammar and structure. However, these studies are largely situated in Western or Asian contexts, where linguistic environments differ significantly from the Nigerian setting. Nigerian students operate within a multilingual and multidialectal environment where Standard English, Nigerian English, Pidgin English, and informal digital English coexist. The interaction of these varieties creates a complex linguistic ecology that may shape students' writing in

unique ways. Therefore, findings from other contexts cannot be automatically generalized to Nigerian universities. Another problem is that writing instruction in many university classrooms often assumes that students already understand the distinction between informal and formal registers. Lecturers focus on teaching essay structure, referencing, and argument development, but may not explicitly address how everyday digital writing habits influence students' academic writing. As a result, students may not consciously recognize that certain features acceptable in social media contexts are inappropriate in academic tasks. Without explicit pedagogical attention to register awareness, students may continue to blend informal digital habits with formal writing expectations.

In addition, assessment practices often penalize students for nonstandard writing without investigating the underlying causes of such patterns. Students receive lower grades for grammatical errors, abbreviations, and informal expressions, yet little effort is made to understand how their digital communication environment contributes to these writing habits. This creates a gap between students' lived linguistic experiences and academic expectations. Addressing this gap requires research that moves beyond correction of errors to understanding the source and nature of these errors. The problem is further complicated by the fact that digital language is not entirely detrimental. It represents creativity, adaptability, and active engagement with language. Students who frequently write on social media are not disengaged from writing; rather, they are writing more than ever before, albeit in informal forms. The challenge, therefore, is not simply to condemn informal digital language but to understand how it interacts with academic writing and how students can be guided to manage both registers effectively. Without research-based evidence, educators cannot design informed strategies that leverage the benefits of digital writing while minimizing its negative influence on academic literacy.

Moreover, the absence of research in this area limits curriculum development and pedagogical innovation. Writing courses and general studies programs in Nigerian universities may not yet reflect the realities of students' digital communication practices. If educators do not understand how social media English shapes students' writing habits, instructional approaches may remain outdated and ineffective. Research is needed to inform curriculum adjustments that incorporate digital literacy awareness into academic writing instruction. There is also the issue of students' metalinguistic awareness. It is unclear whether students recognize the differences between the language they use on social media and the language expected in academic writing. Do they consciously switch between registers, or do they perceive writing as a uniform activity regardless of context? Understanding students' perceptions and awareness is crucial for designing interventions that help them develop better control over their writing.

### **Objectives of this Study**

This study aims to examine the influence of students' informal digital language (social media English) on their formal academic writing. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- 1. Identify** the common features of informal digital language used by students in their social media communication.
- 2. Examine** the presence of informal digital language features in students' formal academic writing.
- 3. Determine** the extent to which students' use of social media English influences the quality of their academic writing.

4. Assess students' awareness of the differences between informal digital writing and formal academic writing.

## **Research Questions**

The study is guided by the following research questions;

1. What are the common features of informal digital language used by students in their social media communication?
2. To what extent do features of informal digital language appear in students' formal academic writing?
3. How does the use of social media English influence the quality of students' academic writing?
4. How aware are students of the differences between informal digital writing and formal academic writing?

## **Significance of this Study**

Firstly, the study is significant to **students**. By identifying how informal digital language features appear in their academic writing, students will become more aware of the differences between social media communication and formal academic writing. This awareness can help them develop better control over their writing, improve grammatical accuracy, and adopt appropriate academic conventions. Ultimately, this will enhance their performance in assignments, examinations, research projects, and other academic tasks that require formal writing proficiency.

Secondly, the study is significant to **lecturers and writing instructors**. Many lecturers observe the presence of social media

language in students' scripts but lack empirical evidence to explain the source and extent of this phenomenon. The findings of this study will provide lecturers with concrete insights into the specific digital language features that influence students' writing. This knowledge can guide lecturers in designing targeted teaching strategies that address register awareness, error patterns, and writing discipline in the classroom.

Thirdly, the study is valuable for **curriculum developers and educational planners**. Current writing curricula in many universities do not explicitly address the impact of digital communication on students' writing habits. By providing evidence of how informal digital practices influence academic writing, this study can inform curriculum revisions that incorporate digital literacy awareness into academic writing courses. Such integration will make writing instruction more relevant to students' lived linguistic experiences.

Fourthly, the study contributes to **applied linguistics and literacy research** by expanding knowledge on the relationship between computer-mediated communication and academic literacy development. While several studies exist in other parts of the world, there is limited research focusing on the Nigerian university context. This study therefore fills an important gap by providing context specific evidence from Nigerian students, enriching global discussions on language use in the digital age.

Fifthly, the study is significant to **educational policy and assessment practices**. Understanding how digital language influences academic writing can help institutions develop better assessment guidelines and writing support programs. Rather than merely penalizing students for non-standard writing, educators can adopt more informed approaches that address the root causes of writing challenges.

Finally, the study holds broader significance for understanding how **language evolves in response to technological change**. It highlights the dynamic nature of language and the need for educational practices to adapt to contemporary communication realities. By examining how students navigate multiple writing registers, the study underscores the importance of register awareness as a critical component of academic literacy in the digital era.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This is anchored on **Register Theory**. Register theory originates from **Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)**. This theory explains how variations in language use are shaped by context and communicative purpose. According to Halliday and Hasan (1985), "SFL views language not as an abstract system of rules but as a **resource for meaning-making in social contexts**" (p. 12). Halliday (1978) stresses that language users make choices from a repertoire of linguistic options to construct meaning based on the social situation they are in. The context of situation, including the participants, purposes, and medium of communication affects these choices and gives rise to distinct varieties of language known as **registers**. In this perspective, "language variation is not arbitrary but shaped by communicative function" (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 9). Language is always contextualized. What counts as appropriate language in one setting may be inappropriate in another. In education, this theoretical stance is crucial because it recognizes that students encounter different communicative demands across contexts. Informal digital language, the kind used in texting, instant messaging, and social media operates under different communicative conditions from formal academic writing. Social media communication prioritizes speed, brevity, and interaction among peers, whereas academic writing demands clarity, organization, and conformity to disciplinary conventions.

Therefore, understanding the influence of students' everyday digital language practices on their academic writing requires a theory that captures how language varies with context. Register Theory offers exactly this. In SFL, “a **register** is a variety of language associated with a particular **context of situation**” (Biber and Conrad, 2009, p. 20). Halliday and Hasan (1985) pp. 37–38) describe register “as a set of linguistic features typical in a specific type of discourse, shaped by three principal contextual variables: **field**, **tenor**, and **mode** (pp. 37-8). **Field** refers to “what is happening, the subject matter or activity being enacted” (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 40). **Tenor** refers to “the social roles and relationships between the interactants” (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 40). **Mode** refers to “the organization of the text, including whether it is spoken or written, and how language is structured” (Halliday and Hasan, 1985, p. 41). These contextual variables influence linguistic features such as vocabulary choice, grammar, cohesion, and text organization. For example, academic writing is typified by explicit logical relations, complex sentence structures, abstract vocabulary, and impersonal tone. Informal digital language, by contrast, often includes abbreviations, emoticons, nonstandard spellings, and conversational structures, features that are functional in fast, peer to peer communication but inappropriate in academic contexts.

In the digital environment, Tagg (2015) explains that, “the **field** typically involves personal interaction, social exchange, and rapid information sharing. Writers are more concerned with immediacy and expressivity than with depth of argument or exposition” (p. 78). The **tenor** is generally informal and egalitarian: students communicate with peers in casual relationships. The **mode** is often mixed involving text, emojis, images, and abbreviations, and is shaped by the affordances of mobile devices and digital platforms. On the other hand, Hyland (2009) claims that, “the **field** of academic writing involves intellectual argumentation, knowledge construction,

and the critical presentation of ideas” (p. 12). The **tenor** is formal, often between student and lecturer or academic readership. The **mode** is written, structured, and governed by conventions of organization, grammar, and citation practices. These distinctions make clear why certain linguistic features are suitable in one context but not in another. Register Theory accounts for such contextual differences by showing how variation is systematic rather than random. Biber and Conrad (2009) note that, “linguistic features cluster according to register variables: genres with similar communicative purposes exhibit similar feature patterns” (p. 21). Academic registers broadly exhibit dense noun phrases, explicit cohesion, and carefully structured argumentation, patterns that differ significantly from digital communication.

One of the core principles of Register Theory is that language must be evaluated in terms of **appropriateness to context**. Halliday (1978) emphasizes that, “variation is inherent to language; there is no absolute standard of correctness independent of context” (p. 6). What counts as appropriate or effective writing in one register may be judged inappropriate in another. In the context of this study, features such as abbreviations (*u, ur, coz*), emoticons, and run-on sentences are not errors in the digital register. They are legitimate means of expressing identity and facilitating rapid interaction. However, the same features transferred into an academic essay violate the norms of the academic register, leading to misalignment between language use and communicative expectations. This theoretical insight reframes what might superficially be labeled as poor English in students’ writing as a **register misapplication**. It signals that students may lack the metalinguistic awareness to distinguish between registers or may not have developed strategies to adjust their language according to context.

A key concept derived from Register Theory is **register awareness**, the ability to recognize and adjust language choices according to context. Teaching academic writing involves not just grammar and structure but also helping students understand how different communicative contexts demand different language features. Lillis and Scott (2007, p. 9) describe academic literacy as “socially situated practice in which learners must negotiate the conventions of disciplinary communication”. Register awareness, therefore, becomes a necessary component of academic literacy. Students must learn to separate features of informal digital communication from those required in academic writing. Without explicit instruction in register awareness, students may rely on habitual writing practices developed through frequent use of digital media. As Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) observe, “Language practices in digital communication can become deeply ingrained because of repetitive use and social reinforcement” (pp. 190-1). This habit may make it difficult for students to switch effectively between informal digital registers and formal academic registers.

Another key insight from Register Theory is the concept of **transfer**. Transfer refers to the influence of one language variety or register on another. Odlin’s (1989) stress that, “the notion of transfer, originally used in second language acquisition, can be adapted to register contexts: habitual patterns from one register may carry over into another when speakers or writers do not sufficiently monitor their language choices” (p. 27). In this study, features typical of digital communication that appear in academic writing can be understood as instances of register transfer. This form of transfer is not limited to errors but reflects deeper cognitive and social processes in language use. When students write frequently on social media, they internalize certain writing practices. Without conscious regulation or explicit awareness of register boundaries, these practices may automatically appear in other writing contexts, including academic tasks.

## **Methodology**

**Research Design:** This study adopted a **mixed-methods research design**, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

**Population:** The population for this study comprised all **second year students** in the **Department of English Language and Literature, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri**. This cohort was selected because they had prior experience with both academic writing tasks (essays, assignments, and examination scripts) and social media communication. The total population of 200-level students in the department is **180 students**, which served as the accessible population for this study.

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique:** A sample size of **90 students (50% of the population)** was purposively selected using **stratified random sampling** to ensure representation across gender and class sections.

**Method of Data Collection:** For the **academic writing samples, two essays per student** were collected from the selected participants, resulting in a total of **180 essays** for analysis. The essays were drawn from assignments and examination scripts submitted in the current academic session to ensure authenticity and relevance. For the **qualitative component, all 90 students** completed a questionnaire on their digital writing habits and academic writing practices. Additionally, **15 students (5 male, 10 female)** were selected for follow up semi structured interviews to gain deeper insights into their awareness of register differences. The following instruments were employed in this study: (i) **Academic Writing Analysis Guide (AWAG)**. (ii) **Questionnaire on Digital Writing and Academic Awareness (QDWA)**. (iii) **Semi Structured Interview Guide (SSIG)**.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents (N=90)**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	40	44.4
Female	50	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

The demographic sample was relatively balanced, with slightly more females (55.6%) than males (44.4%), which allows for gender-based analysis of digital writing practices.

**Table 2: Daily Social Media Usage of Respondents**

Duration per Day	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hr.	10	11.1
1-3 hr.	25	27.8
4-6 hr.	35	38.9
More than 6 hrs.	20	22.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

This table shows that majority of students (61.1%) spend **4 hours or more daily** on social media platforms. This high level of engagement suggests that informal digital language is a significant part of their

everyday linguistic practice. Frequent exposure to informal digital writing increases the likelihood that students’ academic writing may be influenced by digital language features.

**Table 3: Common Features of Informal Digital Language among Students**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Frequency of Occurrence</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Abbreviations (u, b4, coz)</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>94.4</b>
<b>Emoji and emoticons</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>83.3</b>
<b>Nonstandard spelling (plz, gud)</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>77.8</b>
<b>Incomplete sentences</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>66.7</b>
<b>Conversational tone</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>88.9</b>
<b>Use of slang</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>55.6</b>

The data in this table indicate that **abbreviations, emoji, and conversational tone** are the most prevalent features. These patterns reflect the **informal, peer-oriented nature** of social media communication among students.

**Table 4: Frequency of Digital Features in Academic Writing (N=180 essays)**

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Number of Essays</b>	
<b>Percentage (%)</b>		
<b>Abbreviations (u, b4, coz)</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>50</b>

Emojis and emoticons	30	16.7
Nonstandard spelling (plz, gud)	45	25
Incomplete sentences	60	33.3
Conversational tone	80	44.4
Use of slang	40	22.2

This table shows that half of the essays contained **abbreviations typical of social media**, while nearly 45% exhibited a **conversational tone**. This confirms the **influence of informal digital language** on formal academic writing. Features such as emoji were less common, likely because students recognize their inappropriateness in academic contexts.

**Table 5: Correlation between Social Media Use and Digital Features in Academic Writing**

Variable	Social Media Use	Digital Features in Essays
Social Media Use	1	0.68**
Digital Features in Essays	0.68**	1

**Note:  $p < 0.01$**

This table shows that there is a **strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.68, p < 0.01$ )** between the amount of time students spend on social media and the occurrence of digital language features in their academic writing. This indicates that **more frequent social media**

**use increases the likelihood** that students’ writing will contain informal digital features.

**Table 6: Students’ Awareness of Register Differences (N=90)**

Awareness Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I know that social media writing is different from essays	35	30	20	5	3.33
I consciously avoid informal language in academic writing	25	40	15	10	3.11
I sometimes transfer social media language into essays	40	30	10	10	3.22
I need more guidance on using formal academic language	50	25	10	5	3.44

This table shows that although, most students recognize that **social media language differs from academic writing**, a majority **admit to sometimes transferring informal features** into their essays. Additionally, **75%** of students indicated a **need for more guidance**, highlighting gaps in register awareness.

### **Themes from Semi Structured Interviews**

The semi structured interviews revealed four recurring themes.

**1. Habitual Transfer of Digital Language:** Many students admitted that abbreviations and casual expressions appear unconsciously in essays, especially under time pressure. *I often write 'u' instead of 'you' when rushing an assignment.* (Student 7, Female).

**2. Difficulty with Formal Tone:** Students struggled to maintain impersonal and formal tone due to habitual conversational style. *Even when I try, my writing still sounds like I'm chatting with friends.* (Student 3, Male).

**3. Awareness but Lack of Control:** Students knew formal academic rules but lacked strategies to avoid informal habits. *I know it's wrong, but when typing fast, I forget and use slang.* (Student 12, Female).

**4. Desire for Guidance:** Students requested more explicit instruction on how to separate social media and academic registers. *We need exercises to practice formal writing without mixing it with chat language.* (Student 5, Female).

## **Discussion of Findings**

The study found that a majority of students (61.1%) spend four hours or more daily on social media. The quantitative analysis revealed a **strong positive correlation ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ )** between social media usage and the occurrence of digital features in academic writing. This indicates that students who engage more frequently with digital platforms are more likely to transfer informal features, such as abbreviations, conversational tone, and incomplete sentences, into their essays. This finding supports Halliday's (1978, p. 6) notion that language varies systematically according to context. Social media represents an informal register shaped by rapid, peer to peer

communication (field), egalitarian social relationships (tenor), and multimodal digital channels (mode). Academic writing, by contrast, represents a formal register that demands impersonal tone, structured syntax, and adherence to disciplinary norms. The observed transfer of informal features into academic writing illustrates a **failure in register differentiation**, confirming the theoretical premise that language appropriateness depends on context.

Analysis of students' essays revealed that the most frequent features of digital language appearing in academic writing were **abbreviations (50%), conversational tone (44.4%), and incomplete sentences (33.3%)**. Emojis and slang appeared less frequently, likely because students recognize their inappropriateness in academic contexts. The prevalence of abbreviations and informal tone highlights that students' writing habits are shaped by **cognitive automaticity**. When students are accustomed to typing quickly on mobile devices or social media platforms, the informal digital register becomes habitual, leading to unintentional transfer into academic contexts.

Questionnaire and interview data showed that students are **aware of the differences between social media and academic registers**, yet they often fail to regulate their writing. Approximately 75% of respondents indicated the need for more guidance in formal writing, and interviews revealed that habitual transfer occurs especially when students are under time constraints. This supports Halliday and Hasan's (1985, p. 9) claim that **language users must possess register awareness** to adapt their linguistic choices appropriately. Awareness alone is insufficient without deliberate practice and structured guidance. Students' struggles suggest that digital literacy and academic literacy intersect, with social media writing influencing their approach to academic tasks. This interplay highlights a **pedagogical gap** in writing instruction. It suggests that while

students are competent in digital registers, formal register mastery requires explicit instruction and reinforcement.

### **Implications of this Study**

The study provides empirical support for **Halliday's Register Theory** (1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1985), reinforcing the claim that **language appropriateness is context dependent**. The presence of informal digital features such as abbreviations, conversational tone, and incomplete sentences in students' essays confirms that habitual engagement with a particular register (social media English) can influence performance in another register (academic English). This finding extends Register Theory by demonstrating its applicability in a **digital, contemporary context**, where new forms of informal communication, such as text messaging, WhatsApp, and social media platforms, shape students' linguistic habits. Traditional applications of Register Theory often focused on spoken versus written language, or on formal versus informal settings in pre-digital contexts. This study confirms that the **digital environment introduces a highly influential informal register** that can transfer into formal academic domains. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of **register awareness** as a theoretical construct. While students demonstrated recognition of differences between social media and academic writing, they often failed to regulate their language use, particularly under time constraints. This aligns with Halliday and Hasan's (1985, p. 41) proposition that register is dynamic, and effective use requires **conscious adaptation to contextual variables**: field, tenor, and mode. The study therefore contributes to the theoretical understanding of how digital registers interact with traditional academic registers and reinforces the notion that **language learning and literacy development are socially situated and contextually mediated**. Additionally, the correlation between **frequency of social media use and the presence of informal**

**features in academic writing** ( $r = 0.68, p < 0.01$ ) provides quantitative evidence supporting the theory of **register transfer**. The findings suggest that habitual engagement in one register strengthens linguistic patterns that may **inadvertently become generalized** to other contexts. This has broader theoretical relevance for understanding cognitive and sociolinguistic mechanisms underlying language use in the digital age.

The study has direct implications for **teaching and learning practices in higher education**, particularly in the instruction of academic writing. Firstly, the findings indicate that students need **explicit instruction on register differentiation**. Although students are aware that social media and academic writing differ, this awareness alone does not prevent informal digital features from appearing in essays. Therefore, university instructors should integrate **register focused exercises** into writing curricula, emphasizing the linguistic characteristics of social media versus academic writing, practice activities that involve rewriting informal texts in academic style, and reflection on habitual language use in different contexts. Secondly, the study underscores the importance of **digital literacy integration in academic instruction**. Students' frequent use of digital platforms shapes cognitive and writing habits. Educators can leverage this by designing activities that **bridge informal digital registers and formal academic registers** like (i) collaborative online discussions with formal writing requirements. (ii) Digital peer editing with emphasis on register correction. (iii) Exercises translating casual social media messages into structured essays. Thirdly, the findings suggest that **time management and writing habits** influence register transfer. Students often revert to informal digital language when writing under pressure. This indicates a need for pedagogical interventions that **teach strategies for deliberate language control**, including pre-writing planning, proofreading for register, and self-monitoring techniques. Finally,

gender considerations emerge from the study's demographic data. Although, both male and female students engage heavily in digital communication, subtle differences in writing patterns may exist, suggesting **differentiated teaching approaches** could enhance outcomes. For example, interventions can include gender-sensitive workshops to address varying tendencies in informal digital usage.

The study has implications for **curriculum designers and educational policymakers**. Findings indicate a, **disconnect between students' informal digital practices and formal academic expectations**. To address this; (i) Courses should include discussions on how social media influences writing habits and how to adapt informal language for academic purposes. (ii) Recognize that informal features may unintentionally appear, instructors could implement **formative assessments** that provide feedback specifically on register use. (iii) Given that digital communication affects students in all fields, cross-disciplinary approaches to teaching register awareness can enhance overall academic communication skills. (iv) Students should be taught to **self-assess their writing**, comparing informal and formal samples, identifying transfer issues, and adjusting accordingly.

Beyond teaching, the study contributes to the field of **academic writing research**, particularly in the Nigerian higher education context. While much research has focused on grammar, vocabulary, and structure, this study emphasizes the **role of digital language in shaping academic writing competence**. This has implications for future studies, including (i) Exploring interventions to minimize digital register transfer. (ii) Examining the impact of multilingual backgrounds on digital and academic registers. (iii) Investigating longitudinal effects of social media use on writing proficiency over time. Moreover, the study underscores the **need for localized research**. Nigerian students operate in a multilingual environment

where digital English interacts with Standard English and academic English. Understanding these interactions informs the **design of contextually relevant writing pedagogy**, which may differ from Western centric approaches.

The study also has implications for **policy development and academic support structures** in universities. Institutions could:

- (i) Establish writing centers that focus not only on grammar but also on **register awareness**.
- (ii) Organize workshops for lecturers to integrate **register conscious teaching** into their courses.
- (iii) Implement guidelines for digital literacy education to help students navigate **informal and formal registers effectively**.
- (iv) Develop peer-mentoring programs where advanced students support juniors in mastering **academic writing conventions**.

These measures could enhance students' writing performance, reduce the negative influence of informal digital language, and contribute to improved academic outcomes.

Finally, the study has broader societal implications. In the digital age, students are **exposed to multiple language varieties**, and their writing skills affect not only academic success but also **employability and professional communication**. If informal digital language becomes dominant in professional contexts, graduates may struggle with workplace communication. Therefore, the study highlights the importance of **early intervention in academic writing education** to equip students with the ability to switch registers appropriately, ensuring both academic and professional competence.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shown that students' informal digital language, commonly used on social media platforms, significantly influences their formal academic writing. Features such as abbreviations, conversational tone, and incomplete sentences frequently appear in students' essays, reflecting the habitual nature of digital communication. While students generally recognize the differences between informal digital writing and academic writing, they often struggle to regulate their language, especially under time constraints. The findings confirm Halliday's Register Theory, demonstrating that language use is context dependent and that habitual engagement in one register can transfer into another, affecting the appropriateness and quality of written academic work. The implications of this study highlight the need for **explicit instruction on register differentiation**, integration of digital literacy into the curriculum, and institutional support through writing centers and workshops. Educators can help students develop the skills necessary to navigate between informal and formal registers effectively by fostering register awareness and providing targeted guidance. Ultimately, such interventions will enhance academic writing competence, improve overall communication skills, and prepare students for both academic and professional success in a digitalized society.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

Firstly, it is recommended that **students actively develop register awareness** by consciously differentiating between informal digital communication and formal academic writing. Students should be encouraged to review their essays and assignments critically, identifying informal features such as abbreviations, slang, and conversational tone. Reflective writing exercises, where students

compare social media messages with academic essays, can help cultivate self-monitoring skills and reduce unintentional transfer of digital language into formal writing. Additionally, students should practice **planning and proofreading** their work before submission, as these strategies can mitigate the influence of habitual informal writing patterns.

Secondly, **lecturers and academic instructors** should incorporate **explicit instruction on register differentiation** into writing courses. This includes teaching students the characteristics of formal academic registers, illustrating the differences with clear examples, and providing exercises that require students to transform informal digital text into formal academic writing. Lecturers should also provide **constructive feedback** highlighting instances where digital language features appear in students' essays. Such feedback not only reinforces correct academic writing conventions but also enhances students' awareness of contextual appropriateness in language use.

Thirdly, **curriculum designers and educational institutions** should integrate **digital literacy and academic writing modules** that address the interaction between informal and formal registers. Writing curricula should include activities that simulate real-world writing scenarios where students must switch registers effectively. For example, modules can include exercises translating chat messages into structured essays, peer review sessions focusing on register, and collaborative online writing assignments with formal language requirements. Embedding such exercises in the curriculum will equip students with the skills necessary to navigate multiple registers successfully.

Fourthly, it is recommended that **universities establish or strengthen academic support structures** like writing centers, workshops, and mentoring programs. Writing centers should provide

targeted support on **register awareness, academic vocabulary, and essay organization**, while workshops can train students in **strategies to minimize informal digital influence** like sentence restructuring, paraphrasing, and editing. Peer mentoring programs, where advanced students guide juniors in formal writing practices, can also provide continuous support and reinforce proper writing habits.

Furthermore, **educational policymakers** should recognize the impact of digital communication on academic literacy and develop guidelines that promote formal writing proficiency alongside digital competence. Policies can encourage institutions to adopt **assessment practices** that reward correct register use, ensure that writing instruction addresses digital influences, and provide resources for teacher training in academic writing pedagogy. Such measures will create a supportive learning environment that helps students develop both digital literacy and academic writing proficiency.

Finally, it is recommended that **further research** be conducted to explore the influence of digital language on students' writing across different disciplines and academic levels. Longitudinal studies could examine how students' engagement with digital registers evolves over time and its impact on professional writing skills. Research could also investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as register-focused workshops or curriculum enhancements, in reducing the transfer of informal digital language into academic writing.

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## **REVENUE ALLOCATION, ELITE POLITICS, AND THE CRISIS OF FISCAL FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, TRAJECTORIES, AND PROSPECTS**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria's federal system is fundamentally shaped by the politics of revenue allocation, yet persistent disputes over fiscal transfers, resource control, and intergovernmental relations continue to undermine national cohesion and subnational development. This article interrogates the crisis of fiscal federalism in Nigeria by examining how elite politics structures revenue allocation outcomes and constrains reform trajectories. Drawing on the political economy and elite theory frameworks, the study analyzes the historical evolution of revenue allocation formulas, the bargaining strategies of political elites, and the institutional dynamics that sustain fiscal centralization. Using a qualitative methodology that combines documentary analysis of constitutional provisions, revenue allocation commissions' reports, and secondary scholarly sources, the article demonstrates that revenue allocation in Nigeria is less a technocratic exercise than an arena of elite contestation driven by power asymmetries, rent-seeking, and regime survival. The findings reveal that elite dominance has entrenched distributive conflicts, weakened fiscal autonomy at the subnational level, and exacerbated regional inequalities, thereby deepening the legitimacy crisis of Nigeria's federal arrangement. The article argues that without confronting the

political foundations of revenue allocation, technical reforms are unlikely to achieve sustainable fiscal stability. It concludes by outlining reform prospects anchored in institutional restructuring, enhanced fiscal decentralization, and inclusive elite bargaining, with broader implications for federal systems in resource-dependent states.

**Keywords:** Revenue allocation; fiscal federalism; elite politics; political economy; intergovernmental relations; resource control; Nigeria.

## **Introduction**

Revenue allocation remains one of the most enduring and emotionally charged issues in Nigeria's federal experience. From the late colonial period to the present Fourth Republic, debates over how national revenues should be shared among the federal, state, and local governments have repeatedly generated political tension, institutional instability, and regional grievances. At its core, revenue allocation in Nigeria is not merely a fiscal or administrative exercise; it is deeply political, reflecting struggles over power, identity, resource control, and access to state resources. As such, the politics surrounding revenue allocation continue to shape the character and performance of Nigeria's federal system.

In federal systems, revenue allocation is expected to balance two competing imperatives: national unity and subnational autonomy. Fiscal federalism theory suggests that an effective federal arrangement should assign revenue powers and expenditure responsibilities in a manner that promotes efficiency, equity, accountability, and development across constituent units (Oates, 1972; Musgrave, 1983). However, Nigeria's experience has consistently fallen short of these ideals. Despite operating a constitutionally defined federal structure, Nigeria maintains one of the most fiscally centralized systems among federal states, with the

federal government controlling the most lucrative revenue sources, particularly oil and gas (Suberu, 2001; Arowolo, 2011).

The discovery of oil and its subsequent dominance of Nigeria's economy profoundly transformed the country's fiscal and political landscape. Oil revenues, centrally collected and distributed through federally determined formulas, intensified competition among regions and political elites for access to the center (Watts, 2004). Over time, this dynamic weakened the principle of derivation, reduced incentives for internal revenue generation, and entrenched fiscal dependence among subnational governments. Rather than serving as a tool for balanced development, revenue allocation became a mechanism for managing elite coalitions and containing political dissent (Mustapha, 2014).

The crisis of fiscal federalism in Nigeria is evident in several interrelated developments. First is the growing dependence of states and local governments on federal allocations, with many subnational units unable to meet basic governance responsibilities without monthly transfers from the federation account. Second is the persistence of regional inequality and underdevelopment, particularly in oil-producing communities that paradoxically experience environmental degradation alongside fiscal marginalization (Watts, 2004; Obi, 2010). Third is the recurring agitation for resource control, restructuring, and constitutional reform, which reflects widespread dissatisfaction with the existing fiscal order.

While a substantial body of literature has examined revenue allocation in Nigeria, much of it adopts a technocratic or institutional lens. Scholars have focused on the evolution of revenue allocation principles, the work of various fiscal commissions, constitutional provisions, and the efficiency of existing formulas (Ekpo, 2004; RMAFC, 2018). These studies provide important insights into the

mechanics of revenue sharing, yet they often treat political contestation as a secondary concern. As a result, the deeper political forces that shape revenue allocation outcomes—and explain their resistance to reform—remain underexplored.

This article argues that elite politics lies at the heart of Nigeria's revenue allocation crisis. Drawing on elite theory and political economy perspectives, it conceptualizes revenue allocation as an arena of power struggle in which political elites negotiate access to rents, maintain regime stability, and manage regional alliances (Mills, 1956; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). In Nigeria, fiscal institutions do not operate in isolation from politics; rather, they are embedded within networks of elite interests that influence policy design, implementation, and reform. Revenue allocation formulas, therefore, reflect not only constitutional principles but also the strategic calculations of dominant political actors.

Elite domination of fiscal policy has had profound implications for Nigeria's federal system. By centralizing revenue control, political elites at the federal level strengthen their leverage over subnational governments, weakening accountability and fostering a culture of fiscal dependency. At the same time, subnational elites often collude within this system, prioritizing access to federal rents over the development of autonomous revenue bases. This mutually reinforcing elite arrangement sustains a fiscal structure that benefits political actors while undermining broad-based development and democratic accountability (Suberu, 2001; Lewis, 2011).

Situating Nigeria within broader comparative debates further underscores the significance of this study. Resource-dependent federal states across the Global South face similar challenges of elite capture, fiscal centralization, and distributive conflict (Ross, 2012). Nigeria's experience thus offers valuable lessons for understanding how resource wealth, when mediated through elite-driven

institutions, can destabilize fiscal federalism rather than strengthen it. By examining the political foundations of revenue allocation, this article contributes to both Nigerian scholarship and comparative studies of federalism and political economy.

Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative approach, relying on documentary analysis of constitutional texts, reports of revenue allocation commissions, policy documents, and relevant scholarly literature. This approach enables a historically grounded examination of how revenue allocation principles have evolved and how elite interests have shaped their trajectories over time. Rather than evaluating revenue allocation solely in terms of economic efficiency, the article emphasizes the political contexts and power relations that sustain Nigeria's current fiscal order.

The article proceeds as follows. The next section outlines the theoretical framework, integrating political economy and elite theory to explain revenue allocation as a site of elite contestation. This is followed by an analysis of the historical evolution of revenue allocation in Nigeria. Subsequent sections examine the role of elite politics in sustaining fiscal centralization and assess its implications for intergovernmental relations and regional inequality. The concluding section discusses reform prospects, arguing that sustainable fiscal reform in Nigeria requires confronting the political foundations of revenue allocation rather than relying exclusively on technical or institutional adjustments.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Political Economy and Elite Theory as Analytical Lenses**

This study adopts political economy theory and elite theory as complementary frameworks for analyzing the crisis of fiscal federalism in Nigeria. Together, these perspectives illuminate how revenue allocation operates as a political process shaped by elite

interests, institutional constraints, and struggles over resource control rather than as a neutral mechanism for economic coordination.

Political economy theory emphasizes the interaction between political power and economic structures in shaping public policy outcomes. From this perspective, fiscal institutions—including revenue allocation systems—are not merely administrative arrangements but arenas through which power is exercised and contested (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). In resource-dependent states such as Nigeria, political economy analysis is particularly useful because it explains how control over natural resource rents influences state formation, elite behavior, and patterns of governance (Ross, 2012). Revenue allocation, therefore, reflects the broader political settlement underpinning the Nigerian state.

Elite theory, on the other hand, focuses explicitly on the role of a relatively small group of political actors who dominate decision-making processes and shape policy outcomes in their own interests. Classical elite theorists argue that regardless of democratic institutions, political power tends to be concentrated in the hands of a minority who control key economic and political resources (Mills, 1956; Pareto, 1935). In the Nigerian context, elite theory provides a powerful lens for understanding why revenue allocation reforms have been persistently resisted or diluted despite widespread recognition of their dysfunction.

### **Fiscal Federalism and the Limits of Technocratic Explanations**

Traditional fiscal federalism theory assumes that revenue-sharing arrangements are designed to promote efficiency, equity, and accountability across levels of government (Oates, 1972; Musgrave, 1983). According to this framework, subnational governments should have sufficient fiscal autonomy to match local preferences and development needs, while central authorities coordinate redistribution and macroeconomic stability.

However, Nigeria's experience reveals the limits of this technocratic model. Although fiscal federalism principles are formally embedded in constitutional provisions and revenue allocation formulas, their practical operation is heavily mediated by political bargaining. The centralization of revenue powers—especially over oil and gas—cannot be adequately explained by efficiency considerations alone. Instead, it reflects deliberate political choices aimed at consolidating elite control over strategic economic resources (Suberu, 2001).

By integrating political economy analysis, this study challenges the assumption that Nigeria's fiscal imbalance is primarily a design flaw. Rather, it argues that fiscal centralization is a politically rational outcome for dominant elites who benefit from controlling revenue flows and distributing them through discretionary mechanisms. In this sense, revenue allocation becomes a tool for managing elite coalitions and ensuring regime stability rather than promoting fiscal responsibility or development.

### **Elite Politics and Revenue Allocation as Rent Distribution**

Elite theory further clarifies how revenue allocation functions as a system of rent distribution in Nigeria. Political elites—operating across federal and subnational levels—use access to centrally distributed revenues to sustain patronage networks, secure electoral support, and neutralize opposition (Lewis, 2011). This elite-driven system discourages fiscal autonomy at the subnational level, as dependence on federal transfers reduces incentives for internally generated revenue and local accountability.

The persistence of distributive conflicts over revenue allocation—particularly debates around derivation, resource control, and restructuring—can therefore be understood as struggles among competing elite factions rather than purely regional or popular demands. While such conflicts are often framed in ethno-regional or developmental terms, they are frequently mediated by elite actors

seeking to renegotiate their share of national resources (Mustapha, 2014).

This framework also explains why reform efforts initiated by fiscal commissions and constitutional conferences have yielded limited results. Without altering the underlying elite incentives that sustain fiscal centralization, institutional reforms remain superficial. As elite theory predicts, dominant groups adapt reforms to preserve their advantages, resulting in continuity rather than transformation.

### **Linking Elite Politics to the Crisis of Fiscal Federalism**

By combining political economy and elite theory, this study conceptualizes Nigeria's crisis of fiscal federalism as a political crisis rather than merely a fiscal or administrative one. The concentration of revenue powers at the federal level weakens subnational autonomy, distorts intergovernmental relations, and deepens regional inequality. At the same time, it fosters a rent-seeking political culture in which access to state power becomes the primary route to economic accumulation.

This theoretical framework allows the study to move beyond descriptive accounts of revenue allocation and instead explain why Nigeria's fiscal system remains resistant to reform. It highlights how elite domination of fiscal institutions generates a self-reinforcing cycle: fiscal centralization strengthens elite control, which in turn sustains centralized revenue allocation. Breaking this cycle, the framework suggests, requires political—not merely technical—solutions.

### **Historical Evolution of Revenue Allocation in Nigeria**

The evolution of revenue allocation in Nigeria reflects the broader trajectory of state formation, political centralization, and elite consolidation. Far from being a neutral fiscal arrangement, revenue

allocation has historically functioned as a mechanism through which political authority is organized, contested, and maintained. From the colonial period to the contemporary Fourth Republic, changes in revenue allocation principles have closely mirrored shifts in political power, economic structure, and elite interests. Understanding this historical evolution is therefore essential for explaining the persistent crisis of fiscal federalism in Nigeria.

### **Colonial Foundations and the Principle of Derivation**

Revenue allocation in Nigeria originated during the colonial era, when fiscal arrangements were designed primarily to serve imperial administrative efficiency rather than local development. Under British colonial rule, the Nigerian state operated a highly decentralized fiscal system based largely on the principle of derivation, whereby regions retained revenues generated from within their territories (Suberu, 2001). This arrangement was less an expression of federal idealism than a pragmatic response to administrative constraints and the uneven economic capacities of Nigeria's regions.

The Richards Constitution of 1946 and the Macpherson Constitution of 1951 formalized regional autonomy and reinforced derivation as the dominant principle of revenue sharing. At this stage, Nigeria's economy was largely agrarian, with regions specializing in export commodities such as cocoa in the West, groundnuts in the North, and palm produce in the East. Fiscal decentralization encouraged regional competition and development, as regional governments relied heavily on internally generated revenues to finance public services and infrastructure (Ekpo, 2004).

However, even in this early period, revenue allocation was politically contested. Colonial fiscal arrangements privileged economically stronger regions, sowing early seeds of interregional resentment. Nonetheless, derivation remained politically acceptable because it

aligned with the regionalized structure of political power and the limited role of the central government.

### **Post-Independence Adjustments and the Politics of Balance**

Following independence in 1960, Nigeria retained derivation as the cornerstone of its revenue allocation system, though growing political pressures soon necessitated adjustments. The Raisman Commission of 1958, which guided early post-independence fiscal relations, attempted to balance derivation with principles of need and national interest (Suberu, 2001). This marked the beginning of a gradual shift away from strict derivation toward more redistributive mechanisms.

The political logic underpinning this shift was clear. As the federal government assumed greater responsibilities for national integration and economic planning, it required increased access to financial resources. At the same time, political elites sought to manage interregional tensions within an increasingly fragile federation. Revenue allocation thus became a tool for political stabilization, enabling the federal center to redistribute resources in ways that mitigated centrifugal pressures.

The discovery of crude oil in commercial quantities in the late 1950s and its rapid expansion in the 1960s fundamentally altered this balance. Oil revenues, centrally collected and geographically concentrated, introduced new distributive conflicts and intensified elite competition for control of the federal state (Watts, 2004). As oil replaced agriculture as Nigeria's primary source of revenue, the political incentives underpinning derivation weakened considerably.

### **Military Rule and the Centralization of Fiscal Power**

The most dramatic transformation in Nigeria's revenue allocation system occurred during the era of military rule (1966–1999). Military

governments, operating under a unitary command structure, systematically centralized fiscal authority as part of broader efforts to consolidate political control and suppress regional autonomy. Decrees enacted during this period transferred ownership and control of natural resources from regional governments to the federal state, fundamentally altering Nigeria's fiscal federalism (Arowolo, 2011).

Key legal instruments, such as the Petroleum Decree of 1969 and the Land Use Decree of 1978, entrenched federal ownership of oil resources and stripped subnational governments of meaningful control over revenue-generating assets. Concurrently, the derivation principle was progressively reduced—from 50 percent in the early post-independence years to as low as 1.5 percent by the late 1980s (Suberu, 2001). These changes reflected deliberate political choices aimed at strengthening the federal center and enabling military elites to allocate resources strategically across regions.

Revenue allocation commissions established during this period, including the Dina Commission (1968) and the Abovade Commission (1977), introduced increasingly complex formulas incorporating criteria such as equality of states, population, land mass, and social development. While presented as objective and technocratic, these formulas effectively legitimized fiscal centralization and expanded federal discretion over revenue distribution (Ekpo, 2004).

From a political economy perspective, military centralization of revenue allocation served two key functions. First, it allowed ruling elites to finance expansive patronage networks essential for regime survival. Second, it weakened regional power bases that could challenge central authority. Fiscal federalism, in this sense, was subordinated to the imperatives of authoritarian governance.

## **The Fourth Republic and the Persistence of Fiscal Centralization**

The transition to democratic rule in 1999 raised expectations that Nigeria would restore fiscal federalism and enhance subnational autonomy. The 1999 Constitution formally recognized Nigeria as a federation and established the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) to oversee revenue sharing. However, despite these institutional reforms, the underlying structure of fiscal centralization remained largely intact.

Although derivation was increased to 13 percent for oil-producing states, this adjustment fell short of addressing longstanding grievances over resource control and environmental degradation in the Niger Delta (Obi, 2010). Moreover, the federal government retained control over the most lucrative revenue sources, while states and local governments continued to depend overwhelmingly on statutory allocations from the federation account.

In practice, revenue allocation in the Fourth Republic has continued to reflect elite bargaining rather than fiscal rationality. Political elites at both federal and state levels have adapted to the centralized system, using federal allocations to finance political competition and sustain patronage networks (Lewis, 2011). As a result, fiscal dependence has deepened, with many states neglecting internally generated revenue and prioritizing access to federal power.

Recurring debates over restructuring, resource control, and constitutional reform underscore the unresolved nature of Nigeria's fiscal question. Yet, repeated national conferences and reform proposals have produced limited outcomes, largely because they fail to confront the elite interests embedded in the existing revenue allocation regime (Mustapha, 2014).

## **Historical Continuities and the Roots of Crisis**

A central insight from this historical analysis is the remarkable continuity in Nigeria's revenue allocation politics despite regime changes. While the principles and formulas have evolved, the core logic of fiscal centralization and elite control has persisted. Revenue allocation has consistently functioned as a mechanism for managing political coalitions and distributing rents rather than promoting fiscal autonomy or development.

This historical trajectory reinforces the argument advanced in the theoretical framework: Nigeria's crisis of fiscal federalism is not accidental or purely technical. It is the outcome of a long-standing political settlement in which elite interests are deeply invested in centralized revenue control. Any meaningful reform must therefore grapple with these historical and political realities rather than relying solely on institutional redesign.

## **Elite Politics and Fiscal Centralization in Nigeria**

Fiscal centralization in Nigeria cannot be adequately explained by constitutional design or economic efficiency alone. Rather, it is best understood as the outcome of sustained elite political strategies aimed at controlling access to state resources and managing political competition. Revenue allocation has become a central mechanism through which political elites consolidate power, distribute patronage, and stabilize governing coalitions. In this context, fiscal centralization is not a policy failure but a politically rational arrangement that serves elite interests.

## **Oil Rents, Elite Bargaining, and Central Control**

The dominance of oil revenues in Nigeria's political economy has profoundly shaped elite behavior and fiscal outcomes. Oil rents are centrally collected, externally generated, and relatively detached

from domestic productive activity. This structural feature encourages intense elite competition for control of the federal government, which functions as the primary gatekeeper of national wealth (Ross, 2012). Consequently, revenue allocation operates as a distributive arena in which elites bargain over access to oil rents rather than as a mechanism for promoting fiscal responsibility or development.

Elite bargaining over revenue allocation is often framed in formal institutional terms—such as constitutional debates, revenue allocation commissions, and legislative negotiations—but is equally driven by informal networks and patronage relationships. Federal elites use control over fiscal transfers to reward loyal subnational actors, neutralize political opposition, and maintain regional alliances. In turn, state-level elites largely accept fiscal dependence on the center, as it provides predictable access to resources without the political costs associated with taxation and internal revenue mobilization (Lewis, 2011).

This elite-driven fiscal arrangement has contributed to what scholars describe as a “rentier political culture,” in which political competition centers on capturing distributive authority rather than improving governance performance (Watts, 2004). Fiscal centralization thus reinforces a political logic that prioritizes access to rents over accountability, efficiency, or development.

### **Federal Dominance and the Weakening of Subnational Autonomy**

One of the most significant consequences of elite-driven fiscal centralization is the erosion of subnational autonomy. Although Nigeria’s constitution assigns responsibilities to states and local governments, it provides them with limited independent revenue sources. The federal government controls the most buoyant tax bases—particularly petroleum profits tax, royalties, and customs

revenues—while subnational governments rely overwhelmingly on federally allocated funds (Arowolo, 2011).

Elite theory helps explain why this imbalance persists. Federal elites benefit directly from centralized revenue control, as it enhances their leverage over subnational governments. Access to federal allocations becomes a powerful instrument for influencing state-level political outcomes, including electoral competition, party alignment, and policy compliance. As a result, fiscal dependence undermines the capacity of states to act autonomously or challenge federal authority.

At the same time, subnational elites are not merely passive victims of fiscal centralization. Many state governors and local political leaders actively participate in sustaining the centralized system because it offers opportunities for rent extraction with minimal accountability. Dependence on federal transfers reduces the incentive to develop internally generated revenue, which would require stronger taxation systems and greater responsiveness to local citizens (Suberu, 2001). In this way, elite interests at multiple levels of government converge to reproduce fiscal centralization.

### **Revenue Allocation Institutions and Elite Capture**

Institutions designed to regulate revenue allocation—such as the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC)—operate within a political environment shaped by elite dominance. While these institutions are formally tasked with promoting fairness and efficiency, their recommendations are often constrained by political considerations and elite bargaining. Changes to revenue allocation formulas typically reflect negotiated compromises among powerful actors rather than objective assessments of fiscal need or developmental priorities (RMAFC, 2018).

Elite capture of fiscal institutions limits the transformative potential of reform initiatives. For example, repeated calls for increased derivation, fiscal decentralization, and restructuring have been acknowledged in official discourse but rarely implemented in ways that significantly alter the balance of fiscal power. Instead, reforms tend to be incremental, symbolic, or selectively applied to manage political pressure without disrupting elite control (Mustapha, 2014).

This pattern underscores a key insight of political economy theory: institutions do not operate independently of power relations. In Nigeria, revenue allocation institutions function as arenas for elite negotiation rather than as autonomous regulatory bodies. As a result, fiscal centralization persists even in the face of widespread recognition of its dysfunction.

### **Centralization, Patronage, and Democratic Accountability**

Fiscal centralization has also had far-reaching implications for democratic accountability in Nigeria. In theory, fiscal federalism enhances accountability by linking public spending to local taxation and citizen oversight. In practice, Nigeria's centralized revenue system weakens this relationship. Since subnational governments rely primarily on federal transfers, political accountability shifts upward toward the federal center rather than downward toward citizens (Oates, 1972).

Elite-controlled revenue allocation thus facilitates the expansion of patronage politics. Federal allocations become resources for financing political campaigns, rewarding loyal supporters, and sustaining clientelist networks. This dynamic reduces the pressure on political leaders to deliver public goods or pursue developmental policies, contributing to poor governance outcomes and persistent underdevelopment (Lewis, 2011).

Moreover, fiscal centralization exacerbates political instability by intensifying competition for federal power. Elections at the national level take on existential significance because control of the federal state determines access to national resources. This high-stakes political environment fuels electoral violence, elite fragmentation, and governance crises, further undermining democratic consolidation.

### **Elite Politics and the Reproduction of Fiscal Crisis**

The persistence of fiscal centralization in Nigeria reflects a broader pattern of elite reproduction. Political elites adapt to changing institutional contexts while preserving core structures that secure their access to resources. Even transitions from military to civilian rule have not fundamentally altered the centralized fiscal order, underscoring the resilience of elite interests embedded within Nigeria's revenue allocation system (Suberu, 2001).

This analysis reinforces the central argument of the article: Nigeria's crisis of fiscal federalism is rooted in elite politics rather than institutional design alone. Revenue allocation remains a site of elite contestation in which power, not policy efficiency, determines outcomes. As long as elite incentives remain aligned with fiscal centralization, meaningful reform will remain elusive.

### **Revenue Allocation, Inequality, and Intergovernmental Relations in Nigeria**

One of the most visible outcomes of Nigeria's centralized revenue allocation system is the persistence of deep regional, social, and developmental inequalities. While revenue allocation is often justified as a redistributive mechanism aimed at promoting national cohesion and balanced development, its actual operation has frequently produced the opposite effect. Rather than reducing disparities, the existing fiscal arrangement has entrenched uneven

development, intensified regional grievances, and strained intergovernmental relations. These outcomes are closely tied to the political logic of elite-driven fiscal centralization discussed in the preceding sections.

### **Regional Inequality and Uneven Development**

Nigeria's revenue allocation system has struggled to address structural inequalities among its regions. Although allocation formulas incorporate criteria such as equality of states, population, and social development, these measures have not translated into equitable developmental outcomes. States with limited economic capacity remain heavily dependent on federal transfers, yet these transfers are often insufficient to overcome historical disadvantages or stimulate sustainable development (Ekpo, 2004).

Paradoxically, some of the most resource-rich regions in Nigeria, particularly oil-producing areas of the Niger Delta, continue to experience high levels of poverty, environmental degradation, and infrastructural neglect. This contradiction highlights a fundamental flaw in Nigeria's revenue allocation regime: the disconnection between resource extraction and local development. While oil revenues constitute the backbone of the national economy, the communities from which these resources are extracted receive limited direct benefits, reinforcing perceptions of injustice and exploitation (Watts, 2004; Obi, 2010).

Elite politics further compounds this inequality. Revenue allocated to states does not automatically translate into improved welfare outcomes, as elite capture and patronage politics divert public resources away from development priorities. In this context, inequality is not merely a fiscal problem but a political one, shaped by how elites allocate and utilize public funds.

## **The Derivation Principle and the Politics of Resource Control**

The derivation principle occupies a central place in debates on revenue allocation and inequality. Advocates of increased derivation argue that resource-producing states should retain a larger share of revenues to address environmental damage, infrastructural deficits, and developmental needs. Opponents, however, contend that excessive derivation would undermine national solidarity and disadvantage less-endowed states (Suberu, 2001).

The current 13 percent derivation provision represents a political compromise rather than a resolution of these competing claims. While it has increased revenues accruing to oil-producing states, it has not significantly altered the underlying structure of fiscal centralization. More importantly, derivation has become an elite-mediated instrument, with political leaders framing resource control demands in popular terms while negotiating outcomes that preserve federal dominance (Mustapha, 2014).

As a result, derivation has not fully addressed inequality or mitigated conflict in the Niger Delta. Instead, it has become embedded in a broader system of elite bargaining, where fiscal concessions are used to manage dissent rather than promote structural transformation.

## **Intergovernmental Relations and Fiscal Dependence**

Nigeria's revenue allocation system has also profoundly shaped intergovernmental relations, particularly the relationship between the federal government and subnational units. In theory, federalism **предполагает** cooperation and coordination among levels of government. In practice, fiscal dependence has skewed intergovernmental relations in favor of the federal center, undermining the autonomy and bargaining power of states and local governments.

Monthly distributions from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) have become the primary arena of fiscal interaction between the federal and subnational governments. These meetings symbolize the dependence of states on centrally distributed revenues and reinforce the hierarchical nature of Nigeria's federal system. Rather than functioning as partners in governance, states often operate as fiscal clients of the federal government (Arowolo, 2011).

This dependence weakens intergovernmental cooperation and encourages compliance over collaboration. States that rely heavily on federal transfers are less likely to challenge federal policies or pursue independent development strategies. Consequently, intergovernmental relations are characterized by vertical dependence rather than horizontal coordination, limiting the effectiveness of Nigeria's federal system.

### **Local Governments and the Deepening of Fiscal Inequality**

Fiscal centralization has had particularly severe implications for local governments, which occupy the lowest tier of Nigeria's federal structure. Although constitutionally recognized, local governments lack meaningful fiscal autonomy and are often subject to control by state governments through mechanisms such as joint state–local government accounts. This arrangement has further diluted accountability and constrained grassroots development (Ekpo, 2004).

Elite capture at the state level exacerbates these challenges. State political elites frequently appropriate funds meant for local governments, reinforcing inequality at the subnational level and undermining service delivery. As a result, local governments struggle to fulfill their constitutional responsibilities, contributing to poor governance outcomes and citizen disillusionment with the state.

## **Revenue Allocation and Conflict in Intergovernmental Relations**

The distributive nature of Nigeria's revenue allocation system has also fueled intergovernmental conflict. Disputes over revenue-sharing formulas, derivation, and fiscal responsibilities frequently generate tensions among federal, state, and local governments. These conflicts are often expressed through legal challenges, political protests, and demands for constitutional reform.

In oil-producing regions, fiscal grievances have intersected with environmental and social issues to produce sustained conflict and militancy. While these conflicts are often portrayed as grassroots movements, they are frequently mediated by elite actors who leverage popular discontent to renegotiate fiscal arrangements or secure political concessions (Watts, 2004).

These dynamics underscore the limitations of Nigeria's current revenue allocation system as a tool for conflict management. Rather than fostering integration and stability, elite-driven fiscal centralization has contributed to fragmentation and contestation within the federation.

## **Inequality, Intergovernmental Relations, and the Crisis of Federalism**

Taken together, the relationship between revenue allocation, inequality, and intergovernmental relations highlights the depth of Nigeria's fiscal federalism crisis. Centralized revenue control has entrenched dependency, weakened subnational autonomy, and failed to deliver equitable development outcomes. At the same time, elite mediation of fiscal relations has transformed revenue allocation into a mechanism for managing political tensions rather than resolving structural inequalities.

This analysis reinforces the central argument of the article: Nigeria's revenue allocation challenges cannot be addressed through technical reforms alone. Without confronting the elite interests that sustain fiscal centralization and mediate intergovernmental relations, inequality and conflict will continue to define Nigeria's federal experience.

### **Comparative Discussion: Nigeria in Resource-Dependent Federal States**

Nigeria's experience with revenue allocation, elite politics, and fiscal centralization is not unique; it reflects patterns observed in other resource-dependent federal states across the Global South. Countries with abundant natural resources often face the dual challenges of centralized revenue control and elite capture, which complicate the principles of fiscal federalism and exacerbate inequality. By situating Nigeria within this broader comparative framework, this section highlights lessons that transcend national boundaries and underscores the global relevance of elite-driven fiscal dynamics.

### **Resource Dependence and Fiscal Centralization**

A common feature of resource-dependent federations is the centralization of resource revenues. Countries such as Venezuela, Malaysia, and Indonesia similarly rely on centrally collected rents from oil, gas, or mineral resources, which are then distributed to subnational units. As in Nigeria, this structure often creates fiscal dependence, weakens local governance, and concentrates political power in the hands of central elites (Ross, 2012; Bird & Vaillancourt, 2006).

In Venezuela, for instance, oil revenues constitute over half of national government income, and the federal government exerts significant control over transfers to states. This has generated similar patterns of elite bargaining and regional inequality, with resource-

rich regions remaining politically dependent on the central government for fiscal survival. Malaysia presents a parallel case, where oil royalties to resource-producing states are heavily negotiated and tied to federal political priorities (Tan, 2004).

These comparative examples illustrate a critical insight: resource dependence intensifies the stakes of fiscal centralization. When central governments control the most lucrative revenue streams, subnational units become financially and politically subordinate, reproducing the dynamics observed in Nigeria.

### **Elite Capture and Political Settlements**

Comparative scholarship also highlights the role of elite politics in shaping fiscal outcomes. Elite capture is not a consequence of institutional design alone; it is embedded in broader political settlements that determine how resources are allocated. In resource-dependent states, dominant elites at the center often negotiate informal arrangements with subnational elites to maintain political stability, co-opt opposition, and manage regional grievances (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012; Watts, 2004).

In Nigeria, elite capture manifests through federal control of oil revenues and the strategic use of revenue allocation to reward political loyalty. Similar dynamics are evident in Indonesia's oil-rich provinces, where central elites distribute funds through discretionary mechanisms while provincial governments rely on transfers to finance local development and political patronage (Fitriani, Hofman, & Kaiser, 2005). These comparative examples suggest that centralized fiscal control coupled with elite mediation is a common feature of resource-dependent federations, with profound implications for development and governance.

## **Fiscal Federalism and Inequality**

Resource dependence also exacerbates inequalities across regions. In Nigeria, revenue centralization has failed to translate resource wealth into equitable development, particularly in the Niger Delta. Comparative cases reinforce this pattern: in Brazil, despite the constitutional framework for fiscal federalism, resource-rich states often experience uneven development due to central control over resource rents and unequal distribution mechanisms (Shah & Thompson, 2004). Similarly, in Malaysia, the distribution of oil and gas revenues has historically favored certain states over others, reflecting federal priorities and political calculations (Tan, 2004).

These cases illustrate that the challenge of translating resource wealth into equitable outcomes is not purely technical. Rather, it reflects the political logic of elite-mediated revenue allocation, where the central government leverages resources to maintain power, manage opposition, and stabilize political coalitions. Nigeria's experience, therefore, aligns closely with broader trends in resource-dependent federal systems.

## **Implications for Theory and Policy**

The comparative perspective also reinforces the theoretical contributions of this study. By integrating political economy and elite theory, it highlights that revenue allocation is fundamentally a political process shaped by power relations rather than a neutral technical problem. Across resource-dependent federal states, elites consistently exploit centralized fiscal arrangements to consolidate authority, distribute rents, and stabilize regimes, creating persistent tensions between national cohesion, subnational autonomy, and developmental equity.

## **Reform Prospects and Policy Implications**

The analysis presented in this study underscores that Nigeria's fiscal federalism challenges are deeply political rather than merely technical. Reform efforts have historically focused on adjusting revenue allocation formulas, increasing derivation percentages, or creating new institutions, yet these measures have often failed to address the underlying elite incentives that sustain fiscal centralization. For reforms to be meaningful, they must target both institutional design and the political economy in which these institutions operate.

### **Institutional and Legal Reforms**

Institutionally, there is a need for stronger mechanisms that enhance transparency, accountability, and equitable revenue distribution. The Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), for instance, could be empowered to implement binding recommendations rather than merely advisory ones, with explicit mechanisms to ensure compliance by federal and state governments. Legal reforms should also consider clarifying the fiscal responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments to reduce ambiguity and conflict. Codifying resource revenue sharing more robustly could reduce elite manipulation of discretionary allocations (Suberu, 2001; Mustapha, 2014).

Furthermore, revisiting the derivation principle and integrating objective measures of environmental impact, population, and infrastructure needs could improve fairness. However, these adjustments must be accompanied by institutional safeguards that prevent elite capture, ensuring that allocations translate into tangible development outcomes rather than patronage.

## **Fiscal Decentralization and Subnational Capacity Building**

A critical reform avenue is enhancing fiscal decentralization by strengthening subnational governments' capacity to generate internally sourced revenue. States and local governments should be incentivized to develop robust tax systems, improve public financial management, and reduce dependency on federal transfers. Building subnational capacity would not only enhance autonomy but also increase accountability, as political leaders would be directly answerable to local constituents (Ekpo, 2004).

Complementary measures include improving fiscal reporting and audit systems, introducing performance-based allocations, and ensuring equitable access to federal funds. These measures could help align revenue allocation with developmental objectives rather than purely political priorities.

## **Addressing Elite Incentives**

Reforms must also target the political logic that sustains centralization. Elite incentives to maintain control over resources are deeply entrenched, making purely technocratic adjustments insufficient. Effective reform requires creating a political environment where elites perceive benefits in promoting equitable revenue distribution, reducing dependency, and supporting decentralized governance. This could involve restructuring political party incentives, strengthening intergovernmental coordination, and enhancing civil society engagement to hold elites accountable (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

## **Conflict Mitigation and Inclusive Governance**

Finally, reform must address the conflict dimension inherent in Nigeria's revenue allocation system. Structured mechanisms for negotiation, dispute resolution, and participatory budgeting could

reduce tensions between the federal center and subnational units. Involving diverse stakeholders—including communities in resource-producing regions, civil society actors, and technocrats—can ensure that revenue allocation promotes development and reduces grievances that have historically fueled unrest in regions such as the Niger Delta (Watts, 2004; Obi, 2010).

Taken together, these reform strategies suggest that meaningful change requires a synergistic approach: technical improvements in formulas and institutions, capacity-building at subnational levels, and the transformation of elite political incentives. Only by addressing these dimensions simultaneously can Nigeria move toward a fiscal federalism system that is equitable, transparent, and development-oriented.

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the politics of revenue allocation in Nigeria, situating it within a broader framework of fiscal federalism, elite theory, and political economy. The analysis demonstrates that Nigeria's persistent fiscal centralization, intergovernmental inequality, and regional disparities are not accidental; they are the outcome of a long-standing political settlement in which elites at both federal and subnational levels actively shape revenue allocation to consolidate power and distribute rents.

Historically, revenue allocation evolved from the colonial derivation system through post-independence adjustments, military centralization, and the present Fourth Republic arrangements. Across these periods, political elites have maintained control over resource rents, often subordinating principles of equity, development, and accountability to the imperatives of regime survival and coalition management. The consequences of this elite-driven system are profound: entrenched regional inequality, subnational fiscal

dependence, weak local governance, and frequent conflict over resource distribution.

Comparative analysis further illustrates that Nigeria's experience is emblematic of challenges faced by resource-dependent federal states globally. Centralized revenue control, elite capture, and the politicization of fiscal institutions are common features in countries such as Venezuela, Indonesia, and Malaysia. These cases underscore the universality of the political dynamics observed in Nigeria while highlighting the need for reforms that address the incentives driving elite behavior, not just technical deficiencies.

The study concludes that sustainable fiscal reform in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach. Institutional and legal reforms, subnational capacity-building, conflict mitigation mechanisms, and strategies to realign elite incentives are all necessary components of a functional and equitable revenue allocation system. Without addressing the political foundations of fiscal centralization, technical adjustments alone will continue to produce limited and uneven results.

Ultimately, revenue allocation in Nigeria is a mirror reflecting the broader challenges of federal governance in resource-dependent states: the tension between central authority and subnational autonomy, the interplay of wealth and power, and the enduring influence of political elites in shaping institutional outcomes. By acknowledging and addressing these realities, policymakers and scholars can move toward a fiscal federalism system that not only stabilizes political relations but also promotes inclusive development, social equity, and democratic accountability.

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