THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL WORKERS TO CHILDREN'S UPBRINGING IN IKENNE COMMUNITY OF OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The continuous approach of criticism and social rejection in modern African communities create a lot of challenges to children undergoing upbringing and their parents. As they seek care and compassion in the school, they sometimes experience further failure reminders that lead to depleted sense of worth and feelings of social neglect. These experiences are often motivated by the cultural setting in which they have been raised. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the contributions of social workers to family life with regards to child upbringing. The population of this paper consists of children (aged 12-18) as well as social workers in Babcock University in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. A sample of 300 respondents (250 children; 50 social workers) was selected for this study using a simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire is the instrument adopted for this paper, it was content and face validated. To determine the reliability, the Cronbach alpha formula was utilized to ascertain the consistency reliability; the coefficient of 0.75 was obtained.

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics measures. The findings showed that several children in this study experienced many negative emotions that made them feel worthless. They could not conform in the company of other children who had better upbringing and discipline records. They also felt social rejects under the eye lenses of the community and often attributed their situation to being environmentally induced. Being compassionate in correcting and handling the children with poor upbringing was seen as essential. This included the selection of words for addressing these children and their parents. Adequate kindness and considerations during counseling sessions are expected from social workers as well as other professionals to advance the wellbeing of children who had poor upbringing. Proper education and awareness were seen as very useful in lowering the stigma attached to this challenge as well as encouraging parents to be better equipped in bringing up their children.

Introduction

The relevance and general centrality of social work is widely recognized. This is because social work is a vital component that can be successfully used in re-awakening mental, social, spiritual and moral consciousness of children to enable them become model citizens in the society (Wameru & Otieno, 2018). There are several caregiving and counseling services in Nigeria that offer social work services in the country especially in South-Western part of the country. The social work unit also refers children to doctors and psychologists where necessary. The social workers are motivated by the idea of raising model children for the good of the society at large. The social work offers help and spiritual guide to children who may be experiencing neglect or poor attention from their parents (Adeyemi, 2013).

However, the major focus of educational institutions in Nigeria has largely been directed towards academic performance

with little emphasis on other critical aspects such as provision of social work services which is an important pathway for students' complete development (Adeyemi, 2013). It is important that as students strive to acquire academic qualifications, they should also acquire practical values and a deep sense of responsibility which contribute to harmonious co-existence and success in one's future life (Ajidahum, 2012).

Various scholars and educational policy makers have advanced a view that strong social work services in schools can complement teachers' efforts in the intellectual, spiritual and emotional development of learners (Christian, 2018). Concerns have been raised about the worrying incidences of indiscipline cases among secondary school students in different parts of Africa, including Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2013; Christian, 2018). Serious indiscipline cases have been reported even in church-sponsored educational institutions which would be expected to have well-structured programs for the provision of chaplaincy services, thus, emphasizing the relevance of social works (Mungai, 2014; Christian, 2018).

In Nigeria, Ajidahum (2012) argued that if children in schools receive coordinated and well-focused counseling services, cases of students' indiscipline being witnessed in schools would be minimized and students would benefit more from the conducive learning environment provided. Also, as noted by Mungai (2014), delinquency of children is escalating in schools due to transfer of parental responsibilities to surrogate parents who are understandably teachers and house-helps. This nonchalant attitude results from the busy schedule of many parents because they are majorly preoccupied by work; thereby neglecting their children's emotional needs which arguably has serious ramification at indolence.

This paper identifies issues of children's indiscipline as a result of upbringing, and how social work practices can help address the challenge in Ikenne community. Also, the paper seeks to evaluate the contributions of social workers to family life with regards to child upbringing.

Statement of the Problem

Children often reflect their upbringing and background through the exhibited behaviors in schools and other social gatherings. While some parents teach their children tolerance and love, others often neglect their parental duties due to their careers and other commitments. In this case, children are taught by house helps and imitate some characters from peers. As a result of this, teachers and caregivers are confronted with solving disciplinary issues and addressing unrests which consume teaching and learning time (Mungai, 2014). Thus, this paper seeks to bridge the gap in parental child upbringing and social work assistance in child care giving.

Objectives

The general objective of this paper is to investigate the contributions of social workers to the upbringing of children in Ikenne community of Ogun State. Specifically, the paper seeks to:

1. analyze the influence of socio-cultural factors in the upbringing of children in Ikenne community of Ogun State;
2. assess the psychological factors that affect the upbringing of children in Ikenne community of Ogun State;
3. identify the spiritual factors that influences the upbringing of children in Ikenne community of Ogun State.

Literature Review

Concept of Child Upbringing

Parenting/child upbringing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, financial, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting refers to the aspects of raising a child aside from the biological relationship (Davies, 2010). It entails providing safety, shelter, clothes, nourishment, protection and physical development by introducing the child to exercise thereby inculcating good health habits in him.

The best period for commencement of the upbringing or training is the childhood of the student. Childhood is the most impressionable period in the life of a person. At this delicate and responsible juncture, the parents can play a very crucial role. But

upbringing of children is not an easy and simple function and requires deep thought of identification, knowledge, experience, determination and perseverance of the mentor or the parents. It is sad that most parents are found ignorant of the art of upbringing of children. This is the reason most children are not receiving upbringing on desirable lines and they keep growing like self-sustained saplings. Interestingly, Stauffer (2011, p. 16) stressed that:

> The character development of children is formed through the training they receive from their parents, and scripture reinforces this point negatively and positively. Stated negatively, - the rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother (Prov. 29:11). Stated positively, - train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it (Prov. 22:6)

However, there is no indication from the scripture that right to choice and decision should be neglected. Rather, there is an instruction to bring up a child in wisdom, and children are expected to positively respond through proper discipline. The New Testament further demonstrated that the early church accepted moral standards of the community based on the teachings and life of Jesus. The teachings of Jesus were orchestrated by divine and human drive which motivated people to practice right discipline and accept the modules aimed at modeling appropriate relationship between individuals in the society (Stauffer, 2011).

Parenting Styles
A parenting style is the overall emotional climate in the home (Spera, 2005). There have been several arguments for the presence of morals, values, ethics and character education, which generally focus on the actions, and efforts of parents toward inculcating the necessary discipline in the children (Chowdhury, 2016). Developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind (2017) identified three main parenting styles in early child development: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. These parenting styles

were later expanded to four, including an uninvolved style. These four styles of parenting involve combinations of acceptance and responsiveness on the one hand and demand and control on the other (Santrock, 2007).

Uninvolved Parenting: An uninvolved or neglectful parenting style is when parents are often emotionally absent and sometimes even physically absent. They have little or no expectation of the child and regularly have no communication. There is often a large gap between parents and children with this parenting style. Children with little or no communication with their own parents tended to be the victims of another child's deviant behaviour and may be involved in some deviance themselves. Children of uninvolved parents suffer in social competence, academic performance, psychosocial development and problem behaviour.

Permissive Parenting: In these family settings, a child's freedom and autonomy are highly valued, and parents tend to rely mostly on reasoning and explanation. Parents are undemanding, so there tends to be little, if any punishment or explicit rules in this style of parenting. Children of permissive parents are generally happy but sometimes show low levels of self-control and self-reliance because they lack structure at home.

Authoritarian Parenting: Authoritarian parents are very rigid and strict. They place high demands on the child, but are not responsive to the child. Parents who practice authoritarian style parenting have a rigid set of rules and expectations that are strictly enforced and require rigid obedience.

Authoritative Parenting: Described by Baumrind (2017) as the "just right" style, it combines a medium level demands on the child and a medium level responsiveness from the parents. Research shows that this style is more beneficial than the too-hard authoritarian style or the too-soft permissive style. An example of authoritative parenting would be the parents talking to their child about their emotions. However, parenting styles are only a small piece of what it takes to be a good parent. Parenting takes a lot of skill and patience and is constant work and growth.

African Worldview and Child Upbringing

Just as ancient Israelite folklore emphasized the need to properly discipline a child, in the traditional African setting high premium is placed on the development of good character in every person right from childhood, and this is well represented in various aspects of traditional African culture. Awoniyi (2015) examines character from the perspective of the traditional culture of the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria. According to him, the principles of traditional education are based on the concept of *omoluabi* (i.e. person of good character). To be an *omoluabi* in Yoruba traditional thought is to be of good character in all aspects of life.

Similarly, Abimbola (2015) considers character in Yoruba traditional culture from the perspective of the concept of *iwa* (character). *Iwapele* (gentle, patient, respective character) is what is expected of every reason-able person in the society. The person who has *iwapele* will not collide with any of the powers, both human and supernatural, and will therefore live in harmony with the forces that govern the universe. Metiboba (2013) enumerates some of the ways in which the family achieves this role in the traditional setting. Attitudes, values and other patterns of character conducive to anti-social behaviour (e.g., delinquency and crime) found by the child in the larger society are discouraged in the child from the home setting. As Awoniyi (2015) rightly observes, nothing mortifies a Yoruba parent more than to call his/her child an *abiiko* (a child who refuses good training). A child is better called an *akoogba* (a child who has been taught and accepts training), where the failure is that of the child, and not of the parents.

Socio-Cultural Perspectives of Child Upbringing

Considering the life of Eli's children as a case study for parental upbringing of their children, the researcher realizes that the best approach in child upbringing is discipline (formative and corrective) produced by love. Someone has said that "discipline without love equals cruelty" but that "love without discipline" is not love at all (Metiboba, 2013). Ogundipe (2011) rightly affirms, peer influence now seems to be more robust than parental control. Perhaps, this is why most cases of armed robbery of homes, banks and on the highways involve youth, some of whom are teenagers.

More so, the role of culture in moral development and child discipline stands out above other aspects in the moral education of the child. Methods such as forced discipline such as seen in schools when addressing the subject of child upbringing and moral development have often proven erroneous because children misinterpret such treatments as act of dislike (Oladipo, 2009). Thus, the societal influences in addition to the efforts of parents have remained the most required approaches that instill appropriate discipline in the child to ensure effective morality and accountability.

With the emergence of home video and social networks parents have increased responsibility towards their children. With these facilities children may sit even in their homes and get involved in series of crimes. We are all familiar with the kinds of inhuman activities that are learnt from home video (Masenya, 2010). In this regard, parental control seems to have been neglected because of busy schedule and thus there is no one to educate the children on the advantages and disadvantages of these facilities; parents are not usually available to monitor the type of films their children are allowed to watch. Sadly, children have been allowed to devote too much of their time to social networks and films.

Perhaps more importantly, parents often seem to have lost track of the traditional African precepts and concepts by means of which children are taught traditional values. One of the processes of achieving the goal of traditional African precepts involve encouraging the youth to maintain links with their traditional homes where some of these values are still being preserved. In contemporary Africa, many parents have lost contact with their traditional roots so much that children do not even have an idea of their nativity (Masenya, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

The paper adopts the social action theory to guide the theoretical framework. The social action theory was propounded by Max Weber in 1902. The social action theory accepts and assumes that humans vary their actions according to social contexts and how it will affect other people; when a potential reaction is not desirable, the action is modified accordingly (Teefah, 2019). "Action can mean

either a basic action (one that has a meaning) or an advanced social action, which not only has a meaning but is directed at other actors and causes action" (Teefah, 2019, p. 24).

According to Gleeson & Baird (2017), the theoretical approach of social action has been used to explain the process of social development goal setting, development partnership as well as organizing and mobilizing various support systems by the citizens and intervention groups. This social action is taken at all levels of society such as: community mobilization and participation, capacity building and empowerment, civil society and citizen organization and any other action taken to bring the social system to another equilibrium state (Gleeson & Baird 2017).

However, the social action theory tends to ignore wider social structure. It would seem that as social action theory is generally subjective, it is not as solid as structuralist approaches where research is based on facts. The social action theory applies to this paper because it helps to enlighten parents on the most appropriate and effective approach to child upbringing in the area under study. The theory also helps to encourage the contributions of social workers regarding the upbringing of children in Ikenne community of Ogun State.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey method of research. The population of this study consists of children (aged 12-18 years) and social workers in Babcock University, Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State. A sample of three hundred (300) children and social workers in Babcock University, Ikenne LGA were selected for this study using the simple random sampling technique. 250 questionnaires were administered to the children, while 50 questionnaires were administered to the social workers at the Babcock University Teaching Hospital. The four point likert scale was adopted for this study. The instrument was content validated by experts involved with child discipline and upbringing issues in the field of social work. The Cronbach alpha formula was used to determine the internal consistency reliability; the reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using the appropriate descriptive statistics measures; mean and standard deviation.

FINDINGS
Results of Analysis

Paper Question One: Do socio-cultural factors affect the upbringing of children?

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the influence of socio-cultural factors affect the upbringing of children

Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
Undisciplined children are considered as pain and treated with hatred	250	2.80	0.95	Agreed
Children found indiscipline as a difficult thing	250	3.30	1.25	Agreed
Children blame indiscipline on parents and guardians	250	3.50	1.20	Agreed
Social rejection and tribal discrimination reduces upbringing of children	250	3.25	1.05	Agreed
Grand Mean	**250**	**3.21**	**1.11**	**Agreed**

Source: Author's Field survey, 2020 **Mean Score: 2.50**

Table 1 indicates that participants on the influence of socio-cultural factors on the upbringing of children has a grand mean of 3.21 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that socio-cultural factors have influence on the upbringing of children. It was further found in this study that socio-cultural factors are the major challenges to adequate child upbringing in the area of study.

Paper Question Two: Does psychological factors affect the upbringing of children?

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents of psychological factors on upbringing of children

Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
Child upbringing is affected by psychological abuse, anxiety and feeling unloved	250	3.15	1.05	Agreed
Feelings of sadness, worthlessness, victimized and anger hinder upbringing	250	2.90	0.90	Agreed
Indiscipline increased the feeling of low self-esteem	250	3.20	1.10	Agreed
Frequent verbal abuses and name callings affect the upbringing of children	250	2.95	0.97	Agreed
Grand Mean	**250**	**3.05**	**1.005**	**Agreed**

Source: Author's Field survey, 2020   Mean Score: 2.50

Table 2 reveals that participants on the influence of psychological factors on the upbringing of children has a grand mean of 3.05 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that psychological factors have impact on the upbringing of children.

Paper Question Three: Does spiritual factors affect the upbringing of children?

Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on spiritual factors and their impact on children's upbringing

Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
A generational problem in the family or hereditary	250	3.50	1.25	Agreed
Natural behavior of children. In other cases, it was seen as caused by witchcraft	250	3.25	1.05	Agreed
Desire for the spiritual caregivers to be involved	250	2.85	1.01	Agreed
Having to deal with compulsive behaviours and issues of kleptomania	250	3.01	1.10	Agreed
Grand Mean	**250**	**3.15**	**1.10**	**Agreed**

Source: Author's Field survey, 2020   Mean Score: 2.50

Table 3 reveals that participants on the contribution of family and parents as factor on the use of substance among adolescents has a grand mean of 3.01 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that family and parents factor has influence on the substance use among adolescents.

Paper Question four: How does social work practice contribute to family life in terms of child upbringing?

Table 4: Mean responses of respondents on how social work practice contribute to family life in terms of child upbringing

Item Statement	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Decision
Counseling the children on how best to resist peer pressure would help the upbringing of the child	50	3.65	1.75	Agreed
Teaching parents the best way to discipline their children without bruising their self-esteem or pampering their mistakes would improve the upbringing of the children	50	3.80	1.80	Agreed
Exposing children's indiscipline issues to their parents during disciplinary counseling will help keep them away from repetition	50	3.50	1.32	Agreed
Suggesting methods to parents on how best to reach out to their children will help improve the upbringing of children	50	3.35	1.25	Agreed
Grand Mean	**50**	**3.57**	**1.53**	**Agreed**

Source: Author's Field survey, 2020   **Mean Score: 2.50**

Table 5 reveals that participants on contributions of social workers to family life in terms of child upbringing has a grand mean of 3.57 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50, implying that participants agreed that social workers contribute adequately to family life especially in matters of child upbringing.

Discussion

The study found the impact of social rejection in the upbringing of children as one of the main socio-cultural factors. It was pointed out that some of the children felt unloved and isolated. This correlated with the study of Greil, McQuillan and Blevins (2011) who pointed out those matters of child discipline are socially defined. Their research revealed that children indiscipline in some social contexts contributes toward the incidence of child low self-worth.

Furthermore, the society blames parents for failed child discipline. In this study, some parents of the participants reaffirmed their efforts in disciplining their children though some accepted that they felt pity for the children and therefore avoided any appearance being harsh to them. On this note, White (2014, p. 234) clearly pointed out that love for children should not prevent discipline:

> Love exercised while duty is neglected will make
> children headstrong, willful, perverse, selfish,
> and disobedient. If stern duty is left to stand
> alone without love to soften and win, it will have
> a similar result. Duty and love must be blended
> in order that children may be properly
> disciplined

In many cases, low self-esteem was observed. The study reported that in situations where there was very little or no societal support, this challenge was noted. A different study by Miller (2002) on this discipline issue in children revealed the risk of having a major low self-esteem which often cause poor academic performance as well as anxiety. Spirituality and entrenched cultural beliefs were so inseparable that even participants attributed their disciplinary issues to them. Thus, spiritual care-giving is central and calls for understanding the children's spiritual needs. In a similar finding, Popoola, Popoola, Awolola and Shoyombo (2019, p. 1) observed in a study of children discipline from non-western settings. They stated that they "do not abandon their own perceptions, culture, or belief systems regarding character or behaviour even when referred to Western care givers for discipline".

It was found from this study that efforts of social workers greatly improve and contribute immensely to the upbringing of children. This study correlates with Omorogiuwa and Ukponahiusi (2017) who submitted that efforts of social workers are designed to minimize the risk factors for early substance use at the individual level, school, family, and community. This is also supported by National Association of Social Workers, NASW (2016) that social workers' intervention carries out important tasks by supporting parents, adolescents, family, school, workplace and community to handle the cases of child discipline and other family life issues. In other studies, by Omorogiuwa (2020) and Amadasun and Omorogiuwa (2020) it was buttressed that conducive environments and compassionate professionals (social workers) contribute heavily to the psychological assistance offered to the children. As a matter of fact, social workers are expected to "be at the vanguard of promoting policy change in the context of the challenges faced" (Omorogiuwa, 2020, p. 647) by children who have upbringing or discipline problems.

Conclusion

The paper revealed that upbringing of children in Ikenne community faced many challenges: socio-cultural, spiritual, psychological and emotional. Results of findings show that in some cases, traditional religious beliefs interfered with upbringing provision. They may be so spiritually connected that the children may refuse some upbringing methods. Thus, spiritual caregivers need to be culturally competent enough to meet the needs of their prospects without offending them or their parents.

The society viewed the children with frequent disciplinary issues as outcasts. These children felt neglected by the society. In this study, many other people had no idea about the emotional pain experienced by children with disciplinary issues and their parents as a result of the unkind remarks against them. It is unfortunate that child upbringing gradually and steadily not being seen as a collective effort anymore.

Low self-esteem and feeling unloved were part of the psychological effects that were recurrently reported by the children. The study showed that in the African worldview, failed child

upbringing is not only a parental failure. While both the social workers and the children did not deny the misbehavior and wrong ethics displayed by the children, in some cases, they attributed the phenomenon to spiritual issues. These included witchcraft, generational curses, hereditary and impulsive behavior. In this instance, spirituality became the most important component in addressing the needs of these children and their parents.

Recommendation

The paper recommends the following:

1. Adequate kindness and considerations during counseling sessions are expected from social workers as well as other professionals to advance the wellbeing of children who had poor upbringing.
2. Proper education and awareness are useful in lowering the stigma attached to the challenge as well as encouraging parents to be better equipped in bringing up their children.
3. Social workers should work out a plan on a follow-up initiative that will meet the psychological, spiritual and social needs of the children.
4. The authoritative parenting method is recommended for the parents in Ikenne community because it combines formation with correction thereby correcting children with love and discipline. This method would ensure that the character of children is formed on the basis of character formed out of total discipline and love.

Limitations

The paper studied child upbringing as focus. The major aim was to identify the approaches to child upbringing in modern society. Further inquiry into this area will create an understanding of the contribution of socio-cultural context toward children upbringing. Furthermore, a comparative qualitative study of Africans and Biracial or White children discipline in the same territory may amplify the impact of the African ethos on child upbringing.

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SOCIAL CATEGORIES IN THE READERSHIP OF CATHOLIC PUBLICATIONS AND UTILIZATION OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS MESSAGES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

People preferentially utilize religious messages that align with their belief, thereby strengthening their alignment with the larger group. People also engage more with publications and other media that communicate values, belief, and customs of their group to the public. This study used survey research method to establish how Catholic respondents achieved the above while utilizing religious messages both offline and online. The study sampled behaviour of respondents in 10 Catholic Dioceses in Nigeria namely, Bauchi, Ilorin, Otukpo, Oyo, Osogbo, and Ibadan, Owerri, Orlu, Ahiara and Okigwe. The survey took three months from December 24, 2019 to March 25, 2020. Out of 300 questionnaires administered, 250 copies were returned. Two hundred and forty self-identified Catholic respondents who were 18 years of age or older participated in the survey. This is because 10 out of the 250 questionnaires were not answered. The researcher employed SPSS statistical tool version 15.0 to enter the information and EXCEL to plot the graph and other figures. The finding established that despite obvious economic challenges they face, respondents engaged Catholic publications, other traditional media, and Catholic websites more to utilize religious messages. This is because Catholic media communicate the belief they align with. However, there is palpable differentiation especially of age in engagement. Older Catholics engaged the print version more and also followed majorly traditional media, while young Catholics participated more actively online.

Introduction

The Catholic Church is a visible society of baptized Christians. The Church in Nigeria is part of the worldwide Catholic Church under the spiritual leadership of the Pope, the Curia in Rome, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). The 2005 population estimate recorded 19 million baptized Catholics in Nigeria (Timberg, 2005). In 2010, the figure rose to 22.6 million

(Pew Research Center, 2010). Catholics in the South Eastern states account for over 70 percent of Nigeria's Catholic population. Nwaka (2013) asserted that the Church is one of the religious organizations that use the mass media, especially newspaper, for evangelization purposes. Presently, the Church has more than 50 newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals.

Statement of the Problem

Progressive historical changes over time and advancement in information and communication technology have altered the way people utilize religious messages. For instance available historical evidence confirmed that around 1846 to 1863, almost all of the reading by the Nigerian public was religious. During this period, the comparative power of religious publications was very strong, ditto for circulation. Religious publications around this time discussed religious ideas about social issues. One example is Iwe Irohin, which normally reviewed happenings in society. This obviously is one of the reasons why people read religious publications then. Another reason is that readers were committed to reading religious publications based on belief. Today, people are active on several platforms and they use these platforms to utilize religious messages. This study examines media utilization profiles of Nigerian Catholics according to age, education, economic status, mass attendance etc.

The following Research Questions guided the study

RQ.1 How aware are readers of Catholic publications?
RQ.2 How do readers evaluate Catholic publications they read?
RQ.3 How do readers evaluate their participation/faith on social media platforms?

Literature Review

Media, Society and Culture

Media shape culture and society. Understanding media necessarily passes through knowing what they do to culture (Griffin, 2012). In colonial Nigeria, the missionaries who introduced the faith to the indigenous people they met on ground, appreciated

visualization (Griffin, 2012) as they already involved media in their daily routine. They came with myriads of literature such as bible, their rulebooks, newspaper, magazine, breviary, hymnbooks, and French dictionary among others. A typical day routine involved saying prayers together using the Breviary, the book of prayers, which they vocalized as a community on behalf of the Church for their intentions, and the intentions of the world (Trichet, 2016). There are other books of prayer from France that they used for spiritual reading, which helped them to advance their spiritual life. They had Hymn Books and a dictionary that translated French words into Igbo (Trichet, 2016).

They routinely used these books to enhance their lives, enhance their collective identity, and reinforce belief and their peculiarity. There were foreign newspapers and magazines that they relaxed with when done with work (Trichet, 2016). Such high level of understanding media helped them to appreciate its role in society and made them eager to replicate such understanding among the local people. They sought to have crop of informed converts, more successful co-workers, and more savvy media consumers. This vision was behind the introduction of the Catholic Herald by Archbishop Leo Taylor to the Lagos public in 1924. They had a printing press in St. Paul Catholic Church, Ebute Metta that published the newspaper. Daramola (2013) recalled that Fr. Aimed Simon established the printing press.

Like Henry Townsend of the CMS, Fr. Simon hailed from a family that engaged in the printing trade in Switzerland (Daramola, 2013). The other Catholic periodicals that arrived during the early era of Catholic publication development include Catholic Life Magazine of Calabar, The Leader Newspaper of Owerri, and Catholic Weekly Independent of Ibadan (Traber, Vanhengel, and Ohieku, 1978). The Catholic Life tutored Nigerians on the place and essence of being a republic after independence in the 1960s (Daramola, 2013). In the early period of media culture in the Nigerian Church, the foreign journalists and workers at the presses informally trained young people and even employed the good ones at the presses (Dianne, 2007). This process advanced media culture in society. The people respected producers of these publications and encouraged them by buying the publications.

Of course, available historical record confirmed a high number of sold copies. For instance, the number of sold copies for the Catholic Life Magazine in 1958 was 45, 000 (Longworth, 2007). The Leader recorded its highest circulation figure of 25, 000 just before the commencement of Nigerian civil war (Nwalo, 2016). There was a downturn too, but the point being made here is that the high figures indicate a high reception by the reading public, especially the elite. Later to prove their understanding of media, the elite too established newspapers to promote their humanist and secular aspirations. They used the printing presses established by religious organizations as the production facility to produce their newspapers.

However, Nigerian Catholics relied on Catholic publications and other traditional media to receive religious messages from the Church until the 1990s when Internet's emergence proliferated the ways people receive religious messages and ways they actively participate in religious discussions. According to Ihejirika (2008), the new information and communication technologies were well received in the Catholic Church, an appreciation other technologies of mass communication did not attain. In 1995, the Church launched the Vatican website closely guided by an American female information and communications expert. It has remained the most authentic source of information on the Church on the web. Both Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI exhibited very positive attitudes towards these technologies by applying them to their ministries.

The leadership of the Popes encouraged proliferation of Catholic religious messages on the Internet. It encourages active participation of priests and Church members in sending and receiving religious messages on the Internet. Saylor.org (2010) described a day's routine in the life of a person today:

> Think of your typical day. If you are like many people, you wake to a digital alarm clock or perhaps your cell phone. ...Some people immediately check their cell phones for text messages. Others will turn on the computer and check Facebook, Email, or Websites. Some people read the newspaper. Others listen to music on an iPod or CD. Some people will turn on

the television and watch a weather channel, cable news, or Sports Center. Heading to work or class, you may chat on a cell phone or listen to music. Your classes likely employ various types of media from course management software to PowerPoint presentations to DVDs to YouTube. You may return home and relax with video games, television, movies, more Facebook, or music. You connect with friends on campus and beyond with text messages or Facebook. And your day may end as you fall asleep to digital music. Media for most of us are entwined with almost every aspect of life and work.

Theoretical Framework

This study employed the theory of social categories and social groups to explain the phenomenon under investigation. This theory states that individuals within broad subgroups such as age, sex, social or educational class, react similarly to the mass media. This concept is something that has engaged the interest of researchers since the 19th century. Around the 1950s, social psychologists Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn Sherif embarked on a series of studies known as Robber's Cave Experiment that involved a group of 12-year-old boys. They conceptualized the theory of social categories and social groups from the standards and expectations that developed within the group. In psychology, a social category is a collection of people that possess certain characteristics or traits in common.

This theory's aim is to reduce the complexity of modern society. This is the reason society is divided into small groups and the common trait of each group therefore reinforces its peculiarity. This enables society to define such a group in specific ways, give members roles, and give them means of identifying membership in them. Society therefore uses these properties and information organized around them to make decisions about them. Members of each group shape one another. They use the mass media in similar ways. They therefore develop negative emotional dissonance for messages that contradict their commonality. In fact, some scholars

attribute motivation for the emergence of this theory to the cognitive dissonance theory of Leon Festinger. However, limitation of this theory is that it downplays individual differences in social groups.

Methodology

This research used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. For primary source, researcher employed survey design. The survey took place between December 24, 2019 and March 25, 2020, a period of three months. Questionnaires were administered on a selected sample representing the research population. Two hundred and forty Catholics from 10 Catholic dioceses in Nigeria namely, Bauchi, Ilorin, Oyo, Osogbo, Otukpo, and Ibadan, Owerri, Orlu, Ahiara and Okigwe who were 18 years of age or older participated in the survey. This sampling frame was obtained online from Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) Website. Using multistage cluster sampling technique, respondents were purposively selected among various demographic and economic groupings in each diocese: 10 university students, 10 workers, and 10 retired people who are Catholic newspaper readers.

The major secondary data, though not sole data, was the document titled, "The Catholic Press of Nigeria Prospects: An Evaluation of 'The Independent', 'The Leader', and 'Catholic Life', Proposals for the Establishment of a National Catholic Print Media Programme". This is a major document central to the phenomenon of interest. The other documents were reports, books, newspapers, minute of meetings, diaries, interventions and other Catholic documents in Nigeria.

Results

In this segment, data collected through the means of questionnaire are presented using charts. 'In the last three months' as will be used in the analysis depicts the duration of survey. The availability of proliferated means of utilizing religious messages prompted respondents to make some value judgments about Catholic newspapers they read.

Age

Fifty-five respondents (23%) fall between 18-24 years old. Twenty-seven percent of respondents are between 25-34 years old

and 13 percent are between 35-44 years old. Eight percent of respondents fall between 45-54 years old. Seventeen percent fall between 55-64 years old and 11 percent are between 65-74 years old. The remaining two respondents (1%) are between 75 years and above.

Education

The highest level of educational attainment of respondents in 2019/2020 is doctorate degree, but only 12 respondents (5%) attained this level. Eight percent of respondents obtained either M.A or M.Sc degrees while 87 respondents (36%) had either B.A or B.Sc degrees. Sixteen percent of respondents obtained Higher National Diploma (HND) certificate while six percent had National Certificate of Education (NCE). Twelve percent of respondents obtained Ordinary National Diploma (OND) and 33 respondents (14%) had Secondary School Certificate. Only four respondents (2%) obtained First School Leaving Certificate as their highest educational qualification. One respondent (1%) chose 'other' and specified that he/she had Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE).

Estimated Family Income Per Month

Thirteen respondents (6%) had a monthly family income that was less than N10, 000. Nineteen percent of respondents had their monthly family income ranging from N11, 000 to N30, 000 while 54 respondents (23%) earned between N31, 000 and N50, 000 per month. Thirteen percent of respondents earned between N51, 000 and N70, 000 per month while seven percent had their monthly family income ranging from N71, 000 to N90, 000. Seventy-two respondents (31%) earned between N91, 000 and above per month.

Race and Ethnicity

Half of respondents (50%) were Igbo and a quarter of respondents (25%) were Yoruba. Two percent of respondents were Hausa and only two respondents (1%) were Tiv. However, fifty-three respondents (22%) chose 'other' and they specified that they belong to the following ethnic groupings: Urhobo, Edo, Maya, and Cross River.

Generation

The ages of respondents ranged from 18 to above 75 in this 2019 survey. After weighing, the median age was 47 (in other words, half of respondents were 47 or under, and half were 47 or over). For the purpose of analysis, the researcher categorized respondents into four generations based on life experiences that are relevant to Catholics:

- The "Pre-Vatican II Generation," ages 61 and over in 2019/2020. The Pre-Vatican II generation was born in 1959 or earlier. Its members came of age before the Second Vatican Council. After the analysis, members of the Pre-Vatican II Generation made up 22 percent of respondents.
- The "Vatican II Generation," ages 54 to 60 in 2019/2020. These are Catholics born between 1960 and 1966, a time of great ecclesiological transformation in the Church. They came of age during the Second Vatican Council. Vatican II Generation of Catholics made up 10 percent of respondents.
- The "Post-Vatican II Generation," ages 20 to 53 in 2019/2020. These Catholics were born between 1965 and 2000. They have no lived experience of the Pre-Vatican II Church. The "Post-Vatican II Generation of Catholics made up 61 percent of respondents.
- The "Millennial Generation," ages 19 and below in 2019/2020. This generation born in 2001 or later have come of age under the Papacy of Francis I. Majority of them live with their parents as such their religious practice is often closely related to that of their families of origin. Millennial Generation of Catholics made up seven percent of respondents.

Mass Attendance

More than a third of respondents (38%) attend mass every week and more than a third (38%) attend mass more than once a week. Some sixteen percent of respondents attend mass almost every week while three percent of respondents rarely or never attend mass aside during wedding and funerals. Another three percent attend mass a few times a year and two percent of respondents attend mass once or twice a month.

Research Question 1

How aware are readers of Catholic publications?

Respondents were most aware of the following national Catholic publications: *Abide in my Word* (77%), *The Word among Us* (68%), *The Voice Magazine* (61%), and *The Leader Newspaper* (53%). Respondents indicated reading the following national publications in print in the last three months: *The Ambassador Magazine* (62%), *Abide in my Word* (51%), *The Word among Us* (49%), *Catholic Weekly Independent* (43%), and *The Leader Newspaper* (42%). Generally, of all the periodicals listed in figure 1, readers of *Agogo Newsletter* (25%) and *CSN News Magazine* (20%) indicated reading online exclusively than in print.

Figure 1: General Awareness and Readership in the last three months of National Catholic Publications

General Awareness and Readership in the last three months of National Catholic Publications

Title	Aware of Publication	Read in Print last 3 month	Read	Read in print	Read online only
Catholic Weekly Independent	47.6%	42.6%	62.4%	50.5%	11.9%
The Leader Newspaper	52.6%	42.2%	63.9%	53.8%	10.1%
Catholic Herald	40.5%	20.8%	37%	26.1%	10.9%
The Voice Magazine	60.6%	28.1%	43.5%	31.9%	11.6%
The Nigerian Messenger	37.2%	17.9%	34.1%	22.4%	11.8%
The Pointer	36.2%	19.4%	39.0%	32.9%	6.1%
The Nigerian Catholic Encounter	24.9%	15.1%	43.9%	33.3%	10.5%
Apostolos Magazine	24.9%	14.6%	46.6%	29.3%	17.2%
Plentiful Redemption	11.6%	9.5%	53.6%	35.7%	17.9%
The Fount Magazine	18.0%	13.9%	47.5%	30%	17.5%
The Ambassador	41.0%	61.9%	77.1%	60.2%	16.9%
Salve! IHM Newsletter	13.0%	9.5%	50.0%	31.3%	18.8%
Agogo Newsletter	13.9%	10.4%	59.4%	34.4%	25.0%
The Word Among Us	68.0%	48.7%	66.0%	57.2%	8.8%
Abide in my Word	77.0%	50.6%	64.7%	58.2%	6.5%
The Spiritual Pathway	30.0%	21.0%	52.2%	40.3%	11.9%
CSN News Magazine	43.5%	23.8%	46.6%	26.2%	20.4%

Source: Fieldwork (2019/2020)

They controlled the awareness profile of eight titles on the table: *Catholic Herald newspaper* (56.4%), *The Nigerian Messenger* (59%), *The Nigerian Catholic Encounter* (30.8%), *Apostolos Magazine* (33.3%), *The Fount Magazine* (25.6%), *The Ambassador Magazine* (64.1%), *Salve! IHM Newsletter* (20.5%), and *CSN News Magazine* (53.8%). Next to the Pre-Vatican II respondents are Post-Vatican II respondents. They controlled the awareness profile of five titles on the table: *Plentiful Redemption* (15.8%), *Agogo Newsletter* (17.5%), *The Word among Us* (78.1%), *Abide in my Word* (83.3%), and *The Spiritual Pathway* (35.1%). Following Post-Vatican II respondents are millennial respondents.

They controlled the awareness profile of two titles on the table: *Catholic Weekly Independent* (62.5%), and *The Leader Newspaper* (75%). The last on the table are Vatican II respondents. They controlled the awareness profile of two titles on the table: *The Voice Magazine* (76.2%), and *The Pointer Magazine* (42.9%).

Research Question 2

How do readers evaluate Catholic publications they read?

Majority of readers (78%) agree "strongly" that having a print version of Catholic newspapers or magazines to read is important to them (22 percent disagree "strongly"). Majority of readers (81%) agree "strongly" that overall, they are very satisfied with the print copies of the Catholic newspapers or magazines they read (19 percent disagree "strongly"). Majority of readers (84%) agree "strongly" that generally, the subscription costs for the Catholic newspapers or magazines they read are affordable (16 percent disagree "strongly"). Nearly six in ten readers (58%) agree "strongly" that they believe the content in print copies of Catholic newspaper or magazine is more reliable than the content on Catholic blogs or other online-only sites (42 percent disagree "strongly").

More than five in ten readers (55%) agree "strongly" that they believe the content in print copies of Catholic newspaper or magazine is of a higher quality than the content on Catholic blogs or other online-only sites (45 percent disagree "strongly"). However, the dwindling economy appears to affect some readers. More than five in ten readers (55%) agree "strongly" that economic conditions

caused them to re-evaluate their spending and they now buy less reading material (45 percent disagree "strongly").

Figure 2: Readers' evaluation of National Catholic Publications

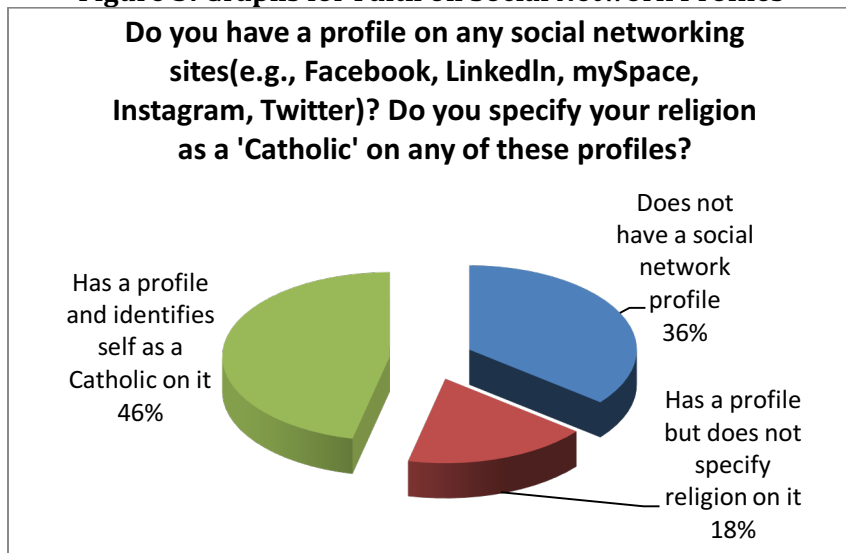| How much do you agree with the following statements? Percentage of those indicating readership of a national catholic print publication responding as such:	
	Agree Strongly
Overall, I am very satisfied with the print copies of the Catholic newspapers or magazines I read.	81%
Generally, the subscription costs for the Catholic newspapers or magazines that I read are affordable	84%
I may stop reading the print version of Catholic newspaper or magazine and switch to reading content online in the near future.	39%
I believe the content you find in print copies of Catholic newspaper or magazine is more reliable than what you read on Catholic blogs or other online-only sites.	58%
I believe the content you find in print copies of Catholic newspaper or magazine is of a higher quality than what you read on Catholic blogs or other online-only sites.	55%
Having a print version of Catholic newspapers or magazines that I read is important to me.	78%
Economic conditions caused me to re-evaluate my spending and I now buy less reading material.	55%

Source: Fieldwork (2019/2020)

Also, only four in ten readers (39%) agree "strongly" that they may stop reading the print version of Catholic newspaper or magazine and switch to reading content online in the near future (61 percent disagree "strongly").

Research Question 3

How do readers evaluate their participation/faith on social media platforms?

More than one in twenty-five respondents (46%) have at least one social network profile (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, Instagram, Twitter) where they self-identify their religion. Almost two in ten respondents (18%) have one or more profiles, but do not specify their religion on any of them. More than three in ten respondents (36%) do not have a social network profile.

Figure 3: Graphs for Faith on Social Network Profiles

Do you have a profile on any social networking sites(e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, mySpace, Instagram, Twitter)? Do you specify your religion as a 'Catholic' on any of these profiles?

Does not have a social network profile 36%

Has a profile but does not specify religion on it 18%

Has a profile and identifies self as a Catholic on it 46%

Source: Fieldwork (2019/2020)

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 investigated the question: How aware are readers of Catholic publications? Data from publications listed show that the first three newspapers are early newspapers. They are the flagship Catholic newspapers in Nigeria. They, therefore, enjoyed regional circulation then and their circulation now goes beyond the confines of their dioceses. This justifies their inclusion among national Catholic publications. The other publications on the table are magazines and liturgical periodicals owned either by congregations, or diocese, or Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), or Catholic Institutes and Seminaries, or other Catholic groups. Another thing to note is that to be aware of the existence of a publication does not necessarily mean to have read it. One can be aware of a publication without seeing or reading it before.

Findings show that generally Pre-Vatican II readers are more aware of national Catholic print publications than younger generations of readers. Both *Abide in my Word* and *The Word among Us* are used for worship as liturgical periodicals. *The Voice Magazine* is a publication of the Major Seminary of Ss. Peter and Paul, Ibadan while *The Leader Newspaper* is a Catholic newspaper that belongs to the Catholic Archdiocese of Owerri. Apart from these four, there is less awareness of national Catholic publications listed. Readership varies among those who are aware of each publication. As a matter of fact, many respondents are aware of most of the publications by reading them. For example, nearly eight in ten (77%) of those who are aware of *Ambassador Magazine* have read it in the last three months. But only 41 percent of respondents are aware of this publication. Therefore, for this publication and many others listed in the findings, awareness comes basically through readership.

However, for publications such as *Abide in my Word* (77%/65%) and *The Word among Us* (68%/66%) respondents who are aware of them are more than those who actually read them in the last three months. Therefore, their awareness is not basically dependent on readership. This means that some respondents who have heard of them have neither seen nor read them in the last three months. Therefore comparing the two liturgical periodicals, more

respondents have read *The Word among Us* than *Abide in my Word* in the last three months. Of those publications with awareness of at least 50 percent of adult respondents, only *The Leader Newspaper* (64%) has been read recently by respondents who are aware of them. Of those publications with awareness of at least 50 percent of adult respondents, readers of *The Voice Magazine* (12%) and *The Leader Newspaper* (10%) are most likely to indicate reading online exclusively rather than in print.

By comparison with other early newspapers listed, respondents are more aware of *The Leader newspaper* (53%) than both *Catholic Weekly Independent* (48%) and *Herald* (41%) newspapers. Respondents are also more aware of *The Leader newspaper* (64%) through readership than both *Catholic Weekly Independent* (62%) and *Herald* (37%) newspapers. While respondents are aware of both *The Leader* (53%/64%) and *Catholic Weekly Independent* (48%/62%) primarily through readership, some respondents who are aware of *Herald newspaper* (41%/37%) have neither seen it nor read it before. Millennial respondents are most likely to have read both *The Leader* and *Catholic Weekly Independent* newspapers in print in the last three months. By comparison, Post-Vatican II respondents are most likely to have read the following publications in print in the last three months: *The Word among Us*, *Abide in my Word, Plentiful Redemption, Agogo Newsletter*, and *The Spiritual Pathway*.

The Pre-Vatican II respondents are most likely to have read the following publications in print in the last three months: *The Ambassador Magazine, The Nigerian Catholic Encounter, Apostolos Magazine, The Fount Magazine, Salve! IHM Newsletter,* and *CSN News Magazine*. Lastly, Vatican II respondents are most likely to have read *The Pointer Magazine* in print in the last three months. In this survey, the general lack of awareness of National Catholic publications is divided equally between both the older and younger respondents. For instance, the younger generation represented by millennial respondents is only aware of two publications: *Catholic Weekly Independent* and *The Leader newspaper*. The older generation represented by Vatican II respondents, on the other hand, is only aware of two publications: *Voice Magazine* and *The Pointer Magazine*.

The lack of awareness between these two groups presents a challenge. These generations of respondents will never search for these publications. Rather, it is in the best interest of Nigerian Catholic publications that producers take these publications to them.

Research Question 2
Research Question 2 investigated the question: How do readers evaluate Catholic publications they read? Data show that the oldest generation of readers (91%/81%, 85%/86%) is most likely to say they are satisfied with the Catholic publications they read and that these are important to them. Readers of the Post-Vatican II generation are the least likely to express satisfaction and least likely to consider the publications as important to them, though the data neither indicate that they disagree nor consider Catholic publications unimportant. Both more frequent mass attendees and less frequent mass attendees agree that they are satisfied with the print copies of the Catholic newspapers or magazines that they read. Similarly, all mass attendees agree that having a print version of these is important to them.

The dynamics here, however, is that for readers who are less frequent mass attendees, awareness, acceptance, and considering Catholic newspapers important may not be a function of their having been regular readers of Catholic newspapers since data already showed they prioritized secular daily newspapers over Catholic newspapers. Therefore, their awareness, acceptance, or considering of Catholic publications as important is in principle than practice. Readers in low-income households are less likely to agree that the subscription costs for national Catholic publications they read are affordable than higher income readers. In the same vein, lower income readers are more likely to indicate that economic conditions have caused them to re-evaluate their spending and buy less reading material than higher income readers.

Research Question 3
Research Question 3 investigated the question: How do readers evaluate their participation/faith on the social media platforms? Data show that having social network profile and the faith of Catholics is related to the generation in question. Among the

younger generation of readers, Post-Vatican II, 81 percent have at least one social network profile. However, sixty percent have one of these social network profiles and include their Catholic identity. This means forty percent of the younger respondents of the Post-Vatican II generation with profiles do not state there that they are Catholic. By comparison, sixty percent of millennial respondents have online profiles, but do not state there that they are Catholic. Similarly, fifty-two percent of older generation of respondents, Vatican II, have profiles, but do not state there that they are Catholic.

In the same vein, fifty-one percent of the oldest generation of respondents have online profiles, but do not state there that they are Catholic. The dynamics here is that younger generation of respondents are not ready to indicate that they are Catholics on their various networks. This implies that they may not be disposed to accommodate Catholic messages in their network space. However, those who are regular mass attendees are likely to accommodate Catholic messages in their network space.

Conclusion

Despite differentiation of age, class, economic status, education among others, this study concludes that Catholic belief and practice plays a major role in deciding where respondents go to search for religious messages and what they read. However, there was mild manifestation of individual differences, just mild one.

Recommendations

1. Some respondents are aware of some Catholic publications, but never read them. Hence, producers of Catholic publications should improve on distribution strategy so that Catholic publications may get to many more readers so that many more readers will not only be aware of Catholic publications, but also read them.
2. For Catholic publications to be successful online, producers need to spread awareness through social networks and other new media sites especially twitter. Producers must encourage Catholics to tweet about the contents and post links to people in their contacts and in their social media space.

3. Economic conditions caused more than half of respondents to re-evaluate buying reading materials, therefore, this category may not be able to buy Catholic publications. This research suggests that the Church should subsidize the cost so that it can become affordable to poor readers.

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DIGITAL MEDIA, YOUTH ACTIVISM AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MODERN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF BINGHAM UNIVERSITY KARU, NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

> *Information is power, when people are properly informed, they become empowered and they find a suitable platform to share the information they possess with others, and that provides easy accessibility for others to the information shared, thereby more people would be informed. Becoming more aware of the situations and systems that affect their lives, they become empowered to make and take informed decisions. This paper examines the role which digital media play in connection to youth activism and political participation in modern Nigeria. Anchored on two theories, the theory of democratic participation and public participation theory in governance, the study employs quantitative research method to elicit information from respondents using survey questionnaire as instrument. Findings from the study reveal that the use of digital media technologies by youth of Nigeria has greatly influenced their consciousness towards social and political concerns. It*

recommends that if youths wish to stir any change in the social and political structure of Nigeria through the use of digital media platforms, they must ensure that those courses are just and that they resonate with the majority and they must also be followed by offline actions.

Introduction

Digital activism literature has proposed several frames for the way in which social media impacts collective and connective action, including: providing mobilizing information and news not available in the other media, assisting in the coordination of protest, helping users to join political causes, creating opportunities for debate, spreading enthusiasm and enabling emotional contagion, (Temple Uwalaka, 2019). Digital media has become the vehicle for young activist to spread their dissent across their country and even globally. Social media applications like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and even Snapchat create the large web of social networking that has allowed the young around the world to create a new era of activism.

For the purpose of this research, Digital Media would mean digitized contents, such as text, audio, video, graphics etc. which can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks and social media which includes sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat, etc. which enable their users to interact with one another through text posts, photographs, and videos, leaving 'likes' and 'comments' to create conversations around culture, sports, news, politics, and the daily events of users lives.

Activism in some form, dates back to the beginning of politics. The United States itself was founded on the back of series of protests that incited a rebellion and created a nation. Protesting or, more generally, activism is an ancient practice that has persisted to the current day. However, while speaking out is nothing new, the platform people use have evolve from face to face, to written, to social championed through hashtags, while the same constant goal of seeking to correct an injustice has remained. In Bingham Journal of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences Vol.1 Obateru and

Olaniran (2019) noted that, "in an era when the news media is affording easy access to packaging and dissemination of information, the social media has become a popular avenue for sharing information for good or ill".

More than a decade ago, information and communication technologies dramatically changed the world. For instance, new media and technology have changed the interpersonal interaction, communication patterns, and as well as social and political discussions (Taufiq, Aima et al. 2019). Digital media is playing a constant role of providing information to the public on political events, engaging its users and encouraging them to get involved in offline political activities. The Internet has become vital for political discussions and political engagement. The media, a modern trend in information and knowledge dissemination, has taken communication beyond the limitations of the traditional way of communicating and socializing, making it an essential part of people's lives; affecting their social, political and economic activities (Funmilola and Mathew, 2020). Digital media technologies have engaged many Internet conformant to build their lives around it. However, studies have shown the increasing use of social media among the youths, who are considered to be more technology shrewd than older adults.

As cited by Jenkins, Shresthova, et al. (2016), Zuckerman notes:

> "the complex interplay between traditional forms of street protest and social media responses designed to direct greater attention onto what had happened: the protests in the streets documented online, and the online protest calling attention to events in the streets represent some of the ways in which civic media- the use of participatory media technologies for civic participation, political engagement or social change –has become a routine part of protests movements, opening participation in protests far beyond those physically present". (p.5)

In 2012 the 'Occupy Nigeria' protest which saw Nigerian youths protesting online and, in the streets, forcing economic and civic activities to shut down in the country as a result of the Federal Government of Nigeria's decision for the removal of fuel subsidy. In 2020, the 'End SARS' protest which witnessed another youths protest online and in the streets against the human rights violation of SARS police.

These prominent events of protests in the history of Nigeria are being mentioned because the writer, argue that these events became more visible and captivating as social and cultural practices, because users can share, via hyperlinks, the messages, images, and sounds that fascinate them more rapidly on digital media inventions.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) for statistical purposes defined those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 as youth without prejudice to other definitions by Member States. "Youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence". That's why, as a category, youth is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. Yet, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment, because 'youth' is often referred to as a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job.

According to National Youth Policy of Nigeria (2009), the youth shall comprise of all young males and females aged 18 – 35 years, who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Youths are seen as one of the greatest assets that any country can have. Not only are they legitimately regarded as the future leaders, they are potentially and actually the greatest investment for a nation's development. They are recognized as a vital resource whose future prospects are inextricably tied to that of their country. They are the valued possession of any nation or region. Without them there can be no future.

Youths are the centre of reconstruction and development. They serve as a good measure of the extent to which a country can reproduce as well as sustain itself. Because their future prospects are tied to what happen in their country at the present, they must take bold steps to advocate for a nation that will profit them tomorrow, speaking out against ills in the system that threaten their

viability as stakeholders and leaders of tomorrow, and participate in social and political processes whether directly or indirectly to correct the injustice in the system.

Objectives of the study
The objectives of this study are:
1. To investigate the role of digital media in connection to youth activism in modern Nigeria
2. To assess whether the digital media network technologies and their usage have brought about the participation of youths in the Nigerian political arena.

Theoretical Framework
This paper is anchored on two theories, the Theory of Democratic Participation and Public Participation Theory in Governance. According to the theory of Democratic Participation as explained by Shraddha Bajracharya (2018) the media is said to be important in rural settings and in the cultures that are degrading with time, such as the Nigerian system where citizens do not feel the real impact of governance on their lives. The theory is believed to conserve and revive local cultures by promoting the right to information (global and local), right to express (feedback), right to use new technologies (means of communication), freedom to local data, freedom to take part in social action, etc. In the process, it expects the government to provide funds, trainings and subsidies after identification if they have financial or technical difficulties. The digital media technology in contemporary Nigeria offers citizens access to vast information concerning activities of government, with the citizens been able to give their feedbacks on issues and taking parts in social and political actions.

Public Participation Theory in Governance according to Kathryn and Bryson (2016) involves the direct involvement – or indirect involvement through representatives – of concerned stakeholders in decision-making about policies, plans or programs in which they have an interest. The youths who are stake holders belong to a group who share their concerns and interest in the business of governance by involving in political processes directly or indirectly through advocacy, social and political participation.
Review of related literature

As computers become more like mobile phones and mobile phones gain the capacity of computers, this change result in more powerful and cheaper devices for activist and though a greater capacity to use digital infrastructure for their goals of political and social change (Mary Joyce, 2010). These devices are digital infrastructure of digital activisms. Economic, social and political factors determine how youths use this infrastructure. Mobile communication is increasingly playing a leading role in the mobilization of social and political protests around the world.

There seem to be no known geographical boundaries for digital revolution which the world is currently witnessing (Bruce, 2016). The protests in the streets documented online, and the online protests calling for attention to events in the streets represent some of the ways in which civic media-the use of participatory technologies for civic participation, political engagement or social change- has become a routine part of protest movements, opening participation in protests far beyond those physically present (Jenkins, Shresthova et al, 2016).

In each case, as well, young people actively influence the practices and rhetoric of these movements. They are helping to frame the agenda. They are helping to shape the media and the messages through which they are pursuing their causes. And they are making active decision at every stage of the process (Jenkins, Shresthova et al, 2016). Some also drew attention to the fact that individual members of the public are not inclined to join formal organisations for protest. The internet is used as an organisation tool, and the rapid flow of messages from one originator to potentially millions of people has replaced the role of social movement organisations (Billur Aslan, 2020). Social media is revolutionizing how youth-led activism gain momentum. Young adults, once in the shadow of their parents, possess a powerful voice, constantly active through mobile technology (Taraneh Azar, 2019). On the internet, sensational images, news, and even conspiracy theories captivate users and spread faster and more rapidly than traditionally researched reports. A seemingly isolated incident can draw major attention, leading to temporary gathering to protest (Jiyeon Kang, 2016).

Meaning and Types of Activism

According to Cambridge Dictionary online, "activism is the use of direct and noticeable actions to achieve a result, usually a political or social one". Youths use digital media applications to express their worry and disagreement on issues, and these actions are directed at public authorities. Activism can be in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. Activism is action on behalf of a cause, action that goes beyond what is conventional or routine. The action might be door-to-door canvassing, alternative radio public meetings, rallies, or fasting (Brian Martin, n.d). Activism has played a major role in ending slavery, challenging dictatorships, protecting workers from exploitation, protecting the environment, promoting equality for women, opposing racism and many other important societal issues. Activism is not necessarily a good or bad thing. It all depends on the cause and the actions and a person's judgement of what is worthwhile (Brian Martin, n.d).

Activists are typically challengers to policies and practices, trying to achieve a social and political goal and not necessarily to obtain power themselves. An activist is a person who takes/uses or supports strong action (such as public) protest in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. Activists bring about positive change in societies. Activists work on every corner of the world on countless social and political issues. Visions and specific goals of activists may not be the same but activists want a better society for all. Activism can manifest in different ways and take various forms for different reasons.

According to humanrightcareer.com five types of activism include:

1. **Demonstrations and protests**: A protest is a public expression of objection, disapproval or dissent towards an idea or action, typically a political one. Protests can take many different forms, from individual statements to mass demonstrations. Demonstration can be seen as providing opportunity for the expression of views which are not receiving adequate attention from the government (Roger Neil Douglass, 2004). Demonstration and its tolerance are vital in a properly functioning democratic liberal society, where objection and dissent towards social and political issues can be expressed.

Demonstrations are arguably the best-known type of activism. During a demonstration or a protest, people united by a common belief come together. They might march along a specific route, sit in at a specific place to draw attention to the cause. Time and place are often important as organizers often pick a location that is meaningful.

2. **Boycotts:** A boycott is a collective withholding of relations of any kind, social or commercial, public or private, on account of political or other indifferences, so as to punish or to influence something or someone (Gary Minda, 1999). Boycott is usually a nonviolent and intentional abstention from using, buying or dealing with a person, organisation or government as an expression of activism, usually for political, social, moral or environmental reasons.

3. **Strikes:** strikes happen when a group of workers refuse to go to work because they are not satisfied with their pay or working conditions, etc. Whether private or government employees, we have seen situations where workers embark on strike actions by refusing to go to work or take part in production because they want their employers to come to listen, consider their plights, and take appropriate actions to meet their demands. The only thing employees probably have to bargain with is their skill. Deny them the right to withhold it as a last resort, they become powerless. Strike therefore, is a cornerstone of bargaining process for employees. Strikes were a feature of the Industrial Revolution as there were few work protections and companies depended on mass labour. Many countries made strikes illegal to deter workers from engaging in them. While strikes are most associated with businesses, they are also used to pressure governments to change certain policies.

4. **Letter writings and petitions:** Letter writing and petitions are two of the most common forms of activism. They are used to pressure public officials, corporations, and other power-holders. The more letters or signatures on a petition, the more likely it is that people will pay attention. Organizations like Amnesty

International understand the power of letter-writing. In the internet age, emails are also a common strategy. They have some benefits, like being useful in urgent situations and when postage is expensive. On the downside, officials sometimes shut down their emails so emails bounce back. They can't do that with physical letters or faxes. Letters also imply a degree of commitment that emails don't, which makes it harder for power-holders to dismiss people's demands. Petitions also have the downside of being so accessible and easy that they lose some of their power. They are most successful when paired with other actions.

5. **Social media campaigns:** Social media activism is a new form of activism taking the world by storm. Also known as 'hashtag activism' it brings activism to social media networks like Instagram and Twitter. Users raise awareness of issues, organizations, and actions through posts, graphics, videos, and more. The reach of social media activism became clear in 2020 with the hashtag "Black Lives Matter." According to data from Pew Research, the hashtag was used over 47 million times on Twitter between May 26 and June 7. Despite its popularity, many are sceptical about social media activism. It often stops at simply sharing a post, so there is no real-world action. It becomes performative.

However, when paired with other strategies, social media activism is a very effective way to share information and broaden an issue's reach, especially among young people. According to Pew Research, the number of 18-29-year-olds using social media for social and political issues has doubled since 2018. The first step to activism is engagement, and while many people will stop at sharing posts, others will take what they have learned on social media to the real world.

The most successful social movements deploy a variety of actions strategically to ensure success. The most effective activists have a large number of actions in their tool belts. The most effective movements use both mainstream tactics- such as voting, lobbying

and drafting legislation and nonviolent mobilisation tactics- such as protests, boycotts, civil disobedience, strikes, sit-ins and rallies.

Social Protest in Nigeria

The tradition of social protest in Nigeria is rooted in the pro-independence movement of the colonial era. It is this movement that later metamorphosed into early political parties and its leaders transformed in the new post-independence political elites, (Hari, 2014). The youth movements of the African colonies emerged and grew within the era of nationalism. Starting from the early resistance and protest movements directed against colonial authorities, nationalist thought and activity developed throughout the 20th century and up to the independence era. They focused on mobilizing racial awareness and national consciousness, especially in the cities. The youth were the most vibrant agents in colonial politics. In many West African countries, youth action led the independence movement (Hari, 2014).

In the 1990's social protest was also given impetus by social activist and civil society organisations who led mass protest against military dictatorship. Indeed, during the military dictatorships of General Ibrahim Babangida and General Sani Abacha, social and human activist like the late Gani Fawehinmi, Beko Ransome Kuti, and Femi Falana under the auspices of civil society organisations such as, campaign for democracy (CD) led mass protest and endured all forms of deprivation and imprisonment during this era, (Hari, 2014). Protest movements such as the 2012 #Occupy Nigeria and the 2020 #EndSARS protest and the use of social media is yet another innovation of social and political protest in Nigeria.

Digital Media and Youth Protests in Nigeria

The traditional media being the most vulnerable to political or economic coercion and manipulation has been reduced in Nigeria to platforms where praise singing takes centre stage in a bid to stay afloat through government patronage (Okafor as cited in Hari, 2014). "Social media provides us with a means in which we can say virtually anything. It is a platform where serious interaction and dialogue takes place. People can add humour or camaraderie to get attention. At the end of the day, we share serious information much

more than we could do on the conventional media outlets" (Hari, 2014).

The digital media, notably social media platforms such as, Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp became rallying point to give protests wide exposure. Website and bloggers provide real time coverage to protest, posting live pictures of protests on the internet. Social media became a hub for connecting protesters on one hand and between them and other Nigerians at home and abroad (Hari, 2014).

It is no surprise when activist of the #Ocuppy Nigeria took to the internet to connect with Nigerians on the fuel subsidy removal protest. Having been marginalised by the mainstream media, organizers and activist involved in the protest turned to social media. Most participants reported became aware of the protest through Facebook, Twitter, Blackberry messenger, YouTube and text messages, (Hari, 2014). Social media gave Nigerians the opportunity to report and give update of the protest. It enabled Nigerian youths to mobilise people to participate in the demonstrations. "We use our Facebook pages and our followers keep track of what happens by following us on Twitter. That helps us to keep the momentum" (Hari, 2014).

As noted by Hari (2014) the most significant impact of social media in the #Occupy Nigeria protest appears to be that it gives impetus to the protest by providing a social space for Nigerians to voice not only their opposition to the subsidy removal but their grievances, frustration on government's insensitivity to the economic hardship millions are enduring every day. Social media campaigns have inspired ordinary Nigerians and raised new awareness of wasteful government spending, lack of accountability and corruption. The fuel subsidy struggle brightened the prospects of a revolution in Nigeria, which implied the exercise of people power for socio-economic and political advancement of Nigeria. There is a general consensus that the use of social media in protest has brought about a level of mobilization and solidarity among Nigerian youth that is unprecedented.

Digital Media and Political Engagement of Youth

The era of digital media space in Nigeria has given the youths leverage for open conversation. Before this era the youths have had grievances about policies of government and activities of politicians but such concerns are often not heard because they cannot be easily and freely voiced out in the public domain.

Even an attempt to use the mainstream/traditional media for such, was resisted because the owners of the media would not allow such for fear of closure by government for speaking out against the government, only praise singing is allowed. The masses were not properly informed about the working and activities of government and will have no basis for their argument or disapproval of governance and politicians.

The digital media space has broken that jinx, providing youths with information about governance on daily basis. And because of access to information the youths have been empowered to speak out their views and interests at no cost. Digital media has offered youths the ample opportunity to express their identity in a fast-moving political environment and to influence the course of action. It is evident that one day the youths will use this struggle to bring themselves to the helms of political affairs. Digital media are affecting political involvement among youths both directly and indirectly. Digital media has brought new ways of engagement which previously did not exist and that can be used by youths to express their political views and convey their interests. Digital networked communication technologies reduced the costs of acquiring information which is a positive motivation for offline political participation. The creativity permitted by digital media structures may motivate some to participate and other individuals to become more interested in politics: for these reasons digital media are expected to influence political attitude and offline participation (Eva, Michael et al, 2012)

The importance of the digital media era from today's point of view is that, journalism, society and politics which used to communicate through mainstream/ traditional media (e.g. newspapers, press release and the voting station) have come closer even as different and distinct entities and their relationship is constantly evolving through new communicative practices. Nowadays they exchange content constantly and extremely quickly

through social media, online platforms and blogs. According to Nael et al., (2020) politicians use extensively un-mediated forms of communication (i.e. social media) to communicate directly with their voters, even though they still cultivate close relationship with major corporate media organisations. On top of that, citizens can express themselves instantaneously online, effortlessly create groups and collective entities, apply pressure on politicians and political issues and demand immediate action. And since a larger percentage of citizens, voters and users of social media are youths it means that their voices and demands can be heard.

Digital Media, Youth Activism and Political Participation in Nigeria

On 8 October 2020, nationwide protests on ENDSARS started after weeks of outrage and anger with videos and pictures showing police brutality, harassment and extortion in Nigeria. The protests were led predominantly by young Nigerians in different cities alongside many activists and celebrities. During the protest, Nigerian youths protested both on social media and in the streets across the country against police brutality and for the further reform of Nigeria as a whole.

What prompted this historic movement in Nigeria was the influence of digital media, after a video was shared on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, of a man being killed by officials of the now disbanded Anti-Robbery Squad (called SARS). According to the shared video, SARS official shot a young man, left him by the roadside and took his car, in Delta state, Nigeria. This angered the youths and resulted in widespread protest across states in Nigeria. This started an online protest by aggrieved youth, which manifested to a widespread street protest across the streets in Nigeria. If it was not for digital media technology, the video might not have been captured and couldn't have gone viral, reaching a lot of youths on social media who took the informed decision to take to the streets to protest for a cause that was just and because they are well informed about their cause of action. Through the same platforms they were able to share the video with their counterparts to mobilise, plan and carryout the massive protest.

SARS was a unit in the Nigerian police force, created to combat the widespread cases of robbery in the country, but have been accused of scores of extra-judicial killings and extortion of young people whom they profiled as criminals or yahoo boys (internet fraudsters). Given the #ENDSARS protest the unit was disbanded by the Federal Government of Nigeria, as was demanded by the youths and Nigerians who protested.

The political hashtag #NotTooYoungtoRun began in 2017, the movement advocate for the reduction of the age limit in running for political offices, arguing that people old enough to vote should be allowed to run for political offices. The voting age is currently 18, but citizens need to be 30 to run for Governor of a state, and 35 to be able to run for President in the country. Though the initiative that trended continuously on social media in Nigeria for months found resonance on the ground. The leaders of the movement met with legislators in the National Assembly and consequently in 2018 most States Assemblies passed laws amending the country's 1999 constitution to accept the movement's demand. "It was designed to work online and offline" says Maryam Luashi, a member of the movement's strategy team.

The #Occupy Nigeria movement in 2012 that forced the country to a brief shutdown over removal of fuel subsidy by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the protest against government to increase internet subscription tariffs- a move that could have forced many to go offline, this became a powerful rallying tool for youngsters, and the government shelved it plan. Access to the internet brought youths together followed by offline action. "Instead of only tweeting complaints in solidarity, young Nigerians are joining practical movements and, in some events, leading them" (Abdulkareem Fareeda, 2018). Despite seeing growing evidence of youth activism, mobilisation and political participation in Nigeria in recent times, Nigerian youths have not yet arrived at the level of inclusion required and desired to gain representation in politics. Some drawback and limiting factor can be identified to be the cause. According to Angela Ajodo (2019) Leadership deficits, money politics, poor internal democracy among the older parties and an absence of a strategic political agenda pose on-going barriers to young people playing a role in national development.

Africa's political history is not complete without appreciating the roles that youths played in achieving their countries' independence. In the years leading to independence, youths were the driving force behind the nationalist activities that led to the dismantling and eventual overthrow of colonialism and the colonial masters. Despite this, the role of youths in African politics has received less than commensurate attention in studies on democratisation (Angela Ajodo, 2019).

Youth Activists and Government Response

Nigeria is witnessing a rise in breeding youth activists, and that has influenced recent events in the country. The fascinating aspect is that this new breed of youth activists break status quo, organises in a decentralised manner and is increasing vocal about its anti-government stance. This generates lots of energy and spontaneity and makes it harder for traditional government institution to control.

Rinu Oduala, is a youth activist who played a key role in the #EndSARS protest that took place in Nigeria in 2020. She is a young law student who represented voice of the youth in the 2021 Lagos state panel that is investigating the alleged cases of abuses by the Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force. She submitted a strongly worded resignation letter, when she wrote that "justice has not been served and as a representative of the citizenry, my only recourse is to stay the course of justice." Her decision was informed by the action of the panel, after the panel surprisingly voted to reopen the Lekki toll plaza, the site were officials of the Nigerian Army opened fire on #EndSARS protesters, leaving at least 12 persons dead and many others injured. Adebayo (popularly called Mr. Macaroni), is a 28 year old social media comedian and a leading voice in the #ENDSARS movement. He was arrested at the Lekki Toll Plaza with several others. Oduala and Adebayo have emerged as the totems of Nigeria's new breed of political activist and certainly, more will follow.

It has been observed that Nigerian government has always responded to activists in hash manners, because they see activism as a plot and ploy to undermine and overthrow the government rather than citizens calling for social and political justice. Policing of protest by the state is done mostly by depending on physical and non-

physical force. The physical force involves using direct physical force to harass protesters, use of poisonous tear-gas, arrest, detention, torture and all kinds of inhumane treatment. The non-physical force involves the use of harsh laws, rules and regulation which hinder the freedom to exercise universally recognised fundamental rights of assembly and actions. Recently, some members of the #EndSARS movements had their bank accounts frozen by the Central Bank of Nigeria under the directive of the Federal government.

Research Methodology

A quantitative methodology through survey was adopted for this research. Well-structured questionnaire was the instrument used to elicit the level of agreement of participants.

The sample population were drawn from Bingham University located in Karu, a local government area in Nasarawa State which is annex to the Federal Capital Territory. Random cluster sampling technique was used. Students and staff from the Department of Mass Communication and other departments were respondents to the questionnaires. The students selected were mostly drawn from final year as they are expected to have a good knowledge of the topic. The respondents who fall within the category of youths are regular users of both traditional and digital media and are well informed about the topic. Since the study examine the influence of digital media on youth activism and political participation in Nigeria, they were considered suitable for achieving the objectives of the study. 150 questionnaires were administered to the respondents, 135 of the 150 were retrieved. However, only the retrived 135 questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics for this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Is there any Relationship between Digital Media and Youth Activism in Recent Times in Nigeria?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	115	85
No	8	6
Not sure	12	9
0Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 1 reveals that out of 135 respondents, 115 (85%) agree that there is a relationship between digital media and youth activism in Nigeria in recent times while 8 (6%) do not agree that there is a relationship between the two and another 12 (9%) are not sure. It therefore implies that more respondents agree to the fact that digital media has had influence on youth activism in recent times in Nigeria.

Table 2: Digital media has given youth a platform and voice to advocate for social change in Nigeria

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	83	61
Agree	36	27
Undecided	16	12
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2 shows that out of 135 respondents, 83 (61%) strongly agree that digital media has given youth a platform and voice to advocate for social change in Nigeria, 36 (27%) also agree that digital media has given youths a platform and voice to advocate for social change, while 16 (12%) are undecided. This implies that more respondents agree that digital media has given youth in Nigeria a voice and platform to speak out freely against social ills.

Table 3: Digital media has influenced youth consciousness towards social and political concern in Nigeria in recent times

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	64	47
Agree	40	30
Undecided	16	12
Disagree	15	11
Strongly disagree	-	
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 3 shows that out of 135 respondents, 64 (47%) strongly agree with the assertion that the use of digital media has influenced youth consciousness towards social and political concern, 40 (30%) agree to the same assertion. While 16 (12%) are undecided and 15 (11%) disagree that digital media has influenced youth consciousness towards political and social concern in Nigeria. This therefore, implies that more respondents agree that digital media has raised youth consciousness towards social and political concern in Nigeria.

Table 4: The use of digital media by youth during the #EndSARS protest opened the protest far beyond those physically present in the street protest

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	99	73
Agree	30	22
Undecided	6	5
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4 shows that out of 135 respondents, 99 (73%) strongly agree that the use of digital media by Nigerian youth during the #EndSARS protest opened the protest far beyond those physically present in the street protest, another 30 (22%)

respondents agree to the same assertion, while 6 (5%) respondents are undecided about the assertion that the use of digital media opened the protest far beyond those physically present in the street protest. This has shown that more respondents agree with the assertion that the use of digital media technologies by youths during the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria went farther than those who were just taking part in the street protest. It opened the protest equally to those who could not physically take part in the street protest to join their voice with those on the street to protest online, both in Nigeria and in the diaspora.

Table 5: The use of digital media by youth during the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria attracted more participants to take part in the street protest

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	89	66
Agree	36	27
Undecided	10	7
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 5 shows that out of 135 respondents, 89 (66%) strongly agree that the use of digital media during the #EndSARS protest in Nigeria attracted more participants to take part in the street protest, while 36 (27%) respondents also agree that the use of digital media attracted more participants to take part in the street protest and 10 (7%) respondents are undecided. It therefore, means that more respondents believe that the use of digital media technologies by youth during the protest attracted more youth to take part in the offline protest.

Table 6: Youths have easy access to more information concerning the workings of government and political issue in Nigeria given this era of digital media

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	55	41
Agree	49	36
Undecided	16	12
Disagree	15	11
Strongly disagree	-	-
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 6 shows that out of 135 respondents, 55 (41%) strongly agree that with digital media, youths have easy access to more information concerning the workings of government and political issues in Nigeria, 49 (36%) also agree to the same assertion. While 16 (12%) are undecided and 15 (11%) disagree with the assertion. This therefore, implies that more respondents agree to the assertion that youths have easy access to more information concerning the workings of government and political issues in the modern Nigeria.

Table 7: Digital media has enabled online political campaign and conversation among politicians, political parties and youths

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	58	43
Agree	45	33
Undecided	14	10
Disagree	9	7
Strongly disagree	9	7
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 7 shows that out of 135 respondents, 58 (43%) strongly agree that digital media has enabled online political campaign among politicians, political parties and youths, 45 (33%)

also agree to the same. While 14 (10%) are undecided, 9 (7%) disagree and another 9 (7%) strongly disagree. This therefore implies that more respondents agree to the assertion that digital media has enabled online political campaign among politicians, political parties and youths.

Table 8: Youths can constantly express their political views, more quickly and effortlessly using digital media platforms

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	58	43
Agree	43	33
Undecided	14	10
Disagree	10	7
Strongly disagree	10	7
Total	135	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 8 shows that out of 135 respondents, 58 (43%) strongly agree that youths can constantly express their political views, more quickly and effortlessly using digital media platforms in Nigeria, another 43 (33%) also agree to the same assertion. While 14 (10%) are undecided, 10 (7%) disagree with this assertion and another 10 (7%) strongly disagree. This therefore, means that more respondents are in agreement that, youths can constantly express their political views, more quickly and effortlessly using digital media platforms in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The paper revealed that this era of digital media technologies has created a platform for the Nigerian youths to be heard; they can easily transmit their yearnings and aspirations to government in a much more simplistic and persuasive manner than ever before. Youths now have easy access to more information about the working of government, unlike in the past where youths in Nigeria often had no voice or say in the political and social structure of the state. The same youths were used for political gains by politicians and elites as well, and this is because youths have limited

information about the affairs and happenings of governance. Therefore, they were held to ransom and made to believe what they were told, and even when the youths have contrary views, it was difficult to express what those views were to influence social and political change.

One of the primary objectives of this study was to investigate the role of digital media in connection to youth activism in modern Nigeria. To this end, data deduced through the survey instrument has vividly shown as illustrated in Table 1 that out of 135 respondents, 115 (85%) agree that there is a relationship between digital media and youth activism in Nigeria in recent times.

Another objective was to assess whether the digital media network technologies and their usage have brought about the participation of youths in the Nigerian political arena. To this, the empirical elicited through the data collection instrument as depicted in Table 3, 6, 7 and 8 have clearly shown that digital network technologies and their usage have brought about the participation of Nigerian youth in the Nigerian political arena. Specifically, 64 (47%) strongly agree with the assertion that the use of digital media has influenced youth consciousness towards social and political concern, 40 (30%) agree to the same assertion.

More so, 77% of respondents agree to the assertion that youths have easy access to more information concerning the workings of government and political issues in the modern Nigeria, while, 76% of respondents were in agreement with the proposition that digital media has enabled online political campaign among politicians, political parties and youths.

The paper has shown that with digital media influence, youths have become more aware of social and political situations of the nation and can actively exercise their rights of participation in the system because of the information they now have about the system at their disposal. This is supported by the democratic participant theory. According to Businesstopia (January 6, 2018), "The democratic-participant theory believes there is democratic and professional hegemony in the media and the media is totally commercial".

Digital media technologies today have become a powerful tool in the hands of Nigerian youths. They now have vast access to

and can share information to millions of their counterparts with ease and at almost no cost. The presence of government and politicians can be seen on social media where they have their own social media handles where they share some of their activities and engage the youths in conversations and to campaign for their interest at polls. The social media platforms have become a free market space where youths can easily and quickly engage with government officials and politicians, they can share their dissatisfaction about the ills in the system. Where government fail to listen, youths can resort to protests against such systems. These protests are witnessed through the same social media platforms (online) and in the streets, where the online protest is carried out and intended to captivate and attract more participation in the street protest.

Jiyeon Kan in his work, *Youth and Activism in Post-authoritarian South-Korea* noted that captivation as social and cultural practices, thrives on technological inventions because users can share via hyperlinks, the messages, images and sounds that fascinate them. Participant in this process is not necessarily intentional political actors; however, online captivation with an issue does suggest the existence of nascent vernacular, knowledge and judgement, although without conformance to existing political norms.

According to Funmilola and Mathew (2020), majorly the youths use social media to participate in political advocacy, political campaigns, communicating with politicians, political discussions, monitoring and reporting electoral mal practices, public consultations, joining interest groups that engage in lobbying, blogging about political issues, and writing letters to public officials respectively. Political participation means 'citizens' involvement in the acts, events or activities that influence the selection of and/or the action taken by political representatives" (Okoro and Nwafor, 2013:33) as cited by Funmilola and Mathewn (2020). It is the various mechanisms through which citizens express their political views and/or exercise their rights and influences on political processes.

Conclusion

When individuals or people are informed about a system, they become more empowered and are able to make and take informed decisions, hence, they can either agree with the system or disagree with the system and challenge it. But when they become ignorant or ill-informed regarding the system, they become vulnerable in the hands of the actors or those who control the system.

What the era of digital media has done in Nigeria is that, it has created a blend between making available and accessible information about government, governance and political actors. The populace can access this information from almost anywhere effortlessly. The populace can in turn immediately give their feedbacks whether they are satisfied with what is happening in the system or not and can advocate for social and political change where and when necessary. In recent times, the youths in Nigeria have used this platform to stir the course of actions by engaging in conversations with governments, advocating for social and political change, becoming more participatory in political activities, and expressing their rights of participation and influence freely.

It is a new dawn, which is; given the youths a sense of belonging and participation and that is very important in any democratic setting.

Recommendations

1. There is the need for more media literacy awareness among Nigerian youth in order to keep them abreast with the regulations and ethics surrounding digital media use. This will aid in curbing the frequent abuses associated with digital platforms.

2. The government and other State actors should be more attentive to the yearnings and plights of the teeming Nigerian youths in order to prevent future anarchy that might spring out of future protests and agitations occasioned by the usage of digital media for political mobilization and participation by the youths.

3. Youth protesting may not be enough to effect the change that is needed in the system. They must decide between redoubling their efforts to participate in electoral process beyond online participation to vote offline during polls. And since they have the

numbers, they can decide to vote into power, people that they trust.

4. More research is needed to investigate the effect of digital activism on Nigeria's government policy directions and governance.

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EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF NAPTIP ON REHABILITATION OF LIBYA RETURNEE MIGRANTS IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study assessed the effort of NAPTIP in the rehabilitation of the Libya returnee migrants in Nigeria. The objective of the study were to examine whether NAPTIP provided professional counselling, disseminated adequate and critical information, facilitated technical and financial empowerment for the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State. The study adopted the survey research design and administered 538 structured questionnaires. The study reveals that the Federal Government has failed to make NAPTIP functional enough to embark on comprehensive rehabilitation of Libya returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State. This has forced the State Government to take over the rehabilitation and reintegration of these returnee migrants. The study therefore recommends pragmatic steps in the institutionalization of returnee migrants' rehabilitation program across the country, since international migration and the outcome has become undeniable reality in the country.

Key Words: Counselling and Rehabilitation, International Migration, Migrant Returnee.

International migrants are persons who migrated to countries other than those of their birth either for economic reasons or security concerns. The number of such persons has doubled from 75 million in 1965 to an estimated 150 million in 2000 (International Organization for Migration, 2000). Based on the data, 80 to 97 million people have migrated with their families (International Labour Organization,2001) to seek greener pasture while 12.1 million (United Nation High Commission for Refugees, 2001) and 14.5 million (United State Committee for Refugees, 2001; Kaplan, 1994; Kennedy, 1993) constitute displaced persons or refugees who fled crisis in their place of origin.

More worrisome is the fact that the number of international migrants has been increasing over the last two decades, reaching a peak of 281 million people living outside their country of origin in 2020. Currently, international migrants represent about 3.6 per cent of the world's population (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020).

In 2020, the pattern of international migration showed that people prefer to migrate to locations proximate to their place of origin. 70 percent of migrants born in Europe resided in another European country. The pattern is similar in sub- Saharan Africa (UN DESA, 2020). Brimelow (1995) and UN DESA, (2020) rationalized proximate migration to the sense of stability that cultural affinity of intra-regional migration provided a migrant who is seeking to settle elsewhere.

However, most countries where these migrants decide to relocate to are anxious of the flux of migrants and the impact of the disruption migrants introduce to a new environment. A prevalent challenge in Africa is that most migrants travel without proper documentation and this tend to resort to deportation of migrants once identified by a host country.

Discourse on international migration and returnee migrants have gained currency over the world due to their impacts on the socio-cultural, politico-security and economic well-being of communities, societies and states, as well as the welfare of the migrants themselves (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Globalization provides a stimulus for international migration with the compression of time and space through the revolution in the information and communication technology (ICT) which provides real time information on events and opportunities across the world (Shrier, Canale & Pentland, 2016; Frouws, Philips, Hassan, & Twigt, 2016; Zijlstra & van Liempt, 2017). It also universalized certain ideas, practices, tastes, fashions, values and institutions which facilitate transaction between people of different nations as well as distinct locations thereby promoting interconnections of people across different geo-political location (Kahanec & Zimmermann, 2008; Czaika, de Haas,& Miller 2014).

International migration in Nigeria and Edo State in particular is a venture embarked upon by young persons seeking

greener pasture elsewhere in the world in the face of unemployment and limited economic opportunities in their place of origin. Hence, a reasonable number of young people leave to other countries in the world. Most prominent destinations include: United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Italy, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, South Africa and Libya (Omoregie, 1997; Nshimpi & Fioramonti, 2013 Adepoju, 2016; Flahaux & de Haas, 2016).

In the discourse of global trafficking, Nigeria has gained a reputation as one of the major origin, transit, and destination countries for human trafficking |(Idemudia, 2003;Aborisade & Aderinto, 2008 ; Okojie, 2009; Uduji, Okolo-Obasi & Asongu 2019). For example, Nigerian nationals, especially women and girls, were reportedly the most identified trafficked persons in the EU in 2015, and they were identified in over 40 countries in 2017 (USDOS, 2018).The main motivating factors for such journey are the achievement of self-actualization and economic gains. These desires have made several Edo people to see illegal and irregular international migration as a means of escape from poverty, hunger, and other socio-economic constraints to other countries with the hope of realizing their goals and aspiration.

Data on the pattern and scope of human trafficking are inconclusive and difficult to track due to the clandestine nature of the act and lack of coordination in data collection, recording, and dissemination (Warren, 2010). However, Nigeria's anti-trafficking agency, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIP) reports that it had received a total of 6,572 cases of human trafficking between 2003 and 2018 in Nigeria (Afolayan & Ikwuyatun, 2008; IOM, 2015; McAuliffe& Koser, 2017; NAPTIP, 2018).

However, the seemingly anarchy in Libya after the fall of Gaddaffi's regime subjected most victims on involuntary migration or human trafficking to numerous inhuman treatment and some were arrested and sent to the prisons. Indeed, many more find themselves in one form of slavery, organ harvesting or the others and earnestly regret the venture and look forward to returning home (UNHCR, 2016; Weerasinghe, et al.,2017). These realities as captured by the footages of 'Libya slave market' on major media platform across the world informed Nigerians on the repatriation of

Nigerians and other nationals to their home countries with divergent needs, which require social policies and institutional intervention. Specifically, Section 11 and 12 of Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act of 2015 provided for the establishment of Counselling and Rehabilitation Department in the Agency (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2015; A104 &105) to play a leading role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of Libya returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State and this is the focus of the current study.

Statement of Problem

The Nigerian state had created NAPTIP to investigate, arrest and prosecute perpetrators of human smuggling and trafficking, as well as assist their victims in the rehabilitation and reintegration after repatriation from foreign land (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2015). However, many Nigerians are familiar with the performance of NAPTIP in the arrest and prosecution of human traffickers with remarkable successes since its inception, but very little is published about it performances in the rehabilitation of the returnee migrants (UN, 2012).

Nigerians become increasingly inquisitive of the utility of the agency in relation to the rehabilitation function since the fall of Muamar Ghadafi in 2011 which led to the repatriation of many Nigerians for possible rehabilitation and reintegration.

The Nigerian Government mandated the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to handle the repatriation and the transportation of these returnee migrants to their respective states of origin for rehabilitation and reintegration after gaining information about the 'Libya Slave Market' footages where Nigerians were victims. Most of the repatriation of thousands of Nigerians from Libya were indigenes of Edo State (Owegie, 2017; Gradyjan, 2018; Vanguard, 2018).

NAPTIP itself has numerous challenges such as inadequate manpower, poor funding and inadequate facilities among others in handling the multifaceted functions involved in human trafficking and indeed the migration of Nigerians to other part of the world. Several studies have been carried out on the activities of NAPTIP in checking human trafficking, smuggling and repatriation (UNODC, 2009; Human Right Watch, 2010). Few studies have been carried out

to assess the efforts of NAPTIP in the rehabilitation of Libya returnee migrants in Benin City since the fall of Muamar Ghadafi in 2011 to 2020. These necessitated the need for the current study to assess the efforts of NAPTIP in the rehabilitation of Libya returnee migrants.

Objectives of the Study

The central objective of this study is to assess the efforts of NAPTIP rehabilitation of Libya returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State. Specific objectives include:

1. To examine whether NAPTIP provided professional counselling to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State.
2. To examine whether NAPTIP gave the required training to integrate the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State.
3. To investigate whether NAPTIP disseminated adequate and critical information to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State.
4. To investigate whether NAPTIP facilitated technical and financial empowerment for the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide this study:

1. Does NAPTIP provide professional counselling to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State?
2. Does NAPTIP give the required trainings to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State?
3. Does NAPTIP provide adequate and critical information to the Libya Returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State?
4. Does NAPTIP facilitate technical and financial empowerment of the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State?

Theoretical Framework

Neoclassical economic theory on migration, see immigrants originally move in response to higher wages in the receiving nation, which they expect to yield higher standard of living from earnings. In the absence of a binational wage differential, return migration should only occur if a migrant's expectations for higher net earnings are not met –because of under- or unemployment, the psychic costs

of moving are higher than anticipated (Constant & Massey (2002:10). Return migration occurs as the outcome of a failed migration experience which did not lead or produced the expected benefit. It involves labour migrants who miscalculated the cost of migration and therefore failed to reap the higher income in the foreign land and therefore forced to return to home countries (Todaro, 1969: p140). The neoclassical economic theory holds that failed migration experience is the only motivation for return of migrants to their home country, specifically failure in terms of expecting income, employment and other opportunities not present at the home country. This postulation fits into the situation of the returnee migrants from Libya who had hope to experience a better standard of living and higher income.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design in generating data for the study. The choice of the survey method is informed as a means of securing relevant information from those with experience in the investigation of the study. The study was conducted in Benin City since it is the place where most of the returnee migrants were rehabilitated. The study population was drawn from members of staff of Non-Governmental Organizations in Benin City and Libya returnees. The NGOs includes Idia Renaissance, Step Against Human Trafficking (SAHT), and the returnee migrants from Libya in Benin City and Libya returnees.

Questionnaires with structured questions were administered to the respondents who shared their views on the subject matter. The research instrument was subjected to both content and face validity. The study however adopted the purposive sampling method to select only members of staff of the NGOs and the Libya Returnee Migrants who have had first hand experience on the rehabilitation of the Libya returnee migrants.The instrument was given to expert in the field of migration and senior colleagues in the Department of Social Work to check the authenticity and efficiency of the instrument to provide answers to the research question. On the whole, a total of five hundred and seventy-one (571) copies of the questionnaires were administered on the aforementioned categories of respondents in the rehabilitation agency and its
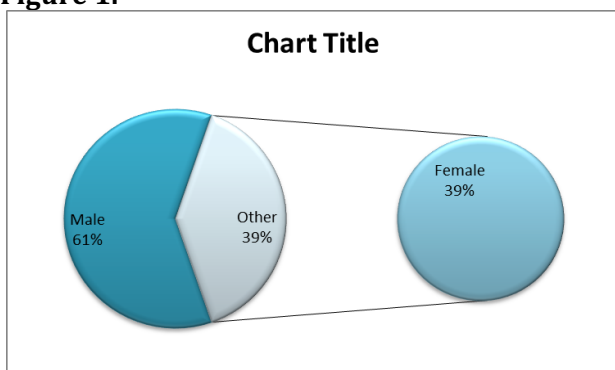
locations within the study area in Benin City but five hundred and thirty eight was retrieved (538).

Table 1: Demographic status of respondents

Sex	
Male	**326**
Female	**212**
Total	**538**

Sources; Author compilation 2020

Figure 1.

Sources; Author compilation 2020

The demographic representation in Table 1 and Figure showed that male were 326 and female 212 which represented 61% and 39% respectively for the population of the study. The representation is robust to permit adequate and objective analysis on gender basis since the variation is fairly balanced.

Research Questions: One
Table2: NAPTIP Provided Professional Counseling

SA	A	D	SD
45	43	248	202

Sources; Author compilation 2020

Fig. 2
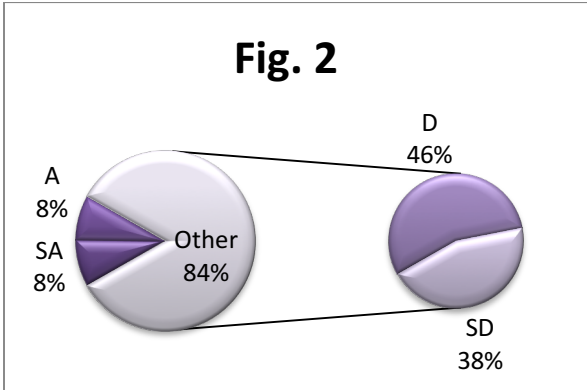
Sources; Author compilation 2020

Table 2 reveals that 45 of the respondents agreed that NAPTIP provided professional counseling to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin, Edo State and 43 of the respondents strongly agreed. This were captured in fig.2 to represent 8% and 8% respectively for both categories.

248 of the respondents disagreed and 202 strongly disagreed that NAPTIP provided professional counseling to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Edo State. This was reflected in fig.2 to indicate that 46% disagreed and 38% strongly disagreed respectively. The aggregate data indicated that 84% of the respondents were of the opinion that NAPTIP did not provide professional counseling to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Edo State.
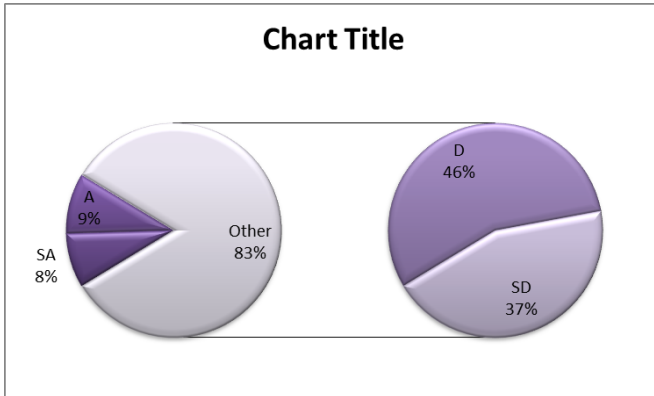
Research Question Two
TABLE 3: NAPTIP Provides Training and Skill Acquisition Programme

SA	A	D	SD
44	49	248	197

Source: Authors' Compilation (2020).

Fig.3

Chart Title

Source: Authors' Compilation (2020).

Table 3 above indicates that 44 of the respondents agreed that NAPTIP provides basic vocational and technical skills acquisition to unskilled Libya Returnee Migrants in Edo State and 43 strongly agreed that such training and skill acquisition took place. This represented 9% and 8% respectively. Indicating an affirmative of mere 17% of the respondents.

However, 248 disagreed and 197 strongly disagreed that NAPTIP provides basic vocational and technical skills acquisition to unskilled Libya Returnee Migrants in Edo State. This represented 46% and 37% in fig.3. which typified an aggregate of 83% disagreement that NAPTIP provides basic vocational and technical skills acquisition to unskilled Libya Returnee Migrants in Edo State.
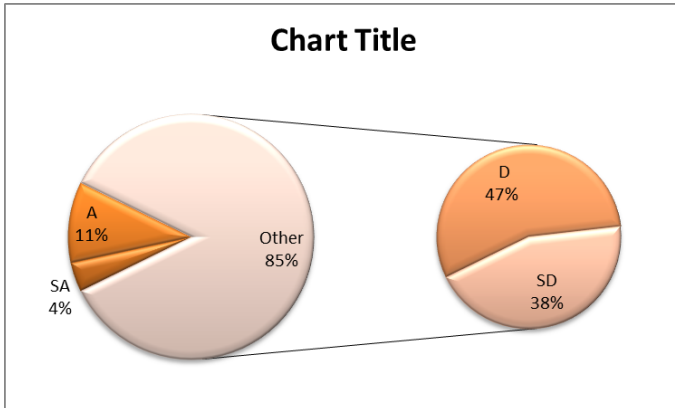
Research Question Three
TABLE 4: NAPTIP Disseminates Adequate Information to the Libya Returnee Migrants

SA	A	D	SD
21	57	255	205

Source: Authors' Compilation (2020).

Fig.4

Chart Title

Source: Authors' Compilation (2020).

Responses from the respondents on table 4 showed that 21 and 57 of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that NAPTIP disseminated adequate information to the Libya returnee migrants. This was reflected in fig.4 to represent 11% and 4% respectively for agree and strongly agreed category. This identify the affirmative acceptance is 15% of the respondents.

225 and 205 of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that NAPTIP disseminated adequate information to the Libya returnee migrants. This was reflected in Fig.4 to represent 47% and 38% for disagreed and strongly disagreed categories of the respondents. This was typified as 85% decline that NAPTIP disseminated adequate information to the Libya returnee migrants.
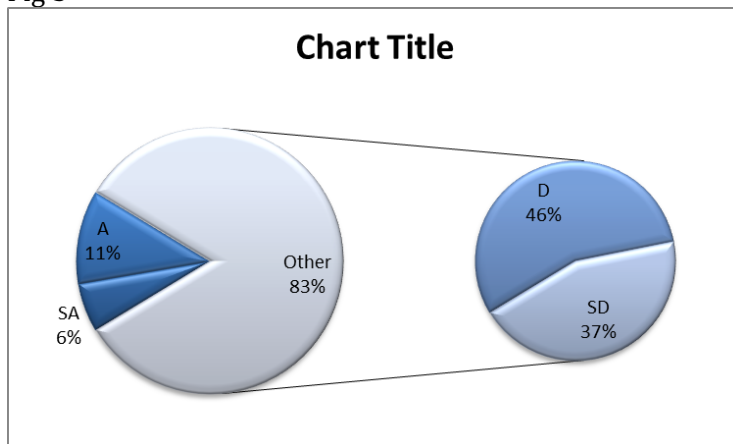
Research Question Four
TABLE 5 : NAPTIP Provides Technical and Financial Empowerment to the Libya Returnee Migrants in Benin City, Edo State

SA	A	D	SD
32	61	247	198

Source: Authors' Compilation (2020).

Fig 5

Source: Authors' Compilation (2020).

Responses from the respondent disclosed in table 5 that 32 of the respondents strongly agreed that NAPTIP provided technical and financial empowerment to the Libya returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State and 61 agreed. This was also reflected in fig.5 to respectively represent 6% and 11|% respectively. The positive affirmation is 17%.

247 and 198 of the Respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that NAPTIP provided technical and financial empowerment to the Libya returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State. This was also reflected in fig.5 to account for 46% and 37% respectively for both categories. This indicated an overwhelming decline on aggregate of 83%.

Discussion of findings
This response from the responds agreed with this research by Adejumo, Olu-Owolabi & Fayomi (2015) that government operates most of the effective rehabilitation homes that catered for the victims of human trafficking in Nigeria. Despite the fact that several NGOs exist in the country, very few are interested in rehabilitation programmes as only 28% of the participants were from homes operated by NGOs against 72% from government homes. In other

countries they are recognized as partners in progress. The nature of the independent role played by non-governmental organizations in rehabilitation of victims within Nigerian society calls for real participation. (Adejumo, Olu-Owolabi & Fayomi, 2015).

Significantly, based on these findings, the dimension of the agency on rehabilitation appears to be inadequately supported by governmental and civil society rehabilitation programs. In fact, this deficiency reveals a tension between the Nigerian Governments' securitization and human rights approach to human trafficking as elements of both approaches are evident in the rehabilitation programs. The lack of support for male survivors suggests that there are still some significant gaps between rehabilitation strategies and the empowerment of survivors in Nigeria (Okoli, 2020).

Based on these findings, Jordan (2002): Macy & John (2011), were of the same opinion that empowering survivors through measures like decision making improves their self-esteem, confidence and ensures better chances at successfully reintegrating into society. Unfortunately, this is largely deficienct in the agency rehabilitation process and programs of rehabilitation. The consequence is that while the efforts to use rehabilitation to empower survivors seem to have had some little impact in terms of providing resources such as disseminating of adequate information, the nature of the rehabilitation programs might actually be disempowering survivors by treating them either as inert objects of rehabilitation or completely neglecting them (i.e., male survivors). It is therefore clear that there is a need to reform rehabilitation strategies in NAPTIP and partnering agency if they are to become more effective, (Okoli, 2020).

There are several pitfalls that hinder the NAPTIP to achieve effective rehabilitation programs and linking of financial resources to Libya Returnee Migrant. For instance, Nwogu (2014) showed that the probable disparities between the funds allocated to NAPTIP by the federal government and the funds it actually receives for its operations are due to corruption. This assertion holds up when the poor state of NAPTIP's facilities is juxtaposed with the huge sums of money it is supposedly allocated in the national budget annually. This issue of corruption and mismanagement of national funds at various levels of government likely account for the lack of facilities

for vocational skills training and linking Victims to financial institutions that can give security and credit facilities to migrant returnee, (Okoli,2020).

Conclusion

The study revealed the institutional weaknesses of NAPTIP and its incapability in rehabilitating the Libya returnee migrants in Benin City, Edo State and Nigeria in general. This reflects the state of this major government agency saddled with the responsibility of intervening on social issues across the nation. It raises questions on the commitment of the government to the wellbeing of its citizens, especially the disadvantaged sub-groups and victims of man-made or natural disaster. NAPTIP was expected to assist them in skills acquisition and other training which would enhance their reintegration into their society with meaningful means of livelihood. The National Directorate for Employment (NDE) which would have been a worthy partner in provision of vocational training to returnee migrant is poorly funded. The bureaucracy and administration, as well as facilities in some of the workshops are very discouraging to trainees. These indeed accounts for the reason why many of the returnee migrants refuse to participate in such training and skill acquisition model.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that:

1) The Federal Government needs to increase the capacity of NAPTIP in terms of quality and quantity of manpower. Expand its facilities and diversify its funding in order to meet the challenges of rehabilitating returnee migrants from every part of the world.
2) All stakeholders need to be educated on the danger of stigmatizing returnee migrants. Since international migration is like any human endeavour, it may not be successful all the time, and its failure should not be seen as the end of the road.
3) Checkmating illegal migration should be seen as the collective responsibility of all citizens. This is because the negative impact of failed migration has enormous challenges on the society and the nation at large.

4) The funding of NAPTIP should not be left with the federal government alone. The creation of Diaspora Trust Fund for the rehabilitation of returnee migrants would enhance the institutional and operational capability of NAPTIP. Besides, corporate bodies in the country could also contribute a certain percentage to the 'Diaspora Trust Fund which would expand the capacity and enhance the effectiveness of NAPTIP in rehabilitating returnee migrants amongst other functions.

5) Setting aside a percentage of the Diaspora's remittance by the Nigerian government could provide a source of funding for NAPTIP and increase its capacity to perform its statutory duties.

6) Therefore, the funding of the agency could be made easier and effective if the Nigerian government engages all the stakeholders, formulates and implements constructive policies for the rehabilitation of the returnee migrants.

7) Appeal to corporate bodies to support NAPTIP in funding and rehabilitation of the returnee migrants could also be a source of additional funding.

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CARE AND PERCEPTION OF THE ELDERLY BY THE YOUTH IN ESAN NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The concept of aging has been a discourse that is attracting attention both nationally and internationally.Though life expectancy stands at 51.6 years, demographers affirmed that the numbers would likely double in the next 2(two) decade. Worrisome is the fact that the elderly are usually affected by problematic health challenges as a result of age and health status. Being one of the advocates and drivers for better/improved health care and spending in advanced and developing nation, the elderly needs care and attention from the youths who are the able bodied members in the society.The study adopted the Theory of Disengagement in explaining the care for the elderly and the perception of the youths towards caring for these special group of persons in selected communities of Esan North East, namely; Ebhoiyi, Amhendokhian, Arue and Eguare. 300 participants were randomly selected and studied using both qualitative and quantitative method of data collection and analysis. It was observed that though older persons are catered for, the youths are limited by time, space, and material hence creating a gap in the scheme of things. It therefore recommends that all concerned government agencies and well meaning individual should create an enabling environment that will care, protect and provide for the youths and the elderly, as the former when satisfied will have a ripple effect on the latter.

Keywords; Elderly, Aging, Youth, Care and Perception.

Introduction

Globally, the population of the aged is now widely recognized as one of the most salient long-term demographic developments, which has profound economic and social implications with unique policy challenges (Asiyanbola 2004). This is because the elderly comprise the fastest-growing age group globally, with a steep increase more in developing countries. Though empirical works have enhance the modern discourse on the process at which old age starts, the evidence is that definitions vary between. However in many developing countries, old age is perceived to begin when active contribution to productivity is no longer possible due to physical frailties (Kola, 2012).

Although the United Nations (UN)2005, does not have a standard numerical criterion for the classification of the aged, but the base age for old age is 60+ years, which describes the older population (WHO, 2015). The concept of ageing in Africa has been heavily debated and criticized. This is because ageing in terms of years does not exist in isolation. According to Glascock and Feinman (1980), chronologically aging process involve changes in social role (work patterns, adult status of children and menopause) and change in capabilities/functionality (mental, physiological and physical changes) are components of the conceptual distinction of the aged.

As noted by World Health Organization (2015), the western capitalist economic age for the elderly is 65+, but this age is not uniform for Africans, because of the cleavages of culture and traditions of Africa. Fayehun and Salami (2014) agreed with the assertion of the World Health Organization and described the context of aged or being elderly in Nigeria as age 60, being the statutory retirement age for employers of government and formal sector, but conflicting professional interests have raised the standard retirement age for certain professions (Example - Judges and University Lecturers) to 65 or 70 years (Eme, Uche, and Uche, 2014), but this may not be in tandem with the traditional conceptualization of the status of the elderly in Nigeria especially in the rural setting.

The African traditional perception of the elderly is closely associated with the social definition of ageing, which conceptualizes old age as both a process and also a stage. This is largely built around

certain social indicators in African society. These indicators are traits which includes physical characteristics (grey hair, walking stick and dentition), marital experiences, stoppage of child bearing, having grand-children, the kinds of clothing, lifestyle, contributions to the community and capacity to command respect within the community (Sijuwade, 2007).

Nigeria had a projected population of over 185 million in 2014 (CIA Factbook, 2014), while recent projection by UN is over 213 million (UN. 2021). Significantly, Nigeria is the most populated nation in Africa and the ninth in the world (UN2005). Life expectancy stands at 51.6 years, and projections by demographers indicate that the number of the elderly will double in the next two decade if the life expectancy increases (Hoff, 2007). It is however, noted that the elderly in most traditional society are highly recognized as custodian of wisdom and tradition. In this context, the elderly need to be respected and catered for both at the national, state, local and community levels. Being a vulnerable group in the human society, the elderly are mostly affected by problematic health conditions due to a combination of age and health status as they constitute one of the main drivers of health care spending, in advanced nations.

The greater longevity of the elderly demands care and support for a longer period and also entails high cost of medical and health care. The rising cost of living and shrinking income pattern often makes it difficult for the family in Nigeria to provide adequate care and support for this senior citizens. This is because the rising individualism and liberalism in the family have often boosted the selfish and egoistic interest of the individual members of the family (Ushasnee, 2004).

The attitude of young people toward the elderly is a function of their relationship with such individuals as this will shape their perception of the elderly. Hence the idea of care for the elderly is determined by the relationship between the youth and the elderly in the society. In this context this study focuses on the care and perception of the elderly among the youth of selected communities in Esan North East Local Government Area, Edo State.

Statement of the Problem

The elderly are one of the highly vulnerable groups in the society. They are disadvantaged and are faced with severe discrimination. The social exclusion that old people experience is further reinforced by the physical and psychological disability that is part of ageing. However in a society that is experiencing endemic poverty, corruption, urbanization, rural-urban migration, materialism and unemployment there is social decay that has affected the traditional sense of family responsibilities including the care for the elderly by the family especially the youths. The youths now strive to work and cater for their immediate family, wives and children, earn a living, then out of the left over, (if any), they now take care of their extended family of which the elderly fall into, (Monisola *et al*, 2012).

In many traditional African societies and in most countries in the world, the family is charged with the responsibilities for the provision of support for the elderly. Such support predominates and it is provided voluntarily without any remuneration (Hoff, 2007). This is due to the fact that the role of the elderly can never be overemphasized in most societies of the world; hence the elderly are usually referred to as senior citizens. In a time where society is experiencing rapid rural-urban drift, the labour force (comprising of vibrant youth) is always on the move. People migrate from the rural area with a sharp demographic age gap, while the available ones feel deprived especially where there are no jobs, basic amenities and social infrastructure; a situation where the elderly rely on the youths (especially family members) for care.

This is because of hardship and poverty that permeate the Nigerian Society. The rural areas are worst hit because of lack of opportunities to make progress and carve a niche for individuals. Rural communities lack basic social amenities and economic opportunities for the youths who are forced to migrate to urban centres leaving the aged to fend for themselves. Though a lot has been written on the aged in Nigeria as the literature shows, not much has been done on the Perception and care of the aged in Esan North East in Edo State, and this creates literature and empirical data gap in the context of the discourse on the issues concerning the elderly in the study area. In the context of the above this study focuses on

the nature, structure and dimension of the Perception and care of the aged in selected communities in Esan North East in Edo State. The study specifically explores the impact of the care of the elderly and the experiences of the elderly in the study area.

The main objective of the study is to examine the care and perception of the elderly by the youths of the selected communities of Esan North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Other specific objectives are to;

1. Examine the social statuses and life experiences of the elderly in selected communities of Esan North East local government area.
2. Examine the nature and dimension of care for the elderly in selected communities in Esan North East local government area.
3. Examine the effect of the care or otherwise on the elderly in the society.

Perception of the elderly by the youths

The youths see the aged or the elderly as a reservoir of knowledge and therefore hold them at a very high esteem. This is because they consult them in matters that concern their community either domestic, marital, traditional or customs related activities. Due to the aforementioned reasons, they (youths) would want to always take care of the elderly or aged among them. However, due to the economic hardship and lack of job with basic amenities in their community, the youth are compelled to migrate to the urban centres for greener pastures. This development now hinders or distorts the effective care that is needed by the elderly.

Studies have shown that the age gap and social disparity across regions where the elderly are more in number tend to have few numbers of persons that can be classified as youth. However the dependency of the elderly on the youth in a time where there are economic hardships and survival challenges usually create mental imbalance on the labour force. As Borges and Magalhães (2009), Van Den Heuvel (2015), Kelley (2005) and Veras (2009) asserted, financial dependence, multi-generational cohabitation are associated with changes in family structure, such as divorce, same-sex marriage, the growing role of women in the labour market, and the need for emotional or health care support. Mudiare (2013), asserts that isolation may also predispose elderly women in

particular, to sexual abuse. He further reiterated that In October, 2011, youths between ages 17-25years went into a raping spree. They terrorized mostly 60-80 year old widows most of whom lived alone in Ogbozalla and Ibeku communities in Enugu State. The only married woman among them that was alone the night she was raped. Unfortunately, the criminals were never prosecuted. One of them had a brother in-law who was a policeman. Another was arrested and released shortly after in spite of the evidence against him; he now operates a beer palour freely. In Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, the findings from a study of 300 elderly men and women by Akpan and Umobong (2013), made them to conclude that there is a high prevalence of elderly abuse perpetuated by the youth. For example, 46.7% of the elderly each complained of medical neglect and bed sores; 47% experienced some form of physical abuse, 44.7% lack of visitation, 49% uncomfortable living condition and 35%, theft. The elderly in a Lagos study complained of medical neglect (Sijuwade, 2008). Similarly, Asogwa and Igbokwe (2010) found a low prevalence of physical abuse (7.8%) in their Enugu State study but reported a moderate prevalence of inadequate food. However, there was high prevalence of denial of freedom of interaction (88%) and verbal abuse (73%) such as "Agadi" and "Usebo"(worthless and Witch/Wizard). They attribute the low incidence of physical abuse to the fear of attracting curses because it is a taboo to hit an elderly person but the act of abusing the elderly by the youth still exists. In the same vein, in a research by (Ajomale, 2007), he further buttress the view from his finding that often time, on account of the elderly mental and physical incapacitation, they live with fear and keep their abuse to themselves.

According to Ajomale,(2007), a wheel chair-bound, elderly man shared his experience on the mistreatment he daily received from the houseboy (male servant) employed to take care of him. He recounted that most times the mood of the boy determined the level of physical abuse the elderly person suffered. Said he, "The violent pushing of the wheelchair creates a lot of fear in me. Sometimes when I need to be exposed to some sunshine, the boy abandons me in the sun until such a time that is convenient for him to push me back into the house. I cannot complain to my only daughter who engaged the boy's services because she once told me to endure all

the mistreatment that getting a replacement could be very difficult. Care givers for the elderly are very difficult to secure." Loneliness and isolation appear to contribute significantly to their abuse.

However, the burden of care for the elderly squarely rests on family members despite the provisions made in the 1999 Constitution. Section 14.2(b) of the Constitution states that the security and welfare of its people shall be the primary purpose of the government, and it promises in Section 16, sub-section 2(d), that suitable and adequate shelter and suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, as well as sick benefits, will be provided to all citizens (Mbah, 2014; 2016; Federal Government of Nigeria, 1999). Unfortunately, the Nigerian government seems not to have kept up to this social contract and has reneged on these promises, as most elderly people are not covered by any social policy within the new planned social security scheme, but instead has opted for the creation of employment opportunities for the youth (Mbah, 2018: Tanyi, André & Mbah 2018) .

Theoretical Framework
The theory that will be utilized in explaining the care for the elderly and the perception of the youth toward caring for these special groups of persons will be the theory of disengagement.

Theory of Disengagement
The theory of disengagement was postulated by Cumming and Henry (1961). The theory of disengagement is both the oldest and probably the best known theory of ageing. Cumming and Henry (1961), employed the term 'disengagement' to refer to a process whereby the individual aged person responds to growing older by withdrawing from the various roles he or she had occupied in middle age. The older person is said here to 'disengage', to move towards an ever-increasing concern with self and away from involvement with others basing their findings on their study of an aged population in Kansas City. Cumming and Henry further argued that the aged person, by disengaging, was following his self-interests and (if the disengaged behaviour was compatible with the values and edicts of

society) that the basic feeling of satisfaction on the part of the aged would be high (Boiwinick. 1973),

The disengagement theory of ageing might be said to have two facets, societal and individual. The societal disengagement theory 'represents a strong evolutionary train of thought which at times resembles strands of the thinking of socio-biologists' (Walts. 1980). Societal disengagement is that process whereby society "withdraws from or no longer seeks the individual's effort or involvement' (Atchley, 1980). In effect, mandatory retirement is a kind of societal effort forcibly to 'disengage the aged person. Societal disengagement may be either intended or unintended, and at times it may be difficult to determine which the case is.

The concept may sound harsh and unyielding (some of the same arguments are made about socio-biological perspectives in general) but its proponents argue that there must be some way of dealing with the mortality of society's members. Of course, it is now argued by many of the critics of societal disengagement that the aged have been falsely accused on a number of fronts: that they are just as productive as their younger counterparts, for example. Societal perceptions and attitudes influence and direct societal disengagement. In other words, societal attitudes have generally been somewhat negative about the continued productivity of the aged in a job.

Individual disengagement is a more voluntary kind of action (although certainly not completely so when considered in the context of societal disengagement). In the case of individual disengagement, the aged begin to limit their own activities and literally to disengage themselves from the mainstream of life in preparation for death, the 'ultimate disengagement" (Kastenbaum, 1977). Individual disengagement is above all a voluntary process, the aged deliberately choose to disengage, and proceed to do so as time goes on in various stages, aspects and components of their life. It is more of a psychological theory than is societal disengagement, and in some ways is the more controversial; mainly because of the voluntary nature of the process.

This theory is very relevant to this study because it help us have a holistic picture of the perception and care of the elderly in our society today. The elderly in the society were once viable in the

production process and they were independent as most of them were productive and could help, fend themselves and also carry the responsibility of others on their shoulders. Due to their age, stamina, health and other variable traits that have limited their contribution to social and physical development and transformation either due to self-premonition or social recognition were retired or relieved from active duty. On this basis, they tend to wane in their contribution to the physical development of their environment and hence rely on the support of others for assistance.

The source of assistance of the elderly especially in Nigeria is the youths, whose parents and grandparents are the elderly in their immediate environment. In instances where the elderly are childless most responsibility falls on their relatives who are still working (usually the youth). In a society that is saddle with an increase in unemployment, rapid rural-urban drift, economic inequality, increase inflation and the likes, the youth tend to look for means of sustenance in order to close the economic gap and live a comfortable life, establish a family, and from the left over if any, tend to send home to the elderly that need assistance and cannot fend for themselves.

Most of the time, this youth device a means (if possible) to ignore the elderly especially if the situation around them is harsh and thereby see the elderly as burden to be pushed aside. This creates another impression of the elderly as against the original social context of elder as up-holder of the tradition of any given society.

Methodology

The survey research design was employed for this study. This design allowed for a systematic gathering of information that described the nature of care and perception of the elderly among the active population in selected communities in Esanland. It has within its constituent communities like Efandion, Ekhue, Ubierumun, Eror, Amhendokhian, Ukoni, Arhue, Ubierumu-Oke, Arue and many others. However Uromi is a town located in Edo state with an estimated population of 121,989 (2006 population census). The population of the study comprised the youths (18-45) and the elderly (65 years and above) resident in selected communities of

Esan North East local Government Area. The study population was made up of family members and members of households residing in the four (Ebhoyi, Amhendokhian, Arue and Eguare) communities in Uromi, as they formed the principal research participants.

The sample size of the study was drawn from the members of the families of Esan Speaking people and non-Esan speaking inhabitants who reside in the study area in Esan North East Local Government Area in Edo State. Samples of 300 were randomly selected from the area of study.

The cluster sampling method was adopted in the study as it enabled the communities to be aggregated into groups, using the existing traditional settlement quarters of the community. 75 households were selected randomly from each community and from each selected community.

In the household, the youth were randomly selected through availability of household. In a situation where there is no youth in household that was selected, we move over to the next household to select the youth. We continue in the process until we select the sample size

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. For the quantitative, the questionnaire was used and for the qualitative data, the in-depth interviews (IDIs) was used in eliciting vital information from the participants. The interview was conducted for the leaders in the community which comprises the community youth leader, the Odionwere and the community gate keeper (usually called the Owanlen or Odion).

Table1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Sex	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
	Males	182	60.7
	Females	118	39.3
Ages	18-23	04	1.3
	24-29	31	10.3
	30-35	60	20.0
	36-40	125	41.7
	41-45	80	26.7
Educational Background	No formal Education	48	16.0
	Primary	12	4.0
	Secondary	90	30.0
	OND	48	16.0
	B.Sc./HND	90	30.0
	Others	12	4.0
Religious Affiliation	Christianity	260	86.7
	Muslims	07	02.3
	ATR	26	8.7
	Others	07	02.3
Occupation	Students	39	13.0
	Drivers	26	8.7
	Farmers	58	19.3
	Unemployed	06	02.0
	Businessmen	63	21.0
	Dress makers	18	06.0
	Civil servants	30	10.0
	Clergymen	08	02.7
	School teacher	12	04.0
	Bike riders	22	07.3
	Bankers	18	06.0
Marital status	Never married	48	16.0
	Married	242	80.7
	Separated	03	01.0
	Widowed	07	02.3

Source: Field work 2021

Discussion of Table 1

The above table examines the demographic characteristics that make up the participants in the study area, from the table I the result shows that most of the participants were male as they constitute 60.7% and the female making just 39.3% of the participants. Due to the sampling technique adopted for the study majority of the participants were within the ages of 36-40 years as they constitute 41.7% of the entire participants, followed by the respondents within ages 30-35 years with 20% and the least are the participants within ages 18-23 years and 24-29 years as they constitute 1.3% and 10.3% respectively. The table further revealed that 30% of the participants had their secondary education and Bachelor/Higher National Degree, 16% represent the participants with OND and same numbers were also for participants with no formal education. The least are the primary school certificate holders and participants that have some unclassified certificates.The implication from the educational qualification of respondents revealed significant response from the respondents are educated and understand more on the perception of the care pattern of the elderly by youth in the study area while respondent without formal education have minute understanding of the care and perception of the Elderly by the youth in the study area.

From the table it is obvious that location has an influence on religion, as 86.7% of the entire participants interviewed for the study were Christians which implies that they share similar religious orientation and perception. On the occupation of the participants the table also shows that the highest among the participants are the traders or business men or women with 21% duly followed by the farmers which represent the major occupation in rural settlement as the farmers represent 19.3%. The findings reveal that not much more of formal occupation exist in the study area but more on informal occupations and house hold business activities exist within the study area.On the marital status of the participants the table showed that most of the participants are married with 80.7%, followed by the single participants with 16%. The separated and the widowed represents 1% and 2.3% respectively.

Section B: Care and perception of the elderly by the youths in selected communities of Esan North East Local Government Area, Uromi, Edo State

This section focuses on the participants and their responses to the issues on the objectives of the study. It seeks to interpret the responses of respondents in selected communities of Esan North East local Government area of Edo State on care and perception of the elderly by the youth in the study area.

Table 2: Objective one: Care and perception of the elderly by the youths in selected communities of Esan North East Local Government Area, Uromi, Edo State (n= 300)

	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Who are the elderly in the selected communities?	The oldest in the community	102	34.1
	The respected men	46	15.3
	The edion	70	23.3
	The judges in the community	82	27.3
What are the criteria that makes one elderly in the selected communities?	Age	142	49.3
	Ritual	88	29.4
	Marital status	10	3.3
	Rituals and age	60	20.0
How are the elderly recognized socially in the selected communities?	Given special respect	81	27.0
	Always consulted in social issues	73	24.3
	Accorded some level of recognition	41	13.7
	Preside over community deliberations	72	24.0

	Given social status	33	11.0
Does educational status of the elderly influence their social recognition?	Yes	22	7.3
	No	278	92.7
In social gathering, is respect accorded to the elderly based on their contribution?	Yes	65	21.7
	No	235	78.3
In celebrations, are there any place for the elderly in the selected communities?	Yes	291	97.0
	No	09	03.0

Source: Fieldwork 2021.

In examining the social status and life experiences of the elderly by youth in Uromi, the Result from Table 2 shows the opinion of the respondents on who an elderly person is and from the table above most of the respondents affirmed that they are the oldest in the community with 34.1% and 27.3% of the entire respondents said they are the judges of the community. 23.3% called the elderly the Edion and 15.3% called them the respected men in the community. On the criteria that makes one elderly in Uromi, 49.3% of the respondents gave it to age, while 29.4% gave it to rituals. However, 20% of the respondents gave it to both age and rituals and only 3.3% gave it to marital status.

This result supports the opinion of an interviewee, who said:The concept of the elderly have to do with age and some ritual (especially when one wants to become an "Odion"), these men are

most respected for their status and social recognition as they are seen as the pillar of experience of all the communities in Esanland especially in Uromi. In social gathering they are the judges when issues of importance are brought to the people (idi-business woman).

A respondent who is a youth and also an undergraduate student responded that in Esanland, to become an elderly person in especially in Uromi is not a joke, as one must be matured in age and experience. The word elderly has to do with age, however to be classified among the Edion one must have perform the necessary ritual, as the Edion are seen as the real elders when matter of great importance are to be deliberated and discussed. Even the Onogie of Uromi recognizes the role the elderly play, hence they are really recognized and their contributions are greatly cherished (idi-student).

On how the elders are recognized socially in Uromi, table 2 showed that most of the respondents affirmed that they are given special respect. This assertion was made by 27% of the entire respondents and 24.3% said the elderly are always consulted in social issues, while 24% of the entire participants asserted that the elderly are the kinsmen in community deliberation (that gives them topmost respect socially) and the few of the participants are those that asserted that the elderly are given social status.

As regards educational status of the elderly and how it influences their social recognition and majority of the participants disagreed to the relevance of educative. While on the question of: if the elderly are accorded some respect in social gathering based on their contribution, most of the respondent says no. this represent 78.3% of the total respondents and finally 97% of the entire respondents agreed that the elderly in festival and social functions, are given esteemed special places and position in Care and perception of the elderly by the youths in selected communities of Esan North East Local Government Area.of Edo State, Nigeria.

A participant who is a Clergyman gave a different view on the issue of respect for the elders.
In Uromi the elderly are accorded special respect both in social gathering, however most time the youth hardly display the respect

as they sometime ignore the elderly instead of vacating their seats for them to seat down (idi- Clergyman).

In similar vein a participant declared:

As a commercial motorcyclist, do you expect me to leave what i will use to feed my family and attend to an elderly man that need help? the answer is no. things are very difficult now and youths need to look for a means for themselves and feed their family so as regard the care for the elderly it is when i have enough money to take care of myself before i can set aside some form of welfare services to the elders around me especially when he or she is an uncle/aunt, because I don't have a father anymore. Overall the elderly are respected socially irrespective of their educational status, contribution and health (idi- commercial motorcyclist).

Table 3:The nature and dimension of care the elderly in Uromi

	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the elderly are well cared for in selected communities?	Yes	240	80.0
	No	60	20.0
In what ways do you think the elderly are respected?	Giving them social recognition	15	6.2
	Provision of financial assistance	72	30.0
	Showing them love	42	17.5
	Assisting them with farm work	34	14.2
	Providing food for the weak ones	30	12.5
	Rendering helping hand	20	8.3
	Provision of medicine for the sick among them	22	9.2
	Assisting in providing shelter	05	2.1
Do you think the youths in selected communities pay attention to the elderly?	Yes	180	60.0
	No	120	40.0

How often do the youths cater for the sick elderly in selected communities	Often	80	26.7
	Sometimes	182	60.7
	Never	38	12.6
Do youths in selected communities provide food to the elderly that are too weak to fend themselves?	Yes	211	70.3
	No	89	29.7
If yes, how often?	Very often	188	89.1
	Often	17	08.1
	Sometimes	06	02.8
Do youths provide and assist the elderly in providing shelter?	Yes	96	32.0
	No	204	68.0
Do youths assist the elderly in farming activities?	Yes	172	57.3
	No	128	42.7
How often do children send money to the elderly in selected communities?	Always	89	29.7
	Sometimes	199	66.3
	Never	12	04.0
Do you think the respect the elderly get is commensurate with that of their friends outside your community?	Yes	223	74.3
	No	77	25.7

Source: Field work 2021

In examining the nature and dimension of care the elderly receives in Uromi, the result in table 3 above shows that majority of the participants agreed that they feel the elderly receive social care optimally. Significantly, the response from the participants constitute 80%, while only 20% disagreed by affirming No to the issue raised, in the knowing the ways the elderly are cared for by the youths. The result also shows that 6.2% affirmed that they give the elderly social recognition, while 30% opined that the youth render financial assistance to the elderly around them in selected communities.

Minute participants of 17.5% and 14.2% respectively, affirmed that they show the elderly love and assist them in farm work. While 12.5% agreed to be providing food for the weak ones. Others render helping hand (8.3%), in the provision of drugs for the sick among them (9.2%) and finally provision of affordable shelter (2.1%). From all indication 60% of the respondents interviewed for the study supports that youth in Uromi pay attention to the elderly and 40% of the participants disagreed.

A female participant declared: As a married woman I think the form of care pattern am giving to my father is not enough, when compare to what he has invested in me. But i cannot help the situation especially when there is no money and am at a long distance from my father, I think this situation is not peculiar to me but to others who reside outside their immediate community due to modernization and migration. We can only send money home but will money give them food? or take them to the hospital, and many other things money cannot do. On the overall, I think being an elderly would have been interesting but for some social and economic hindrances it is become aging with pain (idi- private teacher)-

The result from table 3 also shows that most of the participants (60.7%) agreed that the youths sometimes cater for the sick who are seen as elderly within the selected communities, but 26.7% said that social support and care pattern is often, only 12.6% of the participants say never. However the views of the participants were quiet different when it comes to knowing if the youth in Uromi provide food to the elderly that are too weak to fend themselves, 70.3% says Yes and only 29.7% says no. On the participants that says yes, 89.1% of them agreed that the youths provide food very often to the elderly in selected, followed by 8.1% who say often and only 2.8% of the entire respondent says sometimes

On the issue of providing shelter has shown in the table, 68% of the participants collectively disagreed that the youths ensure and assist the elderly in the provision of affordable shelter while 32% agreed to the issue. However, as regard assisting the elderly in farming activities the Table 3 showed that 57.3% agreed that the youths assist the elderly in farming activities and 42.7% disagreed due to some personal reasons. Moreover, the result revealed that

66.3% of the respondents sometimes send money home to the elders and 29.7% agreed that children always make it a point of duty to send money home. Only 4% of the respondents agreed that they have never send money home to the elderly in their community.

On a evaluation of the respect for the elderly compared to their friends outside, 74.3% of the participants agreed that the elderly get the same respect as their contemporaries in other community and 25.7% disagreed.

According to a participant: I can only speak for myself, as a health practitioner, whenever an elder is sick whether I know him/her or not I do my best to treat him/her. This is because I see them as God's mouth piece; they speak wisdom and are unbiased in their judgment. The elderly need to be fed, sheltered, assisted and protected. For my parent I always send money home, once I get my salary the first thing is to remember them. The last time I didn't send money home my parent called me to show their understanding. My brother you know life reciprocate and we have children so we should do the right thing (idi- nurse).

A fashion designer added to this, discourse thus: My Dad is an Odion in a well-known community in Uromi, I am proud to say I always call, send money and even send ready-made clothes to him to make him look good. If you see my dad, you will think he is just 45 years old, we pay boys to do the farming, my mother still do the cooking as my father hardly eat out. On the overall, we are doing our best (idi- fashion designer).

Table 4: The impact of care or otherwise on the elderly

Does the youths treat the elderly with some sense of respect in selected communities?	Response	Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	283	94.3
	No	17	05.7
	Total	**300**	**100**
In what ways do you think the elderly are not accorded the expected social recognition?	Not been financially supported	81	28.6
	No given their full entitlement	91	32.2
	Inadequate respect	36	12.7
	Equal sharing in community proceed	62	21.9
	Others	13	04.6
	Total	**283**	**100**
Do you think the youth are effective in the care patterns for the elderly in the area?	Yes	237	79.0
	No	06	02.0
	Can't say	57	19.0
	Total	**300**	**100**
Are there any effect of inadequate care by the youths towards the elderly?	Yes	267	89.0
	No	33	11.0
	Total	**300**	**100**
Do you think the inadequate care have a psychological impact on the elderly?	Yes	261	97.8
	No	02	0.7
	Can't say	04	1.5
	Total	**267**	**100**
Emotionally do you feel satisfied?	Yes	251	96.2
	No	10	03.8
	Total	**261**	**100**

Sources: Field Work 2021

Objective three seeks to examine the impact of this care or otherwise on the elderly in selected community in Esan North East Local Government Area, Uromi. From all indications the result from Table 4 shows that significant response of the participants (94.3%) agreed to the fact that youths see the elderly with some sense of respect in the selected communities, while only 5.7% of the participants disagreed. The participants also opined that some elders are not financially supported because of the harsh economic realities of Nigerian society.

Furthermore, 12.7% of the participants opined that the elderly are not having enough respect, while 21.9% said the elderly who are supposed to be given the lion share in the community proceed, are given same quota as the youth which some of the youth find such level of reciprocity absurd and 4.6% of the participants abhor this situation as unfortunate. Majority of the participants (79%) agreed that the youths are doing enough in the area of care for the elderly and 2% disagreed. However, 19% of the participants were undecided on the issue.

Similarly, the findings also shown that 89% of the participants agreed that there are profound impacts of inadequate care by the youth on the elderly and only 11% were not in support, of this position 97.8% agreed that the impact is more psychological and 0.7% is not in agreement with the opinion raised. Finally, significant response from the respondents claimed to be satisfied emotionally with the ways the youths in Uromi are caring for the elderly in their various communities. This group of persons constitutes 96.2% of the respondents while only 3.8% were not satisfied with the way the youths are caring for the elderly in their various communities.

Discussion of the findings

The study revealed that the elderly in Uromi like in other communities are usually affiliated with the age of the individual and they are accorded respect as senior citizens of the community with some specific role such as performing the judicial role of settling community and household disputes. The study also shows that excluding age in Uromi, there are some rituals to be perform if one

want to become an "Odion" and the least requirement that was very insignificant was marital status of the prospective odion.

The study shows that the elders in African society are highly respected, consulted on vital and relevant social issues, placed with high status. They are also given some level of social recognition in deliberation on community issues. However, the contribution of the elderly to the community development when they were of youthful age were never seen as a criteria for respecting these octogenarian. During festivities and celebration, the study affirmed that they are given privileges as sign of respect and recognition. Hence the social analysis of the elderly on their status is very relevant, the findings of the study have been able to show that most person have different perception of the elderly, and based on this the definitions they gave to it differs.

This finding subscribed to the view of Glascock and Feinman (1980) who affirmed that being elderly has to do with chronological age change in social role (work patterns, adult status of children and menopause). Fayehun and Salami (2014) noted that the elderly is usually based on a specific age context. Sijuwade, (2007) noted that the African perception and definition of the elderly personality and role in the society as been closely associated with the social definition of ageing, which conceptualizes old age as both a process and as a stage. This is largely built around certain social indicators in African society. Being an elderly person in Africa is based on age, reproductive status and other life experiences. In tandem with literatures, the findings show that the concept of care in terms of the elderly is very relative, and in Uromi the care given to the elderly have different dimensions such as giving the elderly respect, providing financial assistance, showing them love and affection, assisting the elderly in their farming activities, provision of food and also rendering helping hand to the weak among them, other ways are providing medicine for the sick and creating affordable shelter for those that are homeless. The frequency at which some of this care, assistance and aid is provided varies as some are very frequent while other sometimes it may be rare due to the availability i.e., social inadequacies and the impact of modernization on the family institution.

Based on the in-depth interview it is clear that most of the youth interviewed find it difficult to do the needful in the context of care for the elders, the study showed that the limitation faced by the youths on their immediate family is high and this has limited the care they would have render to the elderly among them. This assertion confirmed the study of Ushasnee,(2004), who asserted that the rising cost of living and shrinking income pattern often makes it difficult for the family to provide adequate care and support for it members. Rising individualism and liberalism in the family have enhanced the selfish and egoistic interest of the individual members of the family.

It can be deduced that most of the youths are not living with their elderly parents, hence distance was a limiting factor coupled with the situation that has limited them. Santana, et al. (2015) cohabitation allows for the exchange of experiences and memories between the elderly and youths and can help change young people's attitudes toward the elderly and vice-versa. This can also aid the frequencies of assistance and care the elderly gets.

Moreover, the study exams the impact of lack of care for the elderly and was able to show that the impact of the care rendered to the elderly has an influence on them. The study was able to prove that the youth sees the elderly with some sense of respect. However, the study also reveal there are some form of elderly abuse in the study area such as stereotype and labeling of the elderly person by the youth and family members. The study also revealed that some elders in the study are face some social problem such financial crisis without any institutionalized financial support and safety net which has negative psychological impact on the elderly status.

The youths have proven that they are emotionally satisfied with what they have done for the elderly as they have worked within their capacity. Hoff (2007), supports this notion by adding that the decline in the economy, gradual disintegration of the extended family system due to modermization and industrialization, unemployment, increasing female employment to complement family income, as well as rural-urban migration all contribute to the noticeable decline in the level of care provided by the family in recent times.

Conclusions

The study concludes that when the elderly are not properly cared for and are lacking both physiological and psychological needs and it will make aging a worrisome process and also create a negative perception to senior citizens towards aging process. The elders were earlier the strength of the nation's labour force and since life is always in transition, the Government need to formulate and implement institutionalized social welfare programs for their well-being Such policies will enhance the elderly social functioning because the elderly still remain an agent of socialization that the youth population need for nation building. Neglecting the elderly will create wrong perception and bad image of any society and thereby gradually killing the cultural values and norms that are symbol of socialization in such communities.

The study also conclude that children should endeavour to cater for their elderly parents as it will be beneficial to care for them than to celebrate their passing away because they are not the one that will consume all that the children will offer but their guest who never in one way contributed to the origin of the source of the income for the ceremony.

Recommendations

The study has identified the dimension and impact of care the elderly receives from the youths in Esan North east Local Government Area, it should be noted that these dimension and impact cannot be isolated from the wider environment in which they occur. Hence, the study itemize some recommendation that can be resourceful for policy formulation and administration for senior citizens in the Nigerian society.

Perception and care for the elderly who are the senior citizens in any community should be taken with optimum sincerity as it is common in most communities in Nigeria. To do this, the government agencies and parastatals should ensure that the youths are gainfully employed in an enabling environment that is devoid of insecurity for them to carry out economic activities that will make them more and more financially buoyant and by so doing they will render the necessary psycho-social support needed for the elderly especially their parents.

The policy maker should enact policy that will create a stable and an enabling environment that will reduce the unemployment that has ravaged the society especially among the youths, this will enhance the fortune of the Nigerian youths irrespective of social status, religion, ethnicity and location.

The government should work towards creating economic opportunity for the teeming youth as this will keep them busy and also enable them to be creative and useful to their communities and the Nation. This will not only increase the productivity of the society but also enhance smooth aging that is devoid of several unwholesome vulnerabilities during aging process.

Families' members should endeavour to check on their parent from time to time to know their physiological and psychological needs because it will greatly have a psychological balance on their well-being in the community where they live.

The community leaders have a role to play towards the well-being of the elderly, they should ensure that the youths in their locality should not promote any form of elder abuse. In the same vein, respect for the elderly should be considered a paramount right and value orientation that should be accrue to this senior citizens in the community because the senior citizens have equally contributed developmental quota in their youthful day.

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INFLUENCE OF HIV/AIDS BILLBOARD ADVERTISEMENTS ON SEXUAL LIFE STYLE OF

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Abstract

This study assessed the influence of HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements on sexual life style of students of the Benue State University, Makurdi. The study adopted the survey research method, while questionnaire served as instrument of data collection which was administered to 380 respondents. The study was anchored on the Agenda Setting and the Uses and Gratification theories. The study found that HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements have influence on the sexual life style of students of the Benue State University, Makurdi as the students use the basic information provided by the billboards to avoid unprotected sex which is one of the major factors for HIV/AIDS transmission. The study concluded that billboard advertisements are viable strategy of intervention for reaching and educating students about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), safe sex and family planning. The study therefore recommended among others that the influence of billboard advertisements on the sexual life style of students will be greatly enhanced if the messages adopt are specifically students oriented.

Introduction

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has been identified as the deadliest of all the sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The AIDS epidemic is the most devastating health disorder in human history next to malaria (FAWE, 2000). It is one of the major causative factors of all deaths in Nigeria today, apart from malaria, tuberculosis and nutritional related ailments and recently Ebola disease (Okafor, 2014).

In response to the developments, governments at the federal, state and local levels, NGOs and other civil society organizations have taken many initiatives aimed at informing the populace about the dangers posed by HIV/AIDS. One such initiative is education and awareness creation through billboard advertisement. Some of HIV/AIDs education programmes embarked upon in Nigeria include the 'Zip up' advertisement and several billboard messages announcing that, 'aids no dey show for face' (dey- is a Nigerian English word (pigin) used in HIV/AIDS advertisement to communicate about aids not showing on the face). There are also other media based campaigns in newspapers, television, books, radio and street performance in form of film shows (Wushishi and Aaron, 2012).

Billboard advertisement has been employed with great frequency in the United States and around the world in interventions to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS (Bertrand, Reilly, Dennis, Anhang and Sweat, 2006). DeJong, Wolf and Austin (2001), posit that these mass communication campaigns have employed single or multiple media at the national, regional and local levels, either as stand-alone efforts or as part of multi-component programmes. Traditional stand-alone efforts have often used television, radio, and/or print media (Ratzan, Payne and Massett, 1994) while newer campaigns are increasingly incorporating "new media" such as Internet websites. Multi-component campaigns have combined media with numerous "interpersonal" channels such as peer education and outreach, community coalitions, counselling, skill-

building workshops, and/or support groups (Peltzer and Seoka, 2004). According to Peltzer and Seoka (2004), billboard advertisements are often utilized because of their ability to reach huge and diverse audiences in a cost-effective manner, giving such campaigns tremendous potential as a tool in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS.

A number of studies (Hindin, 1984; Kim, 2001; Lewicky, 1998; Scheepers 2001; Piotrow, 1992; Underwood 2001; WestoffandRodridguez, 1995; and Yoder, 1996) cited in Darteh (2011), have looked at the effectiveness of using billboard advertisement to provide information on contraceptive in a bid to change behaviour among teenagers. These studies have established relationships between exposure to billboard advertisements and contraceptive use in a number of countries including Nigeria.

In recent times, other scholars such as Hamza and Alumba (2009), and Darteh (2011), have used cross sectional studies to establish the relationship between exposure to media advertisements and some reproductive health outcomes including HIV/AIDS. Most of these studies have looked at channels used in the advertisement such as billboards, radio, television, newspapers and so on.

Studies have shown that in Nigeria, HIV infection is high among young men and women in their 20's (NACA, 2009). Adolescents made up 30% of the population of the country and are among the most socially and sexually active groups. They also have limited knowledge of, lack access to resources and services on a range of issues including sexual and reproductive health (NACA, 2009). With this background, young people especially university students would continue to play a crucial role in the fight against the HIV scourge. Also, because the media played a crucial role in the lives of the young people, many Information Education and Communication (IEC) or Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) programmes on HIV/AIDS targeting students have used advertisement through the media as the channel for communications (NACA, 2009).

Billboard advertisement as a source of transmission of HIV/AIDS education/knowledge is aimed at influencing the behaviour of young people especially students positively regarding HIV/AIDS. It is therefore necessary to identify and analyse the

factors which influence the university students' behaviour so that, implications to such billboard advertisements could be inferred. This study is therefore aimed at evaluating the influence of HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements on the sexual life style of university students.

Statement of the Problem

Billboard advertisements have been used for decades to communicate to the general populace on a broad range of issues. In the last decade, this has been intensified among youth especially university students in the area of HIV/AIDS for the purpose of promoting and enhancing behaviour change among different groups (Darteh, 2011). Since the outbreak of HIV/AIDS disease, there have been several efforts at containing the epidemic. These have included among other things the use of the mass media and other media of communication to disseminate messages aimed at reducing risky sexual behaviour which promotes the spread of HIV/ AIDS.

HIV/AIDS campaigns through advertisement according to Abroms and Maibach (2008), aim at preventing HIV by increasing knowledge, improving risk perception, changing sexual behaviours, and questioning potentially harmful social norms. Studies aimed at ascertaining the influence of HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements on young people especially university students are therefore not only apt and germane, but also timely. However, literature survey shows that there is a gap in the narrative around this issue as it concerns students of the Benue State University, Makurdi. Available literature focuses on students of other institutions and countries but not on the ones in focus. The few available ones are scanty and largely undocumented. An attempt at filling this knowledge gap and academic lacuna has warranted this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide the researchers in carrying out the study.
i. What HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements are available to students of the Benue State University, Makurdi?
ii. What basic information do students of the Benue State University, Makurdi obtain from billboard advertisements?

iii. What influence do HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements have on the sexual life style of students of the Benue State University, Makurdi?

Significance of the Study

This study seeks to establish the influence HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements have on the sexual life style of students of the Benue State University, Makurdi. It is hoped findings of this study can be used to throw more light on sexual behaviour re-orientation of the students of the Benue State University, Makurdi.

It is also hoped that the findings will serve as resource material for governments, NGOs and civil society organizations as well as media campaign planners on billboard advertisements.

It will further provide a guide for future studies on students' social relationship.

The study will also serve as reference material for students and guide for further research in this area.

Scope of the Study

This study is concerned with university students' exposure to HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements and the role such advertisements play in sensitizing the students to avoid risky sexual behaviours. Accordingly, it is delimited to HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements designed to influence the sexual behaviour of students in the state. Geographically, it will cover only students of the Benue State University, Makurdi. Consequently, only students from 100 to 400 levels will be studied. It is hoped that since university students are a significant part of the population, the benefits of this study can be projected to other segments of the population in the state.

Review of Concepts
HIV/AIDS

Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is a spectrum of conditions caused by infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (World Health Organization, 2015). Following initial infection, a person may experience a brief period of influenza-like illness. This is typically followed by a prolonged period without symptoms. As

the infection progresses, it interferes more and more with the immune system, making the person much more susceptible to common infections like tuberculosis, as well as opportunistic infections and tumours that do not usually affect people who have working immune systems. The late symptoms of the infection are referred to as AIDS. This stage is often complicated by an infection of the lung known as pneumocystis pneumonia, severe weight loss, a type of cancer known as Kaposi's sarcoma, or other AIDS-defining conditions (Sepkowitz, 2001).

HIV/AIDS is transmitted primarily via unprotected sexual intercourse (including anal and oral sex), contaminated blood transfusions, hypodermic needles, and from mother to child during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding (William, 2007). Some bodily fluids, such as saliva and tears, do not transmit HIV (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003). Common methods of HIV/AIDS prevention include encouraging safe sex through awareness creation, needle-exchange programmes, and treating those who are infected (World Health Organization, 2012).

There is no cure or vaccine; however, antiretroviral treatment can slow the course of the disease and may lead to a near-normal life expectancy. While antiretroviral treatment reduces the risk of death and complications from the disease, these medications are expensive and have side effects. Without treatment, the average survival time after infection with HIV is estimated to be 9 to 11 years, depending on the HIV subtype (UNAIDS, 2007).

Billboard advertisements

A billboard (also called a hoarding in the UK and many other parts of the world) is a large outdoor advertising structure (a billing board), typically found in high-traffic areas such as busy roads. Billboards present large advertisements to pedestrians and drivers. Typically showing witty slogans and distinctive visuals, billboards are highly visible in the top designated market areas.

The largest ordinary-sized billboards are located primarily on major highways, expressways or principal arterials, and command high-density consumer exposure (mostly to vehicular traffic). These afford greater visibility due not only to their size, but because they allow creative "customizing" through extensions and

embellishments. Posters are the other common form of billboard advertising, located mostly along primary and secondary arterial roads. Posters are smaller format and are viewed principally by residents, commuters and pedestrian.

Outdoor advertising is a low budget and effective way of advertising a company's product. Among the entire methods, billboard advertising is the most sought after method, which has been proven to be the best sales strategy in the recent times. Nearly 5.6 billion dollars was spent on billboard advertising alone, in the year 2006, as analyzed by Outdoor Advertising Association of America.

Billboard advertising is the best bet in outdoor advertising and is not that costly. With the amount of exposure the product gets, the money is worth it. In the past few years, several factors have triggered billboard advertising and cost effectiveness being one of the prime reasons. One of the reasons being is that if an ad is placed in the local newspaper or a television channel, the advertisement gets noticed for only thirty seconds and when the same advertisement is placed on billboard, it gets noticed throughout the day for months. Thousands of people view billboard everyday on their way to jobs or home. It doesn't get lost in the pages like an advertisement placed in a newspaper or magazine. There is a frequent and continuous delivery of messages. No other advertising method can grab the attention of people like billboard advertisement. It creates brand awareness and strong name recognition.

One of the reasons behind the cost being low is technology. In the early years the billboards were hand-painted due to the fact that the labour cost was high. Now, advertisers design and print their advertisements on a huge poster board or vinyl board by a computer-aided printer, which is very cost effective. Creativity can be achieved to the highest extent, with ease and less money. The brighter, colourful and creative the advertisement is, the more eye-catching it is. With the advancements in technology, it takes very less time to design billboards with unlimited possibilities.

Before placing a billboard advertisement in a particular area it is better that a research is done about the interest of the people in and around that area. Like if the advertiser desires to post a billboard

advertisement on a highway, he can choose the advertisement on a motel, cafeteria, or gas station. Depending on the locality, specific potential customers should be targeted.

The cost is really reasonable. It might look like a big amount, but it costs almost same if placing a full-page ad in a newspaper for only a day. And if the effectiveness is considered for both the methods, newspaper advertisements are not even half as effective as billboard advertisements. When an advertisement is placed in a newspaper or in a magazine, the customer should reach out to see the advertisement, but when an advertisement is placed on a billboard, it is like reaching to the customers.

Sexual Life Style

Sexual life style is synonymous with sexual behaviour. Sexual behaviour refers to being attracted to a male or a female and acting in a manner leading to the satisfaction of the sex instinct (Wikipedia, 2010). Several studies had revealed the sexual behaviour of undergraduates and youths. A study of sexual activities of youths conducted by Owuamanam (1995), revealed that various activities are widely practised among the Nigerian undergraduates; such activities as kissing, breast/genital fondling, embracing, hand holding and sexual intercourse. Odewole (2000), and Omoteso (2003), also found similar activities among the undergraduate students they studied. Several attitude surveys had also revealed that the sexual attitude of undergraduates is more liberal than that of adults (WHO, 1993, Owuamanam, 1995 and Odewole, 2000). WHO (1993) reported that 43% of girls and 67% boys aged between 14 and 19 years were sexually active. Franzkowrak (1990), identified sexuality as adolescent developmental task. In the studies of Ravi (1991), Carpenter (2000), Horan, Phillips and Hagan (2000), Koenig (2000), Remez (2000), and Sanders and Reinisch (2001), in Omoteso (2006:129), it was reported that young men surveyed reported sexual experience morethan women. Many women were not sexually active. In fact, in only four countries out of 41 countries, more than one-half of 15-19-year-old women reported any sex experience. Unuigbe and Ogbeide (1999), in their study on sexual behaviour and perception of AIDS among undergraduate girls in

Benin City, Nigeria found a female undergraduate population that was sexually active.

The family background had also been found to have significant influence on young people's sexual behaviour. In many countries, young women lacking opportunities and from poor family background seek support from men trading sex and thus risk HIV infection and other STI's for security (Stenberg, 1980). Young women sometimes enter into relationship with older men called "sugar daddies" in sub-Saharan Africa who pay their school fees, buy gifts and offer inducements to them (Meekers and Calve, 1997 and Luke, 2001). In South Africa and Nigeria, for example many young women have sexual relationships in exchange for favours, gifts and cash (Macphail and Campbell, 2001). A few studies reported similar arrangements between young men and older women as in Nigeria and Cameroon and South Africa where some young men have 'sugar mummies" (Meekers and Calves, 1997 and Scalway, 2001). Also, the study of Kuvlesky (1978), showed that the religion of parents did not have influence on the youths' sexual behaviour.

Students

Students generally are persons who study, investigate, or examine thoughtfully, a subject or phenomenon (Dictionary.com). They could be formally enrolled in a school or not. Specifically, university students are individuals who attend a college or university for higher education. More so, the university system is such that its students or graduates should be responsible citizens and agents of positive change in the society. As a result, "attending university is particularly stressful" (Pidgeon, Rowe, Stapleton, Magyar and Lo, 2014, p. 14).

The university environment is quite different from the outside society (Remic, 1970, p. 57). Describing the university as an "ivory tower of society", Remic acknowledges that, university students are cultured within the confines of the university with facts of an ideal society but they see a different society in reality. This has over the years soured the relationship between students and society.

Generally, students are crucial to continuation of society. This is because they are educated to take over as future leaders and workers in society. As a result, Mayhew (1970, P. 13), highlights that, university students have demands or wishes which include greater

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freedom and control over their personal and private lives, free exercise of their civil and political liberties, to plan and carry out political actions and so on. However, Mayhew observes that, institutions of society relatively remain unconcerned about these demands. University students are therefore, treated by institutions as numbers and not as people in society thereby, bringing about disagreements between students and institutions of society (Mayhew, 1970, p. 13). In addition, "the great moral dilemmas in society" also contribute to students' radicalism in society (p. 13).

Remic (1970, p. 57), observes that, "there is a tremendous gap between the focus of higher education and what is happening in the world today". However, by virtue of university education, university students or graduates should be enlightened and rational members of society and also, agents of positive change in society when given responsibility. It is however questionable in our society today if university students are capable of upholding or sustaining the values of the ideal society. This is because the virtues of studentship have suffered compromise. This is evident in Nigeria as coinages like "half-baked graduates" and the "let my people go" syndromes are trendies.

Body of Literature

Scholars have conducted studies into various dimensions of production and perception of advertising. Mehta (2000), study found that a consumer's own predisposition towards advertising in general, either favourable or unfavourable would influence how he or she would respond to any advertisement. Toncar and Munch (2001), showed that although advertising messages possess incomplete information advocacy, consumers may not fully understand the information that is provided, and thus the incomplete information can still significantly increase the effect of print advertising, making advertisements more persuasive and recallable. Shaw's (2005), essay interrogated tensions between varying cultural notions of beauty and explored the complex nature of the historical relationship between black and white women. It also illustrated how constructions of beauty were used to enforce the hegemonic agenda of the patriarchy Semiotics, the study of signs has profusely been dealt with by scholars. In order to foray into the field

of Semiotics in relation to advertising, scholars have contributed immensely in the area (Hynes, 2007; Liu, 2009; Selg and Ventsela, 2010; Valor, 2005; Gambles, 1998; Danesi, 1999; Reschke and Rhodes, 2003; Clare, 2010; Anderson and Sorenson 2010). Just as and closely related to Semiotics, critical discourse analysis has been widely used in context of studying the discourse of advertising especially as it related to socio-cultural issues.

Advertising is one of the most interesting disciplines in the modern era. In fact, it has become a communication tool which influences our attitudes towards products, companies, brand names, lifestyles and public issues. Advertising is all pervasive. It is difficult to keep a count of the advertising messages that one is bombarded with in a single day. Advertisements appeal to the consumer by reflecting shared values and thus, serving as an index to popular culture. This is so because by and large, consumers are the products of popular culture in which they live. Advertising works not only on a psychological level but also on a cultural one and it is true that "the rational and psychological levels in communication can be probed using conventional research techniques but the cultural level is more difficult to access. That is because the culture is 'encoded' in everyday living and the average consumer does not decode his own culture. In this regard we agree with Williamson's (1972) view: "We can only understand what advertisements mean by finding out how they mean".

Recent evidence in perception and cognition demonstrates the importance of visual perception and that; human eyes are wondrous windows to the world. The last of human senses to evolve and the most sophisticated, they are our main source of information about the world, sending more data to the nervous system than any other sense (Barry, 1997). In fact, the human brain processes images in a way that triggers emotion and instinctive interpretation of reality. Instantaneously, when presented with an image through advertising, the human brain has been taught to interpret the image as reality and react immediately with instinctive emotions. The way we interpret images as reality is explained in Gibson's theory (cited in King, 1997). He explains the concept of the "visual field" which is the process of light reflections coming into our eyes and the "visual world" which interprets these patterns of light as reality (King,

1997). In the "visual world" we interpret images as our own perception of reality without further analyzing the context. These images move freely from the visual field to the visual world without entering a stage of analytical processing (Barry, 1997).

Furthermore, LeDoux's study (1996), suggests that we respond emotionally to viewing something before we can think them through. This study shows that the process of the brain works in such a way that signals coming into the eye travel to the thalamus and then to the amygdala (a part of the brain that plays a vital role in emotional responses) before a second signal is even sent to the neocortex (Barry, 1997). In more common terms, this simply means our brain works in a way in which we react emotionally to things we see before we are even able to think about them. Therefore, according to Gibson, images are presented to the brain and interpreted as reality, and as LeDoux(1996), suggests, humans automatically react with emotions. Summed up, the human brain has been trained to interpret images as reality while simultaneously reacting in an emotional sense. This triggers a problem when consumers stick to these initial instinctive emotional responses. What consumers should be doing is taking a step back and re-evaluating the situation more critically after the initial emotional reaction to give themselves time to process their thoughts more clearly.

Theoretical Framework

Two effect theories are discussed in this work. These are the Agenda Setting and Uses and Gratifications theories.

Agenda-Setting Theory

Agenda-setting theory which was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972 during the era of limited effects implies that the mass media predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a given society. It is assumed that the media sets the agenda for our general discussion. Baran (2004:385), says the agenda-setting theory argues that, "While the media may not tell us how to think, the media certainly tell us what to think about". What this means is that by the amount of time and space devoted to a story, the mass media may well determine the

important issue thus giving the audience food for thought. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972: 176), in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position...the mass media may well determine the important issue, that is, the media may set the 'agenda' of the issue.

Although we have a right to think what we want to think, surprisingly, we tend to think most of those things the media highlight as important (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2008:89). To Iwokwagh (2008:12), agenda setting theory suggests that media agenda determines public agenda.

The relevance of this theory to the current study lies in the ability of the media to set public agenda. Thus, the billboard through its health messages can set in motion, process what will determine an issue the students will think about, thus generating the necessary attitudes towards their sexuality. It is also hoped that persistent focus on and continuous emphasis of the billboard advertising messages on the need to live disciplined lives, avoid pre-marital sex, resist peer pressure to engage in sexual intercourse as well as avoid risk sexual behaviour will empower the students to change their attitudes to issues of their sexuality.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theary, originally formulated by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitich in 1974, attempts to explain the uses and functions of mass media for individuals, groups, and society in general. This theory seeks to explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs, to discover underlying motives for individual's media use, and to identify the positive and negative consequences of individual media use.

Generally, it is acknowledged by Uses and Gratification theorists that a medium will be used more when the existing motives to use the medium leads to more satisfaction. In his contribution, Little John (2002), in Okinda (2006), points out that the Uses and Gratification approach considers two important beliefs. First, belief in a thing and; secondly, belief about a thing. For example, a student

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may believe in the radio as only a source of true and accurate information. Another student may believe that the radio contains many sources of information on a number of subjects.

One of the tenets of the Uses and Gratification theory is that, audiences are active and seek to find out mass media that satisfy their gratifications. Billboard has enabled audience to have more options from which they are able to see messages that satisfy their specific needs. The billboard also allows audience to be in more control of the media selectively tuning into messages they want to read. Studies on the Uses and Gratification of billboard among students have shown that the students use the billboard for entertainment and diversions, social interaction, passing time, escape, information to maintain communication and programme preference (Kaye, 1998; Charney 1996). Several studies have been conducted on billboard use among the students' population anchored on the uses and gratifications theory. However, most of these studies have primarily focused on the US audience (Papachararissi and Robin 2000), in Ko (2000). It is for this reason that the researcher decided to use this theory to find out the purposes undergraduates use the billboard health messages and the effect of such messages on their sexual life style.

Methodology

The research method used for this study is the survey method, while questionnaire was employed as tool of data collection. The population of this study is drawn from the entire population of Benue State University students which according to the figures obtained from the university's Student Affairs Unit (2021), is twenty-two thousand, five hundred (22, 500 students). However, such a number would constitute a problem if all studied since it is too large. Therefore, a sample population of the study was taken from selected faculties.

The sample size for the study is statistically determined using the formula:

$$n = \frac{Z2\ Pq}{d2}$$

According to Araoye (2004:118) in Kusugh (2007:49) this formula can be used where the population size is greater than 10, 000 (>10,000)

Where,

n = Desired sample size (where population is > 10,000)

z = The standard deviation usually set at 1.96 since a significant level of 95% is desired.

P = The proportion in the target population estimated to have some particular characteristics under study.

q = Iop (that is the proportion of the population that does not share the characteristics under study).

d = degree of accuracy desired.

thus;

z = 1.96 level of significance = 50%

p = 50% = 0.50

q = (I-P) = 0.5

d = (0.05)2

n= z2 Pq

    d2

 = (1.96)2 (0.50) (0.5)

                    0.052

= 3. 8416 x 0.50 x 0.5

          0.0025

= 0.9604

   0.0025

n = 384

Therefore, the sample size for the study was statistically determined to be three hundred and eight four (384).

To draw a sample size from the study population, multistage sampling procedure, involving a combination of cluster, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to provide a

relatively equal opportunity for the respondents. The researcher first used cluster sampling technique to divide the population into seven (7) units of clusters based on the colleges/faculties in the Benue State University, Makurdi. Cluster sampling according to Yates, David and Daren (2008), is a sampling technique where the entire population is divided into groups, or clusters and a random sample of these clusters are selected. The clusters selected were: Faculty of Education; Faculty of Arts; College of Health Sciences; Faculty of Law; Faculty of Management Sciences; Faculty of Science; and Faculty of Social Sciences.

Having selected seven (7) Colleges/ Faculties from the university, the researcher used simple random technique to pick two (2) departments from the seven (7) Colleges/Faculties. Simple random sample technique according to Yates, David and Daren (2008), is a subset of individuals (a sample) chosen from a larger set (a population). Each individual is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, such that each individual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process.

To achieve this random selection therefore, the researchers wrote the names of all the departments in each of the Colleges/Faculties on separate pieces of papers and labelled them according to their colleges/faculties and dropped them separately in seven (7) jars, blindfolded a research assistant, TernamUnongu who picked two pieces of paper each randomly from the seven (7) jars. Thus, fourteen departments were picked, two (2) each from the seven colleges/faculties. The departments picked were: Departments of Political Science and Sociology from the Faculty of Social Sciences, Departments of Biological Sciences and Mathematics/Computer Science from the Faculty of Sciences, Departments of Business Management and Accounting from the Faculty of Management Sciences, Departments of Education Foundations and Curriculum and Teaching from the Faculty of Education, Departments of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Medicine from the Faculty of Health Sciences, Departments of Civil Law and International Law and Jurisprudence from the Faculty of Law, Departments of Theatre Arts and Languages/Linguistics from the Faculty of Arts.

After that, the researchers used purposive sampling technique to pick respondents for the study. According to Babbie (2001), a purposive sample, also commonly called a judgmental sample, is one that is selected based on the knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. The subjects are selected because of some characteristics.

Therefore, using purposive sampling technique, the researchers selected twenty-eight (28) respondents from the Department of Political Science, twenty-eight (28) from the Department of Sociology, another twenty-eight (28) from the Department of Biological Sciences. Also, twenty-eight (28) respondents were picked from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science. Similarly, twenty-eight (28) respondents were picked each from the Departments of Business Management and the Accounting. While twenty-seven (27) respondents were picked each from the Departments of Education Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Medicine, Civil Law, International Law and Jurisprudence, Theatre Arts and Languages and Linguistics

Thus each level had seven (8) respondents from each of the selected departments and copies ofquestionnaire were administered ranging from 100 level to 400 level except respondents from the Departments of Education Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Medicine, Civil Law, International Jurisprudence, Theatre Arts and Languages and Linguistics which had six (6) respondents each. This was as a result of their small number compared to the other departments. Thus, each level from the departments of Political Science, Sociology, Biological Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, Business Management and Accounting had (8) respondents, making a total of twenty-eight (28) respondents from each, while the Departments of Education Foundations, Curriculum and Teaching, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Medicine, Civil Law, International Jurisprudence, Theatre Arts and Languages and Linguistics had six (6) respondents each. The above translated to a total of 384 respondents which the researchers used as a representation of the entire population of the study area.

Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

　　　Data collected were collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentages and tables of summary in order to ease comprehension and to appreciate observed variables of the research outcome. Three hundred and eighty four (384) copies of questionnaire were distributed, only three hundred and forty (340) were returned. The analysis was done based on the copies returned.

Data Presentation
Table 1: HIV/AIDS Advertisements Students See on Billboards

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Are You in Control of Your Health Everything Has Changed,	37	10.9
We Can End HIV	48	14.1
Take the Lead to Stop HIV…		
Get Tested Today	25	7.4
AIDS No Dey Show for Face	46	13.5
Zip Up	30	8.8
Wrap-Up	40	11.8
Why Worry, Use a Condom	44	12.9
AIDS KILLS, BEWARE	35	10.3
Say No to Sex; Virgin POWER,		
Virgin PRIDE: Avoid HIV/AIDS	20	5.9
AIDS KILLS	15	4.4
Total	340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

　　　Data in Table 1 sought to know HIV/AIDS advertisements respondents see on bill boards. In the Table, 48 (14.1%) of the respondents have seen Everything Has Changed, We Can End HIV, 46 (13.5%) of the respondents have seen AIDS No Dey Show for Face, another 44 (12.9%) of the respondents have seen Why Worry, Use a Condom, 40 (11.8%) of the respondents have seen Wrap Up, 35 (10.3%) of the respondents have seen AIDS KILLS, BEWARE, 25 (7.4%) of the respondents have seen Take the Lead to Stop HIV…Get Tested Today, 20 (5.9%) of the respondents have seen Say No to Sex;

Virgin POWER, Virgin PRIDE: Avoid HIV/AIDS while 15 (4.4%) of the respondents have seen AIDS KILLS, 30(8.8%) of respondents agreed that they have seen a message which says zip up, while 37 (10.9%) of the respondents said they saw a message that said Are You in Control of Your Health. 48 (14.1%) of the respondents who saw the message that We Can End HIV being the highest, indicates that they are aware of the existence of the disease and can take decision to end it.

Table 2: Basic Information Respondents Obtain from HIV/AIDS Billboard Advertisements

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness about HIV/AIDS	70	20.6
Awareness about cost and application of contraceptives	68	20
The need to avoid unprotected sex by using condoms every time during sex	72	21.1
The need to avoid multiple sex partners	67	19.7
The need to abstain from sex until marriage	63	18.5
Total	340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data in Table 2 sought to know the basic information respondents obtain from HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements. In the Table, 72 (21.1%) of the respondents agreed that the billboards talk about the need to avoid unprotected sex and emphasize the use of condoms during sex, 70 (20.6%) of the respondents agreed that the billboards create awareness about HIV/AIDS, 68 (20%) of the respondents agreed that the billboards create awareness about cost and application of contraceptives, 67 (19.7%) of the respondents agreed that the billboards talk about the need to the need to avoid multiple sex partners, while 63 (18.5%) of the respondents agreed that the billboards talk aboutabstain from sex until marriage. This

implies that the respondents sampled are aware of HIV/AIDS and can abide by the safety measure to avoid contracting it. This view is supported by 72 (21.1%) beingthe highest respondents sampled.

Table 3: Specific Influence of HIV/AIDS Billboard Advertisements on Respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage
I use contraceptives and avoid risky sexual behaviour	85	25
I use condom	120	35
I Stick to one partner	70	21
I abstain from sex	65	19
Total	340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Data in Table 3 sought to know the influence of HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements on respondents' sexual behaviour. The Table indicates that 120 (35%) of the respondents use condom to avoid HIV/AIDS and STIs, 85(25%) of the respondent use contraceptives and avoid risky sexual behaviour, 70 (21%) of the respondents stick to one partner, while 65 (19%) of the respondents abstain from sex. The result implies that HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements have influence on the sexual behaviour of respondents as supported by 120 (35%) of the respondents being the highest sampled.

Discussion of Findings

This study assessed the influence of HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements on sexual life style of students of the Benue State University, Makurdi. Specifically, the study seeks to: identify HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements available to students of the Benue State University, Makurdi; ascertain basic information students of the Benue State University, Makurdi obtain from billboard advertisements; and ascertain the influence of HIV/AIDS

billboard advertisements on the sexual life style of students of the Benue State University, Makurdi.

Findings show that HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements enabled students the Benue State University, Makurdi to be aware of HIV existence and can take decision to end it. This is attested to by 48(14.1%) of the respondents who have seen the message that said that we can end HIV.This finding is in conformity with Akurega's (2011), study which found that mass media messages are available to students. It is also in consonance with those of Committee on Communication (2011), and Lapsey (2011), which show that youths today still use mass media for sexual health information and that, health messages sensitize its audience on sexual issues that culminate into sexual behaviour awareness.

Findings also show that the basic information students of the Benue State University obtained from HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements are: the need to avoid unprotected sex and emphasize the use of condoms during sex. This is the major finding as supported by 72(21.1%) of the sampled respondents. This is similar to what Akurega's (2011), study found that the mass media broadcast health messages whose aim is to educate people on healthy living and how to avoid risky sexual behaviours leading to HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

Findings show that HIV/AIDS billboard advertisements have influence on the sexual life style of the respondents. This is attested to by 120 (35%) of the respondents who apply the information obtain from billboard advertisements by using condoms every time the need arises. The finding gives credence to the theoretical postulations that the media do have identifiable influence on their audience subject to certain conditions or variables (Uses and Gratification theory). The underlying assumption is that students of the Benue State University who expect useful information about reproductive health or sex related issues which include the basic facts of life, reproduction, sexual intercourse, and various aspects or dimensions of human sexuality would consciously expose themselves to health messages to acquire such information, albeit for its utility value. By implication therefore, billboard advertisements have the capacity to influence the sexual life style of the students of the Benue State University students.

Conclusion

Following the findings available to the study through the analysis and interpretation of the research data, the study concludes that billboard advertisements are viable strategy of intervention for reaching and educating students about Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), safe sex and family planning. The influence of billboard advertisements on the sexual life style of students will be greatly enhanced if the messages adopt are specifically students oriented. Advocacy and increase participation by the students will greatly enhance students' appreciation of billboard advertisements' health messages.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study and conclusion thereof, the following recommendations are made:

i.   Health messages should be intensified on billboard emphasizing the consequences of risky sexual behaviour which should be targeted at students in Benue State. This should take into account the potency of the positive influence of the health messages on the sexual education of the students.

ii.   Billboard advertisements should be used as a strategy of intervention to advocate for positive sexual education of students in Benue State.

iii. In order to enhance sex education through billboard advertisements, there is need for producers of such billboards to adopt appropriate formats that will attract and keep the attention of students for them to assimilate the messages.

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PRISON ENVIRONMENT AND THE HEALTH OF ELDERLY INMATES IN OKO CORRECTIONAL CENTER, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE.

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Abstract

The elderly in the society are usually vulnerable because of their age and so they need proper care from people around

them. The elderly reprimanded in correctional centers are not an exception; they also need to be taken care of. But the care provided at the correctional centers may not be adequate for them. Also, the environment does not seem to be conducive for their health and well-being. This paper therefore examines the effect of prison environment on the health of elderly inmates in Oko Correctional center, Benin City. Literatures related to the study were reviewed and the deprivation model was adopted as the theory to explain the issue under investigation. The study made use of both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection with the use of questionnaire and in-depth interview. 110 questionnaires were administered to respondents and 10 persons were selected for interview that include 6 elderly inmates, and four staffs working with the elderly comprising of: two senior prison staff, one junior prison staff and one health prison officer (A Doctor) were all engaged in an in-depth interview. The findings revealed that some elderly inmates receive special medical treatment, while some do not, and that, the environment is not very conducive for their health. Based on these, the study concluded that elderly inmates should be kept separately from younger inmates and there should be routine monitoring of older prisoners to ensure they are not being victimized. Also, medical facilities should be made available in the Nigeria prisons to ensure adequate treatment for prisoners.

Introduction

Correctional facilities were designed to restrict the liberty of young people and not to provide optimal care for the aged. As a result, correctional facilities are often ill-equipped to meet the needs of older adults with complex medical conditions and physical disabilities. These facilities often require residents to contend with challenging environmental features such as poor lighting, steep staircases, dimly lit walkways, high bunk beds and low toilets

(Rachael, Lia and Brie, 2016). Yorston and Taylor (2006) defined elderly inmates as those who are over 45, 60 and 65 years of age. Some evidence suggest that inmates aged 50 and above usually suffer from 'accelerated' ageing: a prisoner in his fifties has the physical health status of someone at least ten years older in the community, and this difference is due to health and or lifestyle factors (e.g. prolonged drug use) which arise both before, and during, imprisonment (Aday, 2003).

The conditions of confinement in prison is built to accommodate young inmates, thus the design and infrastructure is often not appropriate for aging offenders because many prison buildings are old and have narrow staircases, which can be difficult for elderly inmates to negotiate. Some areas are actually inaccessible by wheelchair and there is often a shortage of lifts to assist with transfers for baths, etc. (Duffin, 2010). There may be a lack of handrails and grab bars, and in some institutions, there are barriers to accessing bathrooms (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, 2009). Cells that have bunk beds can be difficult for aging adults with decreased mobility (Buckwalter, Mellilo, & Loeb, 2009).

Inmates are found to age faster, physically and mentally, than individuals in the general population (Abner, 2006; Williams, Stern, Mellow, Safer, and Greifinger, 2012). This trend can be attributed to years of poor personal healthcare, including inaccessibility to healthcare services, poor diet, and poor prison housing (Abner, 2006; Hoffman and Dickinson, 2011; Rikard and Rosenberg, 2007; Williams, 2006). Prior to incarceration, inmates typically are impoverished and exhibit high-risk illicit behaviors and often enter correctional institutions with chronic medical issues and untreated mental illnesses (Hoffman and Dickinson, 2011; Williams, *et al.*, 2012). Elderly prisoners typically experience reduced social support systems, and for the aging inmate population, this decrease of support is amplified (Ojo and Okunola, 2014). The friends and family members of inmates struggle with the shame and social stigma of having their loved ones incarcerated, finding it stressful to make continued visits to the institution and often ending visits altogether (Travis and Waul, 2003). Many incarcerated parents do not receive visits from their children, and many inmates do not want their children to visit them in a correctional facility, believing these

visits may be too emotional for their children (Snyder, van Wormer, Chadha, and Jaggers, 2009).

This diminished support system brings additional stress to elderly inmates, contributing to their developing age-related health issues (Abner, 2006; Hoffman and Dickinson, 2011). Thus, leading to Depression, mood disorders, and dementia are common among elderly inmates (Greifinger, 2007). Like other prisoners, the elderly in prison have the right to be treated with respect for their inherent human dignity and humanity; not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; to receive appropriate medical and mental healthcare, to have reasonable accommodation for their disabilities; and for activities and programs that support their rehabilitation to be provided for them (Porporino, 2015). It is on the background that this research work seeks to look at the effect of Prison environment on the health of elderly inmates in Oko Correctional Center in Benin City, Nigeria.

Statement of the Research Problem

Most correctional facilities were designed to restrict the liberty of young people, not to provide optimal care for the aged. As a result, correctional facilities are often ill-equipped to meet the needs of elderly inmates with complex medical conditions and physical disabilities. Williams et al. (2012) discovered that the majority of male adults in prisons have at least one chronic health condition and that the issue of right to health for prisoners is grossly being violated. Elderly inmates suffer serious illness due to lack of exercises (Robins, 2009). The lack of exercises by elderly inmate makes them to be quite vulnerable to suffer from a variety of medical conditions which will increase their need for healthcare providers, and will typically make them require longer and more frequent hospitalizations (Aborisade, 2016). The deplorable health conditions have led to infectious diseases, such as skin scabies and bilharzias. To worsen the situation, there are no standard hospitals, drugs and qualified medical personnel to take care of the sick inmates.

Elderly inmates face more critical problem when it comes to health provision in prisons. These elderly inmates can be affected by disinclination to eat as a result of bad teeth, no taste, denture

problems, swallowing problems and gastrointestinal difficulties which will ultimately lead to weight loss due to the poor prison facilities (Maschi, Viola, Harrison, Koskinen, and Bellusa, 2014). Obioha (2011) observed that there are no good recreational facilities and other amenities in most prisons in Nigeria. The Nigerian prison environments, with regard to amenities have been characterized as 'uncheerful' , 'dehumanizing and' 'a hell' – This lack of social amenities and recreational facilities accounts for the culture of fragility and explosive social violence that is recurrent and descriptive of Nigerian prison community over the years (Aborisade, 2016). Extant literature on the conditions of prison facilities across Nigeria that can lead to physical deterioration of the elder prisoner include overcrowding, lack of portable water, inadequate sewage and recreational facilities, erratic power supply, lack of social support programs (Obioha, 2011; Aduba, 2013; Otu, Otu, and Eteng, 2013; Okwendi, Nwankoala, and Ushi, 2014). According to Aduba (2013) the rooms and cells are not good for human habitation, while the beddings are in most cases absent as many prison inmates in Nigeria sleep on bare floor. Aside from the inadequate infrastructural facilities of the prisons, questions have been raised on the adequacy of the training of correctional and healthcare professionals in prison vis-à-vis geriatric care and technical wherewithal for prompt intervention of numerous age-related illnesses (Aborisade, 2016). Most work on prisons do not focus on the well-being of the elderly inmates and their health care. It is against this back drop that this research work seeks to examine Prison environment and the health of elderly inmates in Oko Correctional Center in Benin City, Nigeria.

Research Questions
1. What is the effect of Prison environment on the health of older inmates in Oko correctional center, Benin City, Nigeria?
2. What are the health care challenges faced by elderly inmates in Benin custodian correction center Oko?

Research Objectives
1. To investigate the effect of Prison environment on the health of older inmates in Oko correctional center, Benin City, Nigeria.

2. To examine the health care challenges faced by elderly inmates in Benin custodian correction center Oko.

Conceptual Clarification

Prison: Prison is a correctional institution used to detain persons who are in the lawful custody of the government. These persons may be either accused persons awaiting trial or convicted persons serving a sentence (WordWeb, 2020). A prison is a building where criminals are kept as punishment for their offense or where people accused of a crime is kept before their trial. (Collins, 2021)

Prison Environment: Prison environment is the area of the prison. It is the surrounding where prisoners are kept.

Health; The World health Organization (WHO) in 1948 defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (Felman, 2020).

Elderly inmates: They are aging/elderly offenders or suspects, who are over the age of 55, put I prison for the conviction of an offence or awaiting trial.

The effects of Prison Environment on Health of older Inmates

Older inmates are vulnerable to victimization by younger, stronger inmates (United States Department of Justice, 2016). Many older inmates choose to limit their participation in activities and exercise to avoid interacting with those they fear (Krabill and Aday, 2005). This fear can cause a decline in the physical activities of older inmates and increase social isolation (Snyder, Wormer, Chadha, and Jaggers, 2009). Due to the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) requirement to prohibit discrimination against inmates with disabilities, correctional facilities are increasingly housing older inmates separately from younger inmates, demonstrating increasing awareness of the older inmates' unique needs (Snyder, *et al.*, 2009). In addition to the stress that older inmates experience within the walls of the correctional facility, their relationships with friends and family members on the outside often become strained (Travis and Waul, 2003).

Obstacles to maintaining social connections with family members include lack of financial resources, long-distance traveling to the institution for visitation, inconvenient visiting hours, and the social stigma of having an incarcerated family member (Snyder, *et al.*, 2009). These combined fears of victimization by younger inmates and lack of social support often lead to a decline in psychological health, which then contribute to declines in physical and social engagement (Krabill and Aday, 2005). With the recognition that many programs for inmates are designed for the young offender, Snyder *et al.* (2009) highlighted the need for recreational, educational, and rehabilitation programs designed specifically for older inmates, such as music, board games, shuffleboard, horseshoes, and movies. These programs allow for the slower pace and differing physical abilities among older inmates when compared to their younger peers. Program topics that focus on chronic illness, isolation, depression, and end-of-life issues also are important for this population (Snyder, *et al.*, 2009). The Hocking Correctional Facility in Ohio has implemented programmes designed for older male inmates (Snyder, *et al.*, 2009). The services and programs offered at this medium-custody housing unit include chair aerobics, a jogger/walker fitness program, adult basic education, job training, and GED classes. Inmates also may receive assistance with applying for social security benefits, medicaid, and medicare, as well as writing their wills (Snyder, *et al.*, 2009),

Theoretical Framework

The deprivation model holds that mal-adaptation to prison (e.g., violence, aggression, anxiety, depression, distress, and suicide) is a product of the restrictive prison milieu; that is, depriving conditions of the prison produce aggressive or self-destructive behavior.

The Deprivation Model

This paper adopts the deprivation model of Sykes (1958) who coined the phrase "pains of imprisonment" to describe these conditions. He identified five specific deprivations and suggested that inmates successfully adapt to these pains through inmate solidarity, self-isolation and a system of inmate social roles. Sykes

(1958: xiv), argued that prison represents a social system that create or maintain a total social control of inmates. This total control of the inmate is at the core of what Sykes refers as the "pains of imprisonment. He identifies five pains or deprivations associated with prison life: deprivation of liberty, deprivation of goods and services, deprivation of heterosexual relationships, deprivation of autonomy, and deprivation of security (Meredith, 2001). To Sykes the inmates' deprivation of liberty is the most immediate obvious pain because the inmate feel isolated, rejected and lost which in turn will make the inmate feel warded off, turned aside and rendered confused because the older inmates cannot cope with strict rules of the prison due to their age.

The pain which Sykes called the deprivation of goods and services, which he refers to the standard of living accorded to the inmate in prison. This has to do with the amenities given to the inmate which includes food, clothing, shelter, medical care and other social amenities every inmate should enjoy within the prison environment, but within the Nigeria prison environment services older inmates should get are not there because the correctional centers are built / design for younger prisoners and not for older inmates. Further, elderly inmates with physical disabilities are denied mobility devices, forcing them to rely on other inmates to assist them in carrying out their daily activities. These aging prisoners do not always have their needs met because prisons structures pose a major challenge to the aging population: stairs, narrow doorways, wheelchair inaccessibility, and the lack of handrails are just a few ways in which prisons are structurally unequipped to deal with the needs of this population. Cafeterias, medical units, and other necessary facilities may be spread far apart within a prison, making daily life difficult for individuals with mobility impairment. Aging individuals may also require additional time to eat meals or struggle getting to and from their bed, especially on a top bunk. The physiological difficulties/ pains experienced by elderly inmates can be extremely difficult to handle with dignity in an environment lacking privacy, leading to harassment and feelings of shame, isolation, and depression (Williams and Abraldes, 2007). When the prison management cannot adequately address the needs

of the aging prisoners, it's the elderly inmates themselves who suffer.

Deprivation theorists (Sykes, 1958) propose that illness, and other related health conditions are attributable to the 'pains of imprisonment' in the prison environment. Agbaegbu (2011) stated that the conditions of the prisons in Nigeria are characterized by several physical and psychological deprivations. The feeding and healthcare system of the prisons have been questioned and adjudged to be grossly inadequate and unbefitting of even condemned criminals. It is a common sight for prisoners to look starved and unkept while some have literally turned into living skeletons. In addition, reports have been made about the deplorable sanitary conditions of the cells which lead to frequent illnesses and deaths of inmates (Aduba, 2013). Dye (2010) stated that a "paramount component of the pains of imprisonment" is violence. Indeed, it has often been reported that inmate on inmate assaults are extremely common (Stephan and Karberg, 2003). This assault make most elderly inmates isolate themselves from others due to fear, which in turn leads to depression (Williams and Abraldes, 2007).

In Nigerian prisons, it is a common sight to see the remand, convicted, the young and older inmates indiscriminately confined together and this is against the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules (UNSMR, 2018). According to the UNSMR, prisoners should be locked up according to their various categories: sex, nature of offence, mental condition; it must have correctional, educational and religious facilities; a health care Centre or hospital; industrial or agricultural plant; among others. Chukwudi (2012) espoused that reforms in the Nigerian system are needed in the areas of overcrowding, poor staff morale, inadequate funding, need for new rights for prisoners, rights to good food, right to clean environment, right to human dignity, need for other alternatives to (outright) imprisonment (such as suspended sentence, parole, probation, etc.); all this will help reduce prison strain in Nigeria correctional centers.

Methodology

The cross sectional survey research design was adopted. Information was collected from a fraction or cross section of the population at a given point in time. This method was employed

because it involves the use of questionnaire and in-depth interview aimed at finding out the care of elderly inmates and the effect of prison environment on their health.

The population of this study will comprised of elderly male inmates in Oko prison. The justification for the selection of Edo state as study location is predicated on the fact that Edo state is one of the oldest states in south-south of Nigeria, is a gateway to other states in the West, East, North and other states in the south-south. The justification of using Oko correctional centre is due to the fact that Oko is among the oldest prisons in Nigeria (Edo state Correctional Services Headquarters, Benin City, 2019).

Table 1: Summary of number of inmates in Oko correctional service command as at September, 2019

Correctional Facility	General Inmates	Elderly Inmates (50 above years)
1. Medium Security Custodial Centre, Oko	1,364	110
TOTAL	1,364	110

Source: Edo State Correction Service Headquarters, Benin City, 2019

This study utilizes both the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. Specifically the structured questionnaire, in-depth interview (IDI), and key informant interview (KII) method was adopted in generating primary data for the study. The justification is so that the study will be able to cover some vital areas that previous studies were not able to cover and this will allow richer information, as they will complement each other and also assist to authenticate the research findings. The completed copies of questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Simple frequency and percentage was used to show the strengths and weaknesses of variables. The in-depth interview (IDI) was transcribed according to various headings representing the key issues raised in the interview. Simple descriptive and narrative techniques were used to report the interviews.

Since the entire elderly inmate population in the correctional center is 110, it was adopted as the sample size for this study. The content validity was adopted to authenticate that the study instruments measured exactly what they were designed to measure. The instruments were given to three academic/professional experts in the field of sociology. Their views were used to modify, re-shape and validate the contents of the instrument. The reliability of the research instrument was conducted by administering the instruments to a replica of the proposed study population. Its consistency in yielding the same results verified its reliability (Carmines and Zeller, 1979).

Data Presentation and Analysis
Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Age in Years	50-60	53	48.2
	61-65	37	36.6
	66-70	14	12.7
	71years +	6	**5.5**
	Total	**110**	**100**
Marital Status	Single	9	8.2
	Married	61	55.5
	Separate/Divorced	27	24.5
	Widow/Widower	13	11.8
	Total	**110**	**100**
Religion	Christianity	79	71.8

	Islam	18	16.4
	Traditional	8	7.3
	Others	5	4.5
	Total	**110**	**100**
Educational qualification	No Formal Education	31	28.2
	Primary	16	14.5
	Secondary	22	20
	NCE/OND	14	12.7
	HND/B.Sc	21	19.1
	M.Sc/Ph.D	6	5.5
	Total	**110**	**100**
Ethnic	Benin	32	29.1
	Esan	29	26.4
	Etsako	8	7.3
	Yoruba	11	10
	Igbo	21	19.1
	Hausa/Fulani	2	1.8
	Others	7	6.3
	Total	**110**	**100**

Source field survey, 2021

Table 2 above shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents during the survey, this represents "Section A" of the questionnaire. Table 2 shows the age frequency distribution of respondents, were 53 (48.2) of the respondents fall between the age of 55 – 60, 37 (36.6%) respondents fall between 61 – 65 of age while 14 (12.7%) respondents falls between 66 – 70 years old and 71and above has 6 (5.5%) respondents. As regards the marital status of respondents, it can be deduced that 61 (55.5%) respondents are married, while 9 (8.2%) of the respondents are single, 27 (24.5%) of the respondents are separated/divorced while 4 (1%) of the respondents are widowed. This shows that there are more of married elderly inmates in my sample size than those that are single.

Also, the table shows the religious affiliation of respondents, 71.8% of the respondents are Christian, 16.4% of the respondents admit they are Islam, 7.3% of the respondents practice traditional religion while the remaining 4.6% of the respondents said they

practice other religions which were not mentioned. This shows that there are more Christian elderly inmates in the sample size.

Table 2 further shows the educational qualifications of the respondents. Which reveals tat 31 (28.2%) of the respondents had no formal educational qualification, 16 (14.5%) of the respondents admit they attended primary school, 22 (20.0%) of the respondents possess SSCE equivalent, 14 (12.7%) of the respondents possesses NCE/OND or its equivalent while 21 (19.1%) possesses B.Sc/ HND or its equivalent. Only 6 (5.5%) of the respondents possess M.Sc/ Ph.D and above. Therefore, most of the elderly inmate's has average level of education. This shows that the participant under study has higher rate of First School Leaving Certificate qualification and fewer post-graduates.

Further, the above table shows the Ethnicity of the respondents., 32 (29.1%) of the respondents claimed they are Benin, 29 (26.4%) of the participants are Esan, 8 (7.3%) admit they are Etsako, 11 (10%) are from the Yoruba tribe, 21 (19.1%) said they are Igbo's, 2 (1.8%) of them are Hausa/Fulani and the remaining 7 (6.3%) of the respondents said they are from other ethnic groups which are not mentioned. This shows that the dominate group in the study sampling size are Benin speaking people and this is because Oko prison which is the study location is in Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria.

Table 3: The effect of the prison environment on the health of elderly inmates

Items	Response	Frequency	Percentage
1. I have physical health problem and nobody care	Strongly Agree	23	20.9
	Agree	16	14.5
	Undecided	13	11.8
	Strongly Disagree	30	27.3
	Disagree	28	25.5
	Total	**110**	**100**

2. I have mental health or emotional problem or both	Strongly Agree	6	5.5
	Agree	11	10
	Undecided	14	12.7
	Strongly Disagree	46	41.8
	Disagree	33	30
	Total	**110**	**100**
3. Overall availability on medical care in Oko prison	Bad	31	28.2
	Low	46	41.8
	Average	31	28.2
	High	2	1.8
	Total	**110**	**100**
4. Do you receive special medical treatment as an elderly inmate?	Strongly Agree	12	10.9
	Agree	15	13.6
	Undecided	18	16.4
	Strongly Disagree	43	39.1
	Disagree	22	20
	Total	**110**	**100**

Source: Field Work 2021

Table 3 shows that 27.3 % and 25.5% of the participants strongly disagree and disagree that when they had physical health problem and nobody care, 20.9% and 14.5% of the participants strongly agree and agree while the remaining 11.8% of the respondents were undecided. This shows that most of the participants admitted that when they had health issue, there was lack of proper care. The study also revealed that 5,5% and 10% of the respondents strongly agree and sagree that when they had Mental health / emotional problem no proper care was given, while 41.8% and 30% of the participants strongly disagree and disagree and the remaining 12.7% of the respondents were undecided. This show that majority of the participants admitted that when they were down with mental and emotional problem they lacked basic care in Oko prison. On the issue of accessibility of medical facilities in Oko prison, the table revealed that 28.2% of the respondents said its bad, 41.8% admit is low,

28.2% agree is Average, while the remaining 1.8% of the respondents said that accessibility of medical facilities in Oko prison is high. This revealed that majority of the respondents believed that in general the medical facilities in Oko prison are in a poor condition.

Finally, the result from the above table shows that 39.1% and 20.0% of the participants strongly disagree and disagree that elderly inmates don't receive special medical treatment in Oko prison while 10.9% and 13.6% of the respondents strongly agree and agree and the remaining 16.4% of the participant were undecided. Also the table revealed that 43.6% and 35.5% of the participants who are majority admit that they sleep on the floor inside their cell as a result of lack of beds while 2.7% and 4.5% of the respondents disagree and 20.9% 0f the respondents were undecided. The qualitative response gathered from the field supports the quantitative analysis result.

On the issue of health care challenges faced by elderly inmates in Oko prison?

One of the respondents who is a 58years old inmate said:
> The health challenge older inmate faces are: rashes, body pains and others. Here its survival for the fittest o.
> **(Elderly inmate, 58yr, IDI 18/8/2021)**

Another respondent admits that:
> We are faced with health challenge like high blood pressure, malaria, rashes, pneumonia, fever, breathing problem etc and if you cannot carry yourself to the clinic you are no your own. The prison warder some of them don't care about your condition.
> **(Elderly inmate, 56yr, IDI 18/8/2021)**

Another respondent who is a prison staff said:
> I want you to understand that most of these elderly inmates who are sick or faced with health

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challenge had the sickness before they were sentenced to prison or brought here as awaiting trier. You know there are sicknesses we call old people sickness like body pains, rheumatism, headache, mental issue, high blood pressure, diabetes, body rashes etc
(Prison staff, 39yr, IDI 19/8/2021)

Evidence from the findings revealed that; majority of the elderly inmates for this study are within the age of 55-60years and it shows that elderly inmates under study has higher rate of First School Leaving Certificate qualification and fewer post-graduates while they are predominantly Christians and majority of them claim they from Benin ethic and this is because Oko prison which is the study location is in Benin City, Edo state, Nigeria. Majority of the respondents disagree that elderly inmates receive special medical health care. The findings also revealed that there is no proper availability of medical care for elderly inmates in prison.

Based on the finding it is clear that there are special care package of any type for elderly inmate in Oko correctional center. This is in agreement with Rachael et al (2016) who argued that most correctional facilities were designed to restrict the liberty of young people and not to provide optimal care for the aged. As a result, correctional facilities are often ill-equipped to meet the needs of older adults with complex medical conditions and physical disabilities.

Conclusion
The health of an individual is important for them to function properly in the society, the elderly inmate's needs adequate healthcare because of their age, as they belong to the vulnerable group. There is need therefore, for nutrition intervention from the federal government, religious body, NGO's etc, which, still have a lot to offer in solving the challenges faced by the Nigerian correctional centers. The prisoners environment is not conducive because of the low hygiene level which is affecting the health of some elderly inmates making them to develop sickness like, malaria, body rashes, fever, typhoid fever, pneumonia, breathing problem, body pains,

rheumatism, headache, mental issue, high blood pressure, diabetes etc. These have far reaching negative consequences on the life and living conditions of the elderly inmates and even after release. Therefore, there is the need for the Nigerian prison authority to care more and give the elderly inmates the needed attention they deserve, while the federal government should build or rebuild a better prison system with facilities and rehabilitative programs for every categories of inmate housed within the prison walls.

Recommendations

1. Elderly inmates should be kept in a separate cell from younger inmate and their cells should be equipped with bed facilities. This will help reduce the issue of bullying and threat from younger inmates.
2. There should be routine monitoring of older prisoners to ensure they are not being victimized, and take the potential for victimization into consideration in their housing decisions.
3. The medical facility in the prison should be upgraded to meet the demands of both older and younger inmates.
4. That federal government should make available recreational facilities, specifically meant for elderly inmates that will help in reducing prison strain and increase the stability of their wellbeing.

That medical facility should be made available in the Nigerian prisons. This will ensure that prisoners who are sick receive medical treatment for a healthy living.

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MEDIA IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC PROCESS: A REFERENCE OF THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

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Abstract

The study examines the mass media in Nigerian democratic process by making a reference of the Fourth Republic. Survey research method was used for the study. The main objective of the study is to allow the media to perform its role as the fourth estate of the realm. The study is anchored on the mediamorphosis theory. The study relied on secondary sources of data as veritable tools for its analysis. Findings revealed that the role of the media is essential and it is an indispensible part of democratic government. Further findings revealed that democratization in Nigerian is rather slow compared with the people expectation and one major factor that is responsible for this is the political climate environment under which the media operates. The study concludes that political leaders in Nigeria should give the press free hand to operate as it is in other climes since it is the mouth piece of the electorates or the common man. The study recommends that the press is an indispensible part of democratic government and so it should be given complete freedom to discharge its legitimate duties as stated in the 1999 constitution as amended. It also recommends that since the press acts as a check and balance to government activities and policies with the aim of ensuring good governance, dividends of democracy and bring needed development, all obnoxious policies and unnecessary bottle necks should be cleared away and the press be given complete freedom since its autonomy is crucial to the stability of any democratic process not only in Nigerian but all over the world.

Introduction

One of the different organs that make up modern society whose importance can never be overemphasized is the mass media. No wonder the mass media has been described as the "fourth estate of the realm", that is, it is ranked after the executive, the legislative and the judicial arms of government in any democratic society. In Nigeria where attempt is being made to properly entrench the norms of democracy because in this contemporary world, one form

of government that continues to enjoy wider support and acceptance from citizens is democracy, the mass media no doubt has played various roles and it is still playing them in this noble task of strengthening the democratic process. (McQuial, 2015)

As McQuail (2015) rightly noted, the basic roles of the mass media in any society are to inform, educate and entertain. Suarez (2017) went further by stating that in a democratic environment, the role of the press extends beyond these basic functions to include the responsibility of sustaining and nourishing the ideals of democratic ethos and to constantly ensure and guarantee the protection of freedom of individuals and that of the media itself which defines popular participation in liberal democracy.

Olukotun, (2018) asserts that the mass Media across nations saddle themselves with the responsibility of monitoring governance, protecting the interests and rights of the vulnerable in society and advocating for issues and causes that enhance the growth and development of society within which they operate. As Oseni, (2014) puts it, democracy and journalism are soul mates. You really cannot have one without the other. It is only a democratic environment that can foster the best of journalism just as democracy itself can never take root nor be nurtured in an atmosphere inimical to the provision of alternative choice which journalism promotes.

Nigeria returned to democracy on May 29th 1999 after many years of military rule during which the polity was awash with different policies, strategies and programs aimed at entrenching and consolidating the values of democracy in the system and to lay a solid foundation for its sustainability. It is now twelve years into the Nigeria's Fourth Republic, how has the mass media lived up to the task of evolving a sustainable democratic process considering the fact that section 22 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended specifically assigns noble roles to the mass media within democratic arena thus:

> The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of government to the people (Oseni, 2014 p24)

Despite these roles assigned to the mass media in Nigeria's democratic process, there are many challenges preventing the mass media from living up to their expected billing for instance, government officials, elected representatives of the people most times deliberately embark on actions that serve as obstacles to the media by ensuring that they dance to their tune. The polity has been awash with threats, dubious legislation, intense regulation and censorship as well as unmitigated records of violation of press freedom. Other problems include; obsolete equipment, low level of training, unethical practices as well as unfavorable political and economic climates. All these have constituted serious impediments preventing the mass media from performing its noble role of serving as the driving force of a virile democracy. The fundamental question is, to what extent has the political climate stiffened the ability of the mass media from living up to its expected billing and what are the things needed to be put in place to overcome these obvious challenges especially when there are relevant laws including constitutional provisions that guarantee these roles (Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine, (2018)

Objectives of the study
The study is predicated on the following research objectives:
1. Assess the role of the media in entrenching democratic values into the Nigerian Political System.
2. Evaluate how conducive the political atmosphere has been for mass media to play its roles especially in the Fourth Republic.
3. Investigate the extent to which mass media autonomy boosts democratization process in Nigeria.

Methodology
The study made use of secondary data. Survey research method is used for this study. The choice of this method was informed by its outstanding qualities and expert submissions that enhance effort of findings and obtaining understanding of people's opinions and beliefs about how important the media is in the dissemination of information which is the live wire of all societies the world over

hence the media is described as the "fourth estate of the realm." The data for the study were sourced from journals, newspapers, textbooks, workshop and seminar papers, dictionaries, periodicals and encyclopedias, internet, published and unpublished thesis and magazines.

Theoretical framework

The framework of analysis upon which the study is anchored is the Mediamorphosis Theory. Mediamorphosis is a recent theory propounded by Royer Fiddler in 1997. According to this scholar, it is the transformation of communication media, usually brought about by complex interplay of perceived needs, competitive and political pressures, social and technological innovations. He posits that the media are complex adaptive systems. Anacto and Onabanjo (2016) noted that the media, as other systems, respond to external pressure, with a spontaneous self-reorganization. Fiddler (2011) contends that new media do not arise spontaneously and independently; rather, they emerge gradually from the mediamorphorsis of older media. He suggests that emerging forms of social media propagate dominant trails from earlier forms.

The relevance of this theory to the study firstly is that, the adoption of various ICTs in newspaper operations directly or indirectly cause change since new pattern of operation is learnt from such. Second, in almost all democracies, the mass media is always prevented from performing its assigned role of evolving a sustainable democratic process. It is either made to dance to the tune of political elites, or its autonomy is restricted or it is made to operate out rightly at the whims and caprices of the powers that be. It is always made to promote the interest and policies of government over and above that of the masses of the people. This is particularly evident in the Nigerian democratic process.

Conceptual clarifications

The mass media: refers to sources of information and news such as newspapers, magazines, radio and television that reach and influence large number of people. (Oboh, 2008)

Democratic Process: the concept refers to the slow manner in which democracy is moving before it becomes firmly rooted in a society. (Becker, 2019)

The African Leadership Forum (2016) defines what constitutes the mass media as newspaper, journals, magazines, radio, music, television, drama, town crier and news agencies. It includes any agency, modern or traditional that operates for the articulation and dissemination of ideals and information, generally with intent to influence or control an audience or the institutions that constitute legalized power and authority.

USAID (2017) refers to mass media as methods of communication that reach large groups of people quickly and effectively. Such methods of communication include: radio, television, newspapers, music, magazines, traditional theatre, advertising, marketing and publicity.

Democracy: the word democracy is coined from two Greek words: demos (the people) and kratos (rule) which simply means people's rule. Thus, the term democracy originally referred to the right of the citizen of the Greek city states to participate directly in the act of governance. In democracy, power resides in the people and belongs to the people; the people own the government and not government owning the people (Idmudia, 2018)

Democracy is a political system with a relatively equitable distribution of political power that is marked by government accountability, power checks and balances and systemic openness to fair political competition (Chan, 2015 p.40)

Review of related literature
The role of the mass media in Nigerian democratic process
The role of the Mass Media: McQuail (2015) wrote that the mass media are:

> Windows that enable us see beyond our immediate surroundings, interpreters that help us make sense of experience, platforms or carriers that convey information, interactive communication that includes audience feedback, signposts that provide us with instructions.

Andrew (2017) states that the basic roles of the mass media in any society are to inform educate and entertain. For Adeniyi and Berger (2016) the role of the mass media is to persuade entertain, enlighten, mobilize and inform the citizenry. Ochonogar (2018) sees the mass media as multipliers of sources of knowledge and raising the level of knowledge and aspirations. Also that mass media institution provides information daily to aid citizen's development as well as other socio-economic and political organizations that operate within the country. Ojo (2017) posits that the basic role of journalism is to Serve society by informing the public, scrutinizing the way power is exercised, stimulating democracy and in these ways aid political, economic, social and cultural development. To us however, the mass media are the voice of the people. They convey people's wishes and standpoints to the government whenever decisions and policies are made.

The Department for International Development (2013) sees the mass media as source of entertainment, news, public information, education, advocacy and dialogue and function as a mirror of society. The African Leadership Forum (2016) asserts that one major dimension of the role of the mass media in nation-building is through its promotion of the positive aspects of our culture. What this position implies is that the mass media have a duty to distinguish between the positive and negative sides of our socio-cultural orientation and lay serious emphasis on the positive side. Isola (2018) supports the above position by declaring that the only way Africa could prevent complete erosion of her culture and legacies is to strengthen her mass media to the extent that it could contribute to the emerging global culture and project the better aspects of African culture for the benefit of the entire world. In a similar vein, Sparks (2017) sees the media as channels that disseminate contemporary ideas and traditional practices and values and assist in reshaping conflicting social norms. Andrew (2017) argues that the mass media can bring about development or mar it completely. Oboh (2016) opines that the mass is a double-edged sword that can oil or grease economic wheels of a country or bring them to a grinding halt. In the same vein it can be used to maintain social equilibrium, facilitate change or seeks radical alternatives. This makes the media an opportunity or a threat to the

society if it malfunctions in any way. Aliagan (2016) observe that the media shapes our notion of reality through the processing and dissemination of information about unfolding events in society. The messages of the press however do not have independent existence they are conditioned by the prejudices and biases of those who process them. (Aliagan, 2016)

Mass media is a necessary institution in modern democracy. Oseni (2014) laid a foundation in this respect by declaring that democracy and journalism are soul mate. You really cannot have one without the other. It is only a democratic environment that can foster the best of journalism. Just as democracy itself can never take root nor be nurtured in an atmosphere inimical to the provision of alternative choice which journalism promotes.

According to Sadeeq (2012) mass media and democracy have been established to be inter-twine. They cannot be divorced from each other. To govern therefore is to communicate, to democratize is to ensure free unhindered flow of communication. The five major functions of the mass media are; to report news, to interpret it, to setting agenda for governance actions, to serve as watchdog over government and other powerful institutions in society and to take a more active role in public debate have clearly demonstrated their potency in a democratic setting. In any democratic polity, there must be a two-way communication flow- that is, from government to the citizens and from citizens to the government. The essence of this is to ensure the responsiveness of government to the felt needs, yearning and aspirations of the governed and for the governed to put their views across to the government without fear of molestation, harassment or suppression. This is a time-tested postulation without which democracy cannot be established let alone be consolidated.

Nwabueze (2013) posits that democracy is about communication; people talking to one another about their common problems and forging a common destiny. Before people can govern themselves, they must be free to express themselves. Emery (2015) asserts that a democratic government can be responsive to public opinion only if its citizens can make their opinion known. Moreover the electorates can hold government officials accountable for their actions or inactions only if they know what their government has done or is doing or plans to do because mass media provide the main

channels for this two-sided information, and have the dual capacity of redefining and shaping our political views. Emery (2015) highlights the importance of mass media in democracy thus: as the centerpiece of democratic assumption, the media (global or national) are increasingly seen as important influence shaping the political trajectories of countries, especially in the course of the current democratic wave. In post authoritarian societies such as those of Africa and Communist Europe where the media were in the vanguard of the struggle for democratization, they continued to play important role in shaping the course of events in the emerging democracies.

Oseni (2014) substantiates that it is possible to conceive of press-democracy relationship in terms of historical estates: executive, legislature and judicial to which we can add the press (4th estate). In this regard, the concept of check and balance becomes useful. This is even more so in a presidential system. The executive as the name implies executes the laws, the legislature makes the law and judiciary interprets it. The press is there to circulate information and knowledge through reporting on the activities of the three estates. It keeps watchful eyes on developments, positive and negative, it can approve or disapprove, commend or condemn, encourage or discourage. In a truly democratic setting, the press is a necessary precondition for good governance.

From the previous paragraph, this scholar argues further that the media is crucial to democracy by listing such values like supremacy of citizens, equality of representation, role of majority, regularity of competitiveness, equal   eligibility to contest, rule of law, independence of the judiciary, transparency and accountability of government and freedom of the press as salient democratic prerequisites. He maintains that unless there is a courageous, fearless press imbued with the objective of attaining a veritable democratic order, citizens cannot be kings, representation cannot be equal, the true majority will not rule, competition will be banned and electoral commission will be beholden only unto those in authority.

The role of the media in creating a responsible government in a democratic polity are said to include such factors as; promoting dialogue and debate, promoting the interest of the electorates especially outside election years, pursuance of the end of social justice, providing linkage with the international community, keeping

watch on the economy, giving voice to citizens, keeping focus on the state for public utilities, mirroring the society and prevention of a lapse into military dictatorship as well as promoting and sustaining democracy. (Oseni, 2014)

Umuerri (2018) posits that the media can serve as the watchdog on the three arms of government by exposing corruption, waste, inefficiency and negligence on the part of the authorities. Through investigative journalism, scams and scandals can be unearthed, anti-social activities exposed and implementation of the policies and programs monitored and pursued. The mass media can thus act as ombudsman on behalf of the people every day. The three important roles the media must play in a democratic and civilized society are

1. Inform citizens on matters of public policies and politics by presenting and debating alternatives.
2. Act as watchdog by uncovering political, economic and corporate corruption as well as other forms of abuse of power or inept policies.
3. Helps empower citizens to be aware of civic and political rights and how to exercise these rights. Through these roles the media helps to build and sustain a participatory, transparent and accountable governance structure.

Fog (2017) alluded to the fact that the mass media constitute the backbone of democracy. The media supply political information that voters base their decision on. They identify problems in our society that serve as medium for deliberations. They are also the watchdogs that we rely on to uncover errors and wrong doings by those who hold power.

Berger (2019) listed out the most important democratic functions the mass media should perform to include surveillance of socio-political development, identification of most relevant issues, provide a platform for the debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials accountable for the way power is exercised, provide incentives to citizens to learn and become involved in democratic process and resist efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence. According to Hume (2015) this becomes watchdog on the ruling class holding them accountable to the people; second, they cast spotlight on issues that need attention. Third, they educate

the citizens so they can embark right political choices, fourth; they connect people with each other, helping to create the social glue that binds civil society (Hume 2015)

According to McQuail (2015) the conduct of democratic or undemocratic polities nationally or internationally is increasingly depending on mass media. O'Neil (2017) wrote that without the freedom of communication the mass media provides; the foundation of democratic rule is undermined. Gunther and Chan (2015) call mass media the connective tissue of democracy. The International Federation of Journalists advanced reasons for the strategic roles of the media in democracy thus:

The test of any democracy is the quality of public debate, transparency and tolerance in society. It is to the mass media that people look for a variety of opinions, ideas and thoughts which exist in every community and which provide the raw materials for democratic debate.

While classifying the media as part of civil society which has the primary responsibility of advocacy in the polity, the USAID in a technical publication maintained that media overlaps other functional areas of democracy. For example, support for media may yield result in governance activities particularly those related to decentralization, anti-corruption and citizen's participation in the policy process. The rule of law may be further institutionalized by supporting an independent media that keeps a check on the judiciary, reports on the courts and promote a legal framework and creating environment suitable for press freedom. Free and fair elections conducted through transparent processes require a media sector which gives candidates equal access, and reports relevant issues in a timely and objective manner. In sum, the mass media institutions are as important in a democracy as the other three estates of the realm of executive, legislature and judiciary and the success of the consolidation process or otherwise of any democratic party is dependent largely on how vibrant the institutions provided by the mass media are and to what extent the climate is conducive for them to play their assigned roles.

Mass media in Nigeria's fourth republic

While scholars the world over have clearly stated what ideally should be the role of the mass media in democracy, others especially of Nigerian descent have discussed in different literature activities of the media in the country's Forth Republic. While some see a media that lived up to its responsibility in the Four Republic, others have seen a media that have been awash with cases of ethnicity, corruption, flagrant subversion and wildly known unethical standards as well as proliferation of media establishments sponsored and influenced by political class.(Arogundade,2017)

According to Oseni (2014) the mass media have the responsibility of carrying out the following functions in the Fourth Republic: perform their constitutional role of ensuring accountability of government to the governed. Serve as early warning mechanism. Act as check to the excesses of government. Hold leadership responsible for the attainment of agreed goals e.g. the fundamental national objectives and directive principles of state policy. Be a vanguard for a sustained fight for justice, fairness and equity. Be a bastion of independent and balanced position on national issues. Diversify interest sufficiently in areas vital for economic, social and political development to get adequate and sustained attention. Constantly, reminding those in power of their obligations to citizens. Never allows leaders forget that Nigeria owes obligation to the larger international community which it needs for development: always sensitize the government and people of Nigeria to the country's place of leadership within the global community.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which came into effect at the start of the Fourth Republic also assigns some roles to the polity. The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of government to the people (1999 Constitution, section 22)

Omoera (2016) classifies the value of the media into six, namely: information, leadership watchdog, electioneering, accountability/whistle blowing and agitation rule in electoral reforms and used them as yardsticks in measuring the performance of the media in the country's Fourth Republic. For instance, the tons

of news stories, editorial, commentaries, interviews and information giving activities of the media in both the print and electronic media all testify to this fact. The author credited the media as having helped Nigerians to keep abreast of the development in the political space in the fourth republic pointing out such program as the Nigeria Decide on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) during the 2007 general elections which made electorates know the profile of their potential leaders from the interview and fact files of aspiring politicians. The media is also commended for structuring the political landscape of the country as an avenue for addressing agitations and proper politician leadership, enlightening the public and help in self-governance, draw attention to good and bad policies, drum support for positive initiative of government, undertake public campaigns on important national issues, support fight against corruption exposing corrupt public office holders, politicians and highly placed citizens expose bad practices of government and private individuals for example, media role in thwarting President Obasanjo's attempt at third term in office. The roles played by various newspapers and broadcast houses in monitoring the 1999 elections are examples of media watchdog role in the Fourth Republic pointing to the News watch in its January, 25 1999 edition which reported irregularities in the run-up to the state assembly and governorship elections. These include under-age voters in Katsina, multiple voting in Abia as well as bribery stories in Edo, Delta and Ekiti States. The media did this with the aim of effecting a change (Omoera, 2016)

In its electioneering role the media gave Nigerians an insight into the personalities of political office seekers and their manifestoes. In addition to the Nigeria Decides program by NTA, African Independent Television (AIT) produced Focus Nigeria and Political Platform. Others include accountability and whistle blowing roles. The media have unearthed high profile cases in an effort to expose braze corruption which many political and public office holders have enmeshed in. Case studies of media role in this respect include the disgrace from office of Alhaji Salisu Buhari, former speaker of the House of Representatives following various revelations about his academic qualification and age and the impeachment of former senate President Chuba Okadigbo for

corruption and mismanagement of public funds. The media was also instrumental in uncovering other financial recklessness and outright corruption such as the case of Evans Enwerem, former Senate President, Patricia Eheh, a former Speaker House of Representative, Prof. Adeniko Grange, former Minister of Health, Iyabo Obasanjo, for her shady deals in the health and power sectors, House of Representatives ₦2.3 billion scandal, the Halliburton corruption scandal, the Vaswani Brothers scandal and many other improprieties in government circles at different times. (Olukotun and Seteolu, 2011)

Apart from drawing attention to wrong doings inside and outside government, the whistle stance of the Nigerian media to an extent brought some level of sanity in public office. For instance, the allegation over the bio-data of former Lagos state Governor Bola Tinubu that triggered political crisis and was to be impeached because of inconsistencies in his curriculum vitae. The media has always been very active in electoral reforms by keeping tabs on the on-goings at the various electoral tribunals and appeal court cases in many parts of the country to ensure that justice is done. Thus, because of the irregularities and malpractice that characterized the 2003 and 2007 elections and with the insistence of the Nigerian media, the government instituted the Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) with a view to raise election standard that will give credibility to election in Nigeria and command national and international acceptance. Another salient issue in the Fourth Republic in which the media played key role was the issue of Sharia legal system in Zamfara and later some other parts of Northern Nigeria, in October, 1999, the Nigerian press was dangerously partisan instead of being an unbiased umpire, it joined the fray thus further heating the polity (Aliagan, 2016)

The European Union Election Observation Mission (EOM) to the 2003 elections summarized their view on the media performance in this way; media performance during the election was flawed as it failed to provide unbiased, fair and informative coverage of the political parties and candidates contesting the elections. Federal and state owned media were bias in favour of the parties and candidates in power. These media have a particular obligation to provide impartial and unbiased information to the

electorates because they are publicly owned and their advantage in reaching the larger number of people in Nigeria. However, there is a vibrant and prolific print media, in Nigeria which generally succeeded in disseminating more detailed information about more parties and candidates than the broad-cast media (Arogundade, 2017)

Arogundade (2017) listed some factors hindering the media from playing effective role in the elections as observed by the EU observer team to include: the financial instability of the Nigerian media, the low purchasing power of the population, illiteracy, electricity shortages, media reliance on sponsorship for survival, a media culture of deference to the party in power, problems of professional development and the weakness of both government and self-regulation. Media outlets were largely unable to overcome these problems and provide adequate coverage of the 2003 elections.

The problems identified in the media's coverage of the 2003 elections in Nigeria provided a general framework on the media handling of elections in the Fourth Republic Ojo (2006) however offered a way out of some of those problems thus: to minimize problems of bias and subjectivity in reporting issues in politics and democracy, it is expedient that reporters give equal time, space and treatment to all stakeholders in the political fields. In their reportage of political conventions, campaigns and elections, the journalist should emphasize the issues of ideologies and personality rather than looking for conflicts, a traditional staple of news reporting, journalists should project the candidates by giving them equal coverage in both frequency and length of report. All campaign issues including an analysis of the characters and differences among the candidates should be provided to the electorates to enable them make informed decisions. It is unethical to project one candidate or political party in a better light than another; journalist must not involve themselves in politics.

Overall, from available literature and the views of various scholars, the Nigerian media have played various roles in the Fourth Republic and have contributed in no small measure to the sustain ace of democratic norms and institutions in the country. Although they have been slowed down, by co-opting, death threats, assaults,

insufferable legislation, intimidations and even assassination of media professionals, they still remain the vanguard, educating the masses of the people on the nature of politics played, the selection of their representatives and how to be part of the decisions-making process in Nigeria (Rozumilowic, 2012)

The early Nigeria newspapers and political development
The role of newspapers as instruments of political development was heightened with democratic elections following the Clifford Constitution of 1922. Many Nigeria established newspapers in order to express their political opinions. The daily times was established on 1st June, 1926 by the Nigerian Printing and Publishing Company Ltd. Herbert Macaulay founded the Daily News which African Leadership Forum (2007) credited as starting first truly Nigerian popular newspaper because clearly it articulated Nigerian's position on many issues and because Macaulay himself was a committed politician from the beginning, his paper naturally became a major weapon in the nationalist struggle. In 1937, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe founded the West African Pilot which soon became the forum for heightened nationalist awareness which was the first most circulated newspaper devoted to promoting serious broad-based anti-colonial mobilization in the country. The national struggle gathered further momentum with the return of Nigerian soldiers who served in the Second World War many of whom came back with a determination to release their people from colonial bondage and found the West African Pilot a veritable medium for airing their dissenting views (African Leadership Forum 2016)

According to Arogundade (2017) Zik, more than his contemporaries expanded the scope of political journalism of the era not just in terms of the number of publications in his conglomerate, but in terms of running a press as a political, social, business and an enterprise. Omu (2018) further declared that the journalistic revolution inaugurated by Nnamdi Azikwe included the democratization of access to aggressive propaganda, sensationalism, commercialization and technical renovation which became the arrow-head of modern journalism in Nigeria and worked in favour of popular struggle for political emancipation and independence. Thus, at independence in 1960, Nigerian press was

applauded as probably the greatest and most developed in Africa. The Nigerian Tribune in Ibadan in 1949 was established to champion the cause of the Egbu Omu Oduduwa and later the Action Group and the welfare doctrine of its leader Chief Awalowo. The Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo was founded in Zaria in 1930s by the Colonial Development Corporation as a vernacular newspaper to serve the needs of the Hausa-speaking groups in Northern Nigeria. The Nigerian Tribune came in the 1940s while the New Nigeria emerged in Kaduna in 1966 as a newspaper owned by Northern Nigerian government with a clear mandate to promote Northern interests. Zik's West African Pilot itself shed its national toga and promoted Eastern Nigerian interests and in the 1950s Zik himself became the Premier of the Easter Region under an NCNC government. Thus, ownership became a crucial factor determining the nationalist orientation of the newspapers.

Azikwe (1987) elaborated extensively on what the Nigerian media of the colonial era actually focused on as follows:

> Our early newspapers fought against slavery until it was abolished. Here, IweIroh was clearly in the fore-front, ably supported by the Anglo African. Then they directed attention to the social ills of the day, seeking for desirable changes to enable the country to forge ahead. Between 1900 and 1925, the columns of newspapers were filled with social, economic and political issues which were debated vehemently and which led to some of our editors unceremoniously to their goal house.

Some of these issues discussed included the introduction of paper currency, water rate, the building of the colonial church with public funds, the flogging of Nigerians in the North, the establishment of indirect rule in Southern Nigeria, the liquor traffic, the attempt to nationalize native lands, the organization of the provincial courts, the amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, the formation of the National Congress of British West Africa, the agitation for amendment to the Nigerian Constitution, the organization of pressure groups and the formation of political

parties. We can truthfully say that the pioneers of the Nigerian press established a virile press at a time in a colonial history when freedom of expression was not respected as a right but as a privilege. For instance, when Lord Lugard was engaged in consolidating Nigeria as part and parcel of British imperial system, he often found his polices subjected to sever press criticisms. A newspaper ordinance was enacted in 1903, but Lugard found it necessary to stiffen it so that by 1917, it became very difficult for anyone to publish a newspaper without a bond for two hundred and fifty pounds while the enactment of the criminal codes in 1916 made almost every criticism of government seditious (Azikwe, 1987)

For Owolobi (2016) the main focus of the early newspapers was to spearhead a brand of nationalism that was both cultural and political in outlook voicing against colonialism and its alienating exploitations and racial indignities. The pre-independence newspapers were nationalistic and they pursued the objectives of educating the people on the need for independence, promoting cultural values as well as mounting pressure against racial discrimination and other associated vices while the post-independence newspapers appear to focus more on tribal, political and regional agenda aimed at promoting the various interests of the newspaper proprietors.

Owolabi (2016) concludes that the bravery, confidence, selflessness and sacrifices were the contributions of the press to the attainment of Nigerian independence on October 1, 1960. Some prominent individuals who used the press to fight for the country's independence included Robert Campbell. Richard Balize, Blackall Bejamin, John P. Jackson, Thomas H.Jackson, Ernest Seseilkoli, Adeyemo Alakija, Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikwe, Anthony Enahoro and Obafemi Awolowo. Good proportion of the war for independence was fought on the pages of newspapers, magazines and the airwaves of the broadcast media. We must understand that unlike many other African countries, Nigeria did not engage in any form of violent struggle for the attainment of independence and democracy, rather the mass media was used to fight the war instead of lethal weapons and ammunitions (Owolabi, 2016)

Press challenges in the Nigerian democratic process and the way out.

The Nigerian media have various roles to play in the successive governments after independence and these roles have serious implications on the way the people are governed In the military era for instance, some journalists were harassed, some jailed, and some lost their jobs, some detained while others lost their lives in carrying out their legitimate duties. These successive governments also put in place legislations that were used to gag and punish journalists and writers. Ekpu (2000) listed some of these legislations as follows:

i. The News Act 1917
ii. Press Registration Act 1933
iii. Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publication) Act 1961
iv. Defamation Act, 1961
v. Emergency Powers Act, 1961
vi. Seditious Meeting Act, 1961
vii. Obscene Publications Act, 1962
viii. Newspaper (Amendment) Act, 1964

The criminal and penal codes especially as they deal with:

i. Seditious falsehood; Sections 50 and 51 (SS416, 417 Penal Code)
ii. Injurious Falsehood; Section 59 (Section 418 Penal Code)
iii. Criminal defamation Sections 373-379 (SS391-92 Penal Code)
iv. Power to prohibit importation of publications, section 58
v. Seditious publication against a foreign head of state, section 60
vi. Contempt of court: section 6 criminal code Art and Section 133.

Other decrees that were used to censor the media between 1966 and 1979 were:

i. The Circulation of Newspaper Decree No.2 of 1966
ii. Defamatory and Offensive Publication Decree No.44 of 1966
iii. Newspaper (prohibition from circulation) Decree No.17 of 1968
iv. The Printers and Publishers if the Sunday Star and Imole Owuro (Declaration as Unlawful Society) Edit No.19 of 1968.

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The Public Officers (protection against false accusation) Decree No.11 of 1976 and the Newspaper prohibition from circulation (validation) No.1 of 1978, (Ekpu 2000)

The mass media was caged, gagged or censured by many obnoxious policies decrees, acts and codes of conduct. However, among those who fell victims of these decrees were Christopher Kolade, Isola Folorunso, Francisca Emmanuel, Alfred Fiberesima and Kofo Yakubu who were arrested and detained by the government for featuring a drama titled: Trees grew in the desert on the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) on June 28 1970. Also during the Buhari military regime, the mass media suffered greatly in the hands of the junta. The regime promulgated two major anti-press decrees these were; decrees No.2 and 4 of 1984. For example, the Guardian Newspapers was closed down on April 2, 1984 and its journalists were arrested and detained for publishing a story titled "Eight military chiefs tipped as ambassadors". Other detained were Tunde Kolawole, Bukar Zaman Haruna, Leke Salawu and Dr. Tai Solarin. The Babangida regime also promulgated seven decrees to curtail press freedom. Many media houses were closed down and government security operatives confiscated millions of copies of newspapers and magazines. It was then that Dele Giwa the then editor-in-chief of News watch magazine was assassinated through a parcel bomb suspected to have government link. Several other media practitioners were harassed, arrested, detained and tortured. The regime sealed off, proscribed and banned several media houses notable among them were Concord Press. The News, National Concord, Daily Sketch, Nigerian Observer, African Concord and Ogun State Broadcasting Corporation (OGBC) The Sani Abacha regime equally harassed, arrested and detained several media practitioners and closed down media houses such as The Punch, National Concord, The Guardian via Decrees Nos. 6, 7 and 8 of 1994. People suspected to be government agents assassinated Tunde Oladipo of the Guardian and Bagauda Kalto of the News both in 1998 (Emery, 2015)

In the current democratic dispensation government still exerts considerable influence on what goes on in the media. Two state-controlled bodies, the National Broadcasting Commission

(NBC) and Nigerian Press Council (NPC), have wide ranging powers to sanction broadcasters and Newspaper bodies primarily through the enforcement of codes of conduct. Section 7 of NCP Amendment Decree 60 of 1999 states that (1) The council shall adopt the code of conduct of the Nigerian Union of Journalists to guide the press and journalists in the performance of their duties. (2)The council shall cause to be published in the press journal the code of conduct as adopted under sub-section (1) of this section which shall be binding on every journalist in Nigeria. The NPC has the mandate to investigate cases of insult and defamation and to impose penalties (Onabanjo, 2016) Decree 60 of 1999 also required that publications be registered by the press council through a system entitled "Documentation of Newspapers". In applying for registration, publishers must submit their mission statements and objectives and could in theory be denied registration if their objectives failed to satisfy the council's recommendation (Berger 2019) In section 19A of NBC, any station which contravenes the provisions of the National Broadcasting Code, shall be liable to the sanctions prescribed in the Code. Both the NPC and NBC are domicile under the Federal Ministry of Information, with the NBC reporting directly to the presidency, in many cases, including recommendation of applications for broadcasting licenses and the President must physically sign all broadcast licenses.

According to Berger (2019) there still exists legislation making access to public information extremely difficult .These include the Criminal Code Act of 1990, the Evidence Act of 1990.the Public Complaint Commission Act of 1975, and the Statistic Act of 1987. As a way out for a free press in Nigeria, a number of decrees that are contrary to the 1999 constitution have been repealed including the Official Secret Act and the Defamatory and Offensive Publication Decree of 1999. There are however a number of repressive laws introduced during the military dictatorship prior to the return to constitutional democracy in 1999 such as the Offensive Publication Decree of 1993, the Obscene publications Act of 1990, and the Printing Press Regulation Act of 1990.All these obnoxious decrees, councils, commissions and codes of conduct should be repealed or done away with and the Nigerian press is given free hand to report government activities and policies and constructively

criticize where necessary since the press is the mouth piece of the general public as it is the case in other democracies (Berger,2019)

Conclusion

It is true to all intents and purposes and there is no vestige of doubt that the role played by the mass media is essential and indispensible because it is people and development oriented and so its autonomy as a panacea to the stability and progress of any democratic process should not be hindered. The media until now is operating at the whims and caprices of government the media needs to be given complete freedom as stated in the 1999 constitution as amended. It is discovered that the democratization process is rather slow compared with people's expectations and the major factor responsible for this is the climate under which the media operates. The media is the mouth piece of the electorates in a democratic polity used to check government excesses, constructively criticizing the actions and inactions and scrutinizing the way power is exercised with the intention to stop impunity and arbitration and bring needed development that will meet the felt needs yearnings and aspirations of citizens. But in the Nigerian experience this is not seen being played out as it is the case in other democracies all over the world

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the discussions involved and conclusion thereafter drawn, the following recommendations are hereby proposed:

1. In any democratic polity, democracy cannot thrive or become stable and achieve its purpose for the electorates without effective mass media.
2. A high level of corruption that characterized the media resulting into the commercialization of news and promotion of parochial interests for monetary gains should be eradicated
3. All impediments to the passage into law of the freedom of Information Bill should be cleared and the bill made to be part of the nation's governing process.

4. All political parties and their candidates should be given equal access to all government owned media and not just the ruling party and its candidates.
5. A situation whereby the mass media are denied their autonomy by the government's regulatory agencies such as the Nigerian Press Broadcasting Commission and the Nigerian Press Council should be done away with.

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JUDICIAL CORRUPTION AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines judicial corruption as an impediment to effective criminal justice administration in Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to: assess the causes of judicial corruption in Nigeria; evaluate the nature of judicial corruption in Nigeria; examine how judicial corruption has impeded the effective administration of criminal justice in Nigeria; and suggest ways on how to mitigate corruption in the Nigeria judiciary. The study identified the following as the causes of judicial corruption in Nigeria thus: undue influence of the executive and legislative arms of government, social tolerance of corruption, fear of retribution, poor salaries for judges and court staff, poor training and lack of rewards for ethical behaviour, collusion among judges, and poor monitoring of court procedures. The nature of judicial corruption in Nigeria cuts across: political interference into judicial processes and bribery. The study established that judicial corruption impedes the effective administration of criminal justice in Nigeria. This is because judicial corruption evades the whole mark of crime justice administration which is provision of justice,

conferment and protection of rights and obligations of people without discrimination. The study recommends that independence of the judiciary should not be compromised; there should be an objective and transparent process for the appointment of judges; fair remuneration and pensions should be provided for judicial staff while in service and upon retirement. Laws should be made to safeguard judicial official's salaries and working conditions so that they cannot be manipulated by the executive.

Introduction

There is no doubt that corruption is identified as the clog in the wheel of socio-economic and political advancement of societies. Corruption has become systemic and institutionalized in Nigeria. This is to the extent that there is no sector, segment, and institution in Nigeria that is not infiltrated with corruption. Public servants in Nigeria are grossly involved in corruption with impunity. Successive governments in Nigeria have launched diverse anti-corruption crusades to tame the monster to no avail. More worrisome is the involvement of the Nigeria judiciary in corruption. In fact, the indulgence of the judiciary into corruption has hampered the fight against corruption in Nigeria and elsewhere. The supposed umpire of corruption is alleged to have no moral integrity and justification to referee the game. Corruption in Nigeria seems be a virus that is resistant to treatment. In fact, corruption is cancerous and the damage corruption has done Nigeria and humanity in general is of equal proportion to Hiv/Aids, Ebola, and COVID-19 pandemic of late.

Previously, corruption related offences were mainly the concern of internal security apparatuses, like the police and other paramilitary agencies. In recent time, corruption has become a recurrent theme that appears on the agenda of international organisations, like the World Bank or the OECD. The internationalisation of the discourse of the ills of corruption to humanity is championed by some non-governmental organisations.

Transparency International devised a controversial 'Corruption Perceptions Index', which ranked countries according to how corrupt they were perceived to be. It followed up with a Bribe Payers Index which ranked countries according to their propensity to offer bribes (Transparency International 2007). This implies that corruption is no longer a local, national and regional phenomenon. It is a global phenomenon and it affects even the multinational corporations and overdeveloped economies. In a nutshell, corruption is not prevalent only in the third world economies; it has also affected the developed economies.

Corruption is featured on the front burner of economic discourse. Economists look at the costs of corruption, and its effect on economic development (Ackerman 1999, Elliott, 1997, Gray& Kaufamann, 19998, Mauro, 1995, OECD, 1997, Robinson, 1998, Chander & Wilde 1992). Economists apply the models of economic analysis to the problem of corruption with the assumption that people are rational and calculating, and will respond to incentives and disincentives. This approach is well summarised by Klitgaard's (1988) formula Monopoly + Discretion -Accountability = Corruption. In economic praxis, corruption has multiplier consequences on the expected welfare of the people and societal development. This is because corruption led to the diversion of the funds meant for the provision of basic socio-economic amenities whose absence is causing untold economic hardship for the populace.

The emerging trends of corruption related discourse is less patient with cultural explanations. Formerly, corruption in developing countries might be explained by traditions of gift giving, or the obligations of kinship. Now many people in these countries are less tolerant of such excuses. A draft bill to establish an anti-corruption commission in Papua New Guinea, for example prescribes bluntly 'custom [is] not to be a defence' (Papua New Guinea 1998). A Corruption and Anti-corruption brisk distinction between gifts and bribes has been given by the former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo (quoted in Pope 1997:p5) that:

> the gift is usually a token. It is not
> demanded. The value is usually in the
> spirit rather than the material worth. It is
> usually done in the open, and never in

> secret. Where it is excessive, it becomes an
> embarrassment and it is returned. If
> anything corruption has perverted and
> destroyed this aspect of our culture.

This suggests that there is no justification for corruption. Public officials must not involve in corruption on the guise of familial ties, cultural relations, generosity and public relations (PR). In whatever perspective of social orientation, corruption should not be condoned in the society. Public officials are expected to live on their legitimate earnings. Corruption scandal might lead to a government sponsored crackdown or inquiry. An 'independent' commission might be established, but it would report directly to the Executive arm of government (Prime Minister or the President). In Nigeria for example, government agencies saddled with responsibility of checkmating corruption such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission are answerable to the President of Nigeria. State inaction on corruption has led to greater emphasis on the role of civil society, and the private sector in preventing corruption. Transparency International (2007) has supplemented its international action against corruption by franchising national chapters, and has constituted other domestic non-government organisations, each campaigning against corruption in different ways.

Corruption is devastating when the judiciary ''the watch dog'' of corruption is involved in and accused of corruption. Again, Transparency International (2007:89) aver thus:

> Equal treatment before the law is a pillar
> of democratic societies. When courts are
> corrupted by greed or political
> expediency, the scales of justice are tipped,
> and ordinary people suffer. Judicial
> corruption means the voice of the innocent
> goes unheard, while the guilty act with
> impunity.

Arguably, the test of any democracy lies in the efficiency and efficacy of its judicial system. It seems the Nigerian democratic

setting has failed to uphold the basic tenets of democracy which are justice, equity, fairness and legality. Such attributes of ideal democratic setting are superintended by the judiciary. In recent times, the judiciary in Nigeria is identified with corruption allegations and charges. Judicial officer (Judges or Justices) are involved in corruption related offences to include bribe taking, succumbing to political interference into judicial processes, non declaration of assets, having more than required international passports thereby violating the code of conduct guiding their professional etiquettes and public service rules. In Nigeria for instance, Justice Danladi Umar of the Code of Conduct Tribunal, Justice Rita Ofilli Ojumogobia and Adeniyi Ademola of the Federal High Court, Justice James Agbadu Fishim of the National Industrial Court, Justice Sylvester Ngwuta of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and Justice Walter Onnoghen the former Chief Justice of Nigeria were allegedly involved in corruption (BBC News 2016, Vanguard 2016, Africa Live, 2016). The involvement of judicial officers in corruption as mentioned above is indicative of corruption in the judiciary.

Consequent upon the above, Nigeria security agencies have recovered Eight Hundred Thousand Dollars (800, 000) and Six Hundred and Forty-Five Thousand Two Hundred Euros (645, 200) in cash during the raid of the residence of senior Justices suspected of corruption. Justice Ngwuta of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and co-defendant were arrested in those raids. Justice Ngwuta was charged of money laundering and was allegedly found with several passports, even though pleaded not guilty to the fifteen (15) counts charges of fraud (BBC News 2016, Africa Live, 2016). Again, Justice Rita Ofilli Ojumogobia and Adeniyi Ademola of the Federal High Court, Justice James Agbadu Fishim of the National Industrial Court were charged of receiving bribe in various sums and forms. The judicial regulatory body of Nigeria, National Judicial Council (NJC) suspended the judges pending their trial (Vanguard 2016).

Judicial Corruption kills judicial system thereby denying thousands access to justice and protection of their individual rights. A well functioning government, with the citizens best in mind requires not only the rule of law, but also an independent judiciary that enforces the law impartially and with equity. When the judiciary is corrupt, it facilitates corruption in other sectors of government

and it transmits to the general public the message that corruption is accepted (Tampipi, 1997, Rogow & Laswell, 1963, Pieth, 1997). In such countries, judicial corruption might even be socially accepted. TI's Global Corruption Barometer of 2007 surveyed 59,661 persons in sixty two (62) states and 8 percent of respondents who had been in contact with the judiciary affirmed that they had paid a bribe in order to receive a positive decision in a judicial case (Transparency International, 2007).

In Africa and Latin America, the percentages were as high as twenty one (21%) and eighteen (18%) per cent respectively (ICAC, 1992, Marten, 1999, Huntington, 1968, Gorta, 1998). Judicial corruption violates the right to fair trial, which is essential for effective implementation of human rights (Cockcroft, 1998). Judicial independence is a necessity for a non-corrupt judiciary, but it is not enough, since an independent judiciary itself might be corrupt. It is hard to downplay the negative consequences of judicial corruption, both nationally and internationally. This study seeks to examine judicial corruption as an impediment to effective administration of criminal justice in Nigeria.

The following are the questions this paper intends to answer. What are the causes of judicial corruption in Nigeria? What is the nature of judicial corruption in Nigeria? How has corruption impeded effective administration of criminal justice in Nigeria? What can be done to mitigate corruption in the Nigerian judiciary? The objectives of the paper are to: Assess the causes of judicial corruption in Nigeria. Investigate the nature of judicial corruption in Nigeria, examine whether corruption has impeded the administration of justice in Nigeria, and suggest ways on how to mitigate judicial corruption in Nigeria.

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

This section of the study deals with conceptual issues and the adopted theoretical framework. Here the concepts of corruption, judicial corruption, criminal justice administration and group conflict theory are presented.

Corruption: There is no absolute and general definition of the term corruption that is accepted globally. Nevertheless, corruption has been defined diversely by individuals and corporate bodies based on their intellectual background. Such conceptions of corruption are

somewhat imprecise and vague, using such terms as denigration and abuse of office for personal or private gain (Myrdal, 1989, Morgan, 1995, Heidenheimer, Johnston, & LeVine, 1989, Haris-White, 1996). The common consensus in doctrine and in international standards seems to be that corruption is divided into grand and petty corruption. Grand corruption involves the highest level of a government while petty corruption is the exchange of smaller amounts of money or other favours, e.g. employment in minor positions given to relatives. The central difference between the two is that grand corruption is a form of destruction of the governmental functions while the latter exists therein. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1999) does not define corruption as such, but it lists certain acts of corruption; intentional active and passive bribery, deliberate embezzlement, trading in influence, abuse of functions and illicit enrichment. However, the list of the corrupt behaviour just mentioned is not exhaustive. Other practices that are considered as corruption in other instruments are extortion, theft, fraud, favouritism, nepotism and clientelism or other conducts that create or exploit conflicting interests. These conducts are overlapping in some senses and sometimes they fall outside the scope of corruption. In the Civil Law Convention against Corruption (CiLCC, 1999), the term is explicitly defined for the purpose of that specific convention namely: "requesting, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or any other undue advantage or prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty".

Even if corruption is not clearly defined, there seem to be a common consensus in international anti-corruption norms and standards that bribery is included in the term. It takes at least two persons involved for the bribery crime to be completed, but an act from either side of the transaction is enough for the crime to be committed. Article 15 (a) of the UNCAC prohibits active bribery, more precisely, "The promise, offering or giving to public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, for the official himself or herself or for another person or entity, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of his or her official duties" when committed deliberately. Article 15 (b) prohibits the mirror crime of active bribery; the acceptance or solicitation of a bribe or

passive bribery. Article 17 of the UNCAC prohibits intentional "embezzlement, misappropriation or other diversion by a public official for his or her benefit ... of any property, public or private funds or securities or any other thing of value entrusted to the public official by virtue of his or her position." On the basis of UNCAC and other international instruments, judicial corruption can be understood as an act or omission that profit the judge, court staff or other persons involved in the dispensation of justice which leads to inappropriate or unjust court decisions. Such conduct can be in form of payment or acceptance of bribes, extortion, embezzlement, threats, abuse of the procedural rules or other improper pressure that can affect the independence and impartiality of the judicial outcome by anyone that is involved in the decision-making process. For the purposes of this study, judicial corruption is the involvement of public officials in immoral practices for selfish gains at the expense of the masses.

Judicial corruption: Transparency International (2007) defines judicial corruption as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain by judicial officials'. This means both financial or material gain and non-material gain such as the furtherance of political or professional ambitions. Judicial corruption includes any inappropriate influence on the impartiality of the judicial process by any actor within the judicial system. For example, a judge may allow or exclude evidence with the aim of justifying the acquittal of a guilty defendant of high political or social status. Judges or court staff may manipulate court dates to favour one party or another. In countries where there are no verbatim transcripts, judges may inaccurately summarise court proceedings or distort witness testimony before delivering a verdict that has been purchased by one of the parties in the case. Junior court personnel may 'lose' a file – for a price.

Other parts of the justice system may influence judicial corruption. Criminal cases can be corrupted before they reach the courts if police tamper with evidence that supports a criminal indictment, or prosecutors fail to apply uniform criteria to evidence generated by the police. In countries where the prosecution has a monopoly on bringing prosecutions before the courts, a corrupt prosecutor can effectively block off any avenue for legal redress.

Judicial corruption includes the misuse of the scarce public funds that most governments are willing to allocate to justice, which is rarely a high priority in political terms. For example, judges may hire family members to staff their courts or offices, and manipulate contracts for court buildings and equipment. Judicial corruption extends from pre-trial activities through the trial proceedings and settlement to the ultimate enforcement of decisions by court bailiffs. For the purposes of this study, judicial corruption is the use of illegal and personal ideas that are against the standard and prescribed judicial proceedings to pervert justice.

Criminal Justice Administration: Criminal Justice Administration is a mechanism that ensures the discrete allocation of justice where appropriate without internal and external factors influencing the process. It is a process that ensures that the content and the specified proceedings of the substantive and procedural law is observed and implemented by the statutory agencies mandated to administer it. The whole mark of crime justice administration is the provision of justice, conferment and protection of rights and obligations. Criminal justice administration is guided by the principles of justice, equity, and fairness.

Theoretical Framework

Group conflict theory in criminology is the adopted framework to explain judicial corruption as an impediment to effective criminal justice administration in Nigeria. Group conflict theory in criminology is associated with the works of Bonger (1916) and Dahrendorf (1959). The theory sees society as constantly responding to social inequality. It assumes that it is the "ruling class" who benefit from particular social arrangements and how those in power maintain their positions and reap benefits from them. The "ruling or elite class" are seen as a group that spread certain values, beliefs, norms and social arrangements including policies on judiciary in order to enhance its power and wealth. Consequently, official corruption- white collar crime is a reserve of the elite class. Judicial officials form a group serving and protecting the interest of the state in the judicial arm of government. Judiciary corruption is the manifestation of social inequality among unequal disputing parties. This is noticed in an instance where a disputant with more

influence and affluence would influence the decision of the judicial officials to his/her advantage.

Group conflict theorists emphasized the conflicts that arise when interests clash, and roles that power and authority play in legislation, adjudication and law enforcement processes in the society. Here, the involvement of the state officials in corruption related charges and the casual handling of same justifies the complacency of the state in prosecuting the elite of corruption offences. In fact, the elite are given preferential treatment when found wanting. Whereas, less privileged groups of the society when involved in crime are labelled as criminals and given proportionate punishment for their offences. The process of preferential criminalisation is enforced by the elite's authority and powers of legislation, adjudication and enforcement of law in the society.

The elite formulate and promote particular policies in the society to suit their own interest. The conspiracy between the elite via the legislature, judicial and executive arms of government is paramount for the formulation, administration and execution of public policies that are silent on their involvement in crime (corruption) in Nigeria. This is intended to widen and deepen the already established socio-political and economic gap between the elite and the downtrodden members of the society. The social reality of judicial corruption is facilitated by state statutory powers vested in the judicial officials to manage the judiciary. Therefore, in a society where state policies are constructed in segmental and asymmetrical manner in relation to social stratification, within this context the more power a segment has the likely it is that its members will be involved in corruption with impunity. Therefore, judicial corruption is intended and deliberately directed at hindering the less-privileged members of the society who are seeking for access to justice. The less-privileged members of the society have no influence and money to hire good lawyers and bribe judges to get justice. The elite class have the influence and money to hire best lawyers and bribe judges hence they have victory at the courts at the expense of the downtrodden members of the society.

The strength and relevance of group conflict theory in criminology in explaining judicial corruption as an impediment to effective criminal justice administration is that the theory has x-

rayed and exposed the elite conspiracy via systemic corruption towards enriching themselves thereby enhancing their power and prestige at the expense of the less-privileged members of the society. Judicial corruption would further deprive the poor access to justice while allowing the rich more opportunities to justice. The involvement of the judiciary in corruption has resulted to the distortion of the enthronement of the core values of adjudication in the society. However, the adopted theoretical framework has its criticism, deficiencies and inadequacies as mentioned below, but it is relevant in explaining judicial corruption as an impediment in the administration of criminal justice in Nigeria. Conflict criminology has the following criticisms: conflict theorist assumes that it is only the interest of the powerful that are /or is protected by the law. Conflict theory concentrates too much on conflict and change but too little on what produces stability in society.

Causes of judicial Corruption in Nigeria

The following are the causative factors of judicial corruption in Nigeria thus: Undue influence by the executive and legislative arms of government: Despite constitutional provisions for equality between the three government branches (the legislature, which makes the laws; the executive agencies, which administer the laws and manage the business of government; and the judiciary, which resolves disputes and applies the law), the executive and legislature have significant control over the judiciary in many countries. Where the rule of law has been historically weak, the judiciary is frequently viewed as an acquiescent branch of government. Judges in weak judiciaries are deferential to politically connected individuals in the executive and legislative branches. Often the president of the country or a politically motivated body (such as the Ministry of Justice or Parliament) has the power to appoint and promote judges without the restraints of transparent and objective selection procedures, or eligibility requirements may be vague, allowing for arbitrary compliance. Unless compelled by law, officials in the executive and legislative branches are averse to relinquishing their influence over the judiciary. Once appointed, judges may feel compelled to respond positively to the demands of the powerful in order to maintain their own status. Rather than act as a check on

government in protecting civil liberties and human rights, judges in corrupt judiciaries often promote state interests over the rights of the individual. In many countries, the President and Governors has the power to reward judges who abide by his wishes with modern office equipment, higher quality housing and newer cars (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983).

Social tolerance of corruption: In many countries, social interactions are governed less by law than customary or familial codes of conduct. In this regard, corrupt judges who support the interests of their relatives overlook the notion that it may be more dishonourable for a judge to ignore the wishes of a family member than to abide strictly by the law. Nor is the rule of law as important in such countries as individual relationships. Public policies are be based more on personal influence than merit. The strength of personal relationships is so great in some countries that all judicial decisions are suspected of being a product of influence. In some countries, paying a bribe is considered an essential prerequisite for judicial services and, indeed, the only avenue for accomplishing results hence the saying 'Why hire a lawyer, if you can buy a judge?' is common. In countries where court processes are laborious, court users prefer to pay bribes as a cheaper means of receiving quicker service. Court staff also demand bribes for services to which citizens are legally entitled. In some countries, the payment of fees for judicial services is so engrained that complaints arise not if a bribe is sought, but if the requested bribe is greater than usual (see 'Judicial corruption in the context of legal culture', page 99, and 'Informality, legal institutions and social norms', page 306).

Fear of retribution: One influence that can lead judges to make decisions based on factors other than the facts and applicable law is fear of retribution by political leaders, appellate judges, powerful individuals, the public and the media. Rather than risk disciplinary action, demotion or transfer, judges will apply a politically acceptable decision. It is interesting to note that recently in Egypt two senior judges, under the threat of disciplinary action, publicly determined that the 2005 multi-party election results were manipulated (see 'Egypt's judiciary flexes its muscles', page 201). Death threats and other threats of harm against judges are powerful

incentives to sidestepping the law in deciding the outcome of a case. Fear for one's safety, as with Kosovar judges immediately after the Kosovo war, caused many to rule in favour of Kosovar defendants even though the law supported the Serb plaintiffs. While international judges in Kosovo worked under UN protection, Kosovar judges had no such insurance. In some countries, including Bulgaria, judges who correctly apply the law in controversial criminal cases can be vilified by the press even though the evidence failed to justify a conviction. Fear of applying the correct, but unpopular, decision, inexperienced or insecure judges will modify their judgement in order to avoid public scorn.

Low judicial and court staff salaries: Judicial salaries is too low to attract qualified legal personnel or retain them, and that do not enable judges and court staff to support their families in a secure environment, prompt judges and court staff to supplement their incomes with bribes. The salary differential between different branches of government can be galling in some countries. In addition to low salaries, judges often assume their positions with a significant financial burden. Judgeships in some countries are for sale and the cost can be many times the official annual salary of a judge. Judges who purchased their position have to recoup their investment by seeking bribes. Some judges reportedly tolerate their court staff demanding bribes as they recognise that illicit payments are the only way they can achieve a moderate standard of living (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983). Countries such as Ecuador, Georgia, Nigeria and Peru have significantly raised judicial salaries in recent years in a bid to reduce the incentives for corruption. However, it is difficult to prove that an increase in salary is a causal factor in reducing corruption. Even where incidents of illicit payments to judges have clearly been reduced, the public continues to believe that corruption persists at the same level.

Poor training and lack of rewards for ethical behaviour: In some countries, judges who make decisions based solely on facts and applicable law have no assurance they will receive a positive evaluation. Ethical behaviour is punished, rather than rewarded. In corrupt judiciaries, judges who make correct decisions can see their judgements routinely overturned by corrupt appellate judges,

thereby giving the impression that the lower court judge is incompetent. Court presidents, who have the power to assign cases, can punish an ethical judge by assigning a disproportionately heavy caseload, causing a major case delay that can be grounds for reprimand. In Sri Lanka, judges who have the courage to rule against the government's interests are allegedly ignored by the Chief Justice who has broad discretion concerning the composition of Supreme Court panels. Those judges who are resolute in their independence can be the subject of bogus charges or can face early retirement (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983).

Collusion among judges: In countries where judicial corruption is rife, judges conspire to support judicial decisions from which they will personally benefit. In Zimbabwe the government allocated farms expropriated under the fast-track land reform programme to judges at all levels, from lower court magistrates to the Chief Justice, to ensure that court decisions favour political interests. In a criminal case where the stakes are high, judges from the first instance court to the highest appellate court will collude to exonerate the guilty or reduce the defendant's sentence in return for a payoff (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983).

Inadequately monitored administrative court procedures: Where procedural codes are ambiguous, perplexing or frequently amended, as in transitional countries, judges and court staff can exploit the confusion. Without modern office systems and computerised case processing, detection of the inappropriate use of case documents and files is difficult. Poorly trained and low paid court staffs are enticed to use their discretionary powers to engage in administrative corruption since there is little accountability for their decisions. In Nigeria, for example, the disappearance of case files is a common source of extortion (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983).

The Nature of Judicial Corruption in Nigeria

The nature of judicial corruption in Nigeria can be seen from two fronts of corruption that most affect judiciaries: political interference in judicial processes by either the executive or legislative branches of government, and bribery.

Political interference in judicial processes: Despite several decades of reform efforts and international instruments protecting judicial independence, judges and court personnel around the world continue to face pressure to rule in favour of powerful political or economic entities, rather than according to the law. Backsliding on international standards is evident in some countries. Political powers have increased their influence over the judiciary, for instance, in Russia and Argentina. A pliable judiciary provides 'legal' protection to those in power for dubious or illegal strategies such as embezzlement, nepotism, crony privatisations or political decisions that might otherwise encounter resistance in the legislature or from the media. In November 2006, for example, an Argentine judge appointed by former president Carlos Menem ruled that excess campaign expenditures by the ruling party had not violated the 2002 campaign financing law because parties were not responsible for financing of which 'they were unaware'.

Political interference comes about by threat, intimidation and simple bribery of judges, but also by the manipulation of judicial appointments, salaries and conditions of service. In Algeria judges who are thought 'too' independent are penalised and transferred to distant locations. In Kenya judges were pressured to step down without being informed of the allegations against them in an anti-corruption campaign that was widely seen as politically expedient. Judges perceived as problematic by the powerful can be reassigned from sensitive positions or have control of sensitive cases transferred to more pliable judges for instance, Justice Ayo Salami of the Appeal Court. This was a tactic used in Peru by former president Alberto Fujimori and which also occurs in Sri Lanka. The key to preventing this type of corruption is constitutional and legal mechanisms that shield judges from sudden dismissal or transfer without the benefit of an impartial inquiry. This protection goes much of the way toward ensuring that courts, judges and their judgements are independent of outside influences (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983)..

But it can be equally problematic if judges are permitted to shelter behind outdated immunity provisions, draconian contempt laws or notions of collegiality, as in Turkey, Pakistan and Nepal

respectively. What is required is a careful balance of independence and accountability, and much more transparency than most governments or judiciaries have been willing to introduce. Judicial independence is founded on public confidence. The perceived integrity of the institution is of particular importance, since it underpins trust in the institution. Until recently, the head of the British judiciary was simultaneously speaker of the UK upper house of parliament and a member of the executive, which presented problems of conflict of interest. In the United States, judicial elections are marred by concerns that donations to judges' election campaigns will inevitably influence judicial decision making. Judicial and political corruptions are mutually reinforcing. Where the justice system is corrupt, sanctions on people who use bribes and threats to suborn politicians are unlikely to be enforced. The ramifications of this dynamic are deep as they deter more honest and unfettered candidates from entering or succeeding in politics or public service (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983)..

Bribery: Bribery can occur at every point of interaction in the judicial system: court officials may extort money for work they should do anyway; lawyers may charge additional 'fees' to expedite or delay cases, or to direct clients to judges known to take bribes for favourable decisions. For their part, judges may accept bribes to delay or accelerate cases, accept or deny appeals, influence other judges or simply decide a case in a certain way. Studies in this volume from India and Bangladesh detail how lengthy adjournments force people to pay bribes to speed up their cases. When defendants or litigants already have a low opinion of the honesty of judges and the judicial process, they are far more likely to resort to bribing court officials, lawyers and judges to achieve their ends (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983)..

The appeals process, ostensibly an important avenue for redress in cases of faulty verdicts, presents further opportunities for judicial corruption. When dominant political forces control the appointment of senior judges, the concept of appealing to a less partial authority may be no more than a mirage. Even when appointments are appropriate, the effectiveness of the appeals

process is dented if the screening of requests for hearings is not transparent, or when the backlog of cases means years spent waiting to be heard. Appeals tend to favour the party with the deepest pockets, meaning that a party with limited resources, but a legitimate complaint, may not be able to pursue their case beyond the first instance (Ackerman, 1999, Gould, 1991, Imbaruddin, 1997, Morgan, 1999, Myrdal, 1989, Palmer, 1983).

Judicial Corruption as an Impediment to Effective Criminal Justice Administration in Nigeria

It is a truism that judicial systems the world over are created to be infallible. It is yet a paradox that the judicial system in some societies particularly Nigeria cannot be an island in the sea of corruption. This implies that, judicial systems in most societies are a reflection of the values, morals, and integrity system of such societies. Therefore, corruption in Nigeria judiciary is a prototype of the prevailing order in Nigeria.

There is no gainsaying that corruption in Nigeria judiciary distorts the effective enforcement and implementation of rights, justice and obligations. How far the consequences of corruption in Nigeria judiciary have reached is common place to measure. Judicial corruption deprives the poor access to justice while allowing the rich more opportunities to justice. The involvement of the judiciary in corruption has resulted to the distortion of the enthronement of the core values of adjudication in the society. Again, it is difficult to understate the negative impact of judicial corruption on criminal justice administration in Nigeria hence its damage on society is so grave. Judicial corruptions segregates communities, allows for the violation of human rights with impunity, make the fight against transnational crime impossible, reduces trade, economic and human development and most significantly, it rejects persons from fair dispute settlements (Cockcroft, 1989). The effects are harmful and many and the consequences vary from state to state. However, the factors that form patterned and detrimental effects of judicial corruption on some fundamental principles are evident in Nigeria.

Transparency International's *Global Corruption Report* focuses on the judicial system for one simple reason: the fight against corruption depends upon it. The expanding arsenal of anti-

corruption weapons includes new national and international laws against corruption that rely on fair and impartial judicial systems for enforcement. Where judicial corruption occurs, the damage can be pervasive and extremely difficult to reverse. Judicial corruption undermines citizens' morale, violates their human rights, harms their job prospects and national development and depletes the quality of governance (Friedrich, 1989). A government that functions on behalf of all its citizens requires not only the rule of law, but an independent and effective judiciary to enforce it to the satisfaction of all parties.

The professionals that make up the judicial system can use their skills, knowledge and influence to privilege truth and benefit the general public, and the vast majority do. But they can also abuse these qualities, using them to enrich themselves or to improve their careers and influence. For whatever reason and whether petty or gross, corruption in the judiciary ensures that corruption remains beyond the law in every other field of government and economic activity in which it may have taken root. Indeed, without an independent judiciary, graft effectively becomes the new 'rule of law'. Nevertheless, an enormous challenge for the anti-corruption movement is to ensure that anti-corruption laws are enforced and that legal redress for injustice can be secured through a functioning judicial system. The failure of judges and the broader judiciary to meet these legitimate expectations provides a fertile breeding ground for corruption. In such environments even the best anti-corruption laws become meaningless.

Corruption in a justice system distorts the proper role of the judiciary, which is to protect the civil liberties and rights of the citizen and to ensure a fair trial by a competent and impartial court. It enables public officials and special interest groups engaged in corrupt practice to function with the confidence that their illicit acts will go unpunished, if exposed. In corrupt judiciaries, citizens are not afforded their democratic right of equal access to the courts, nor are they treated equally by the courts. The merits of the case and applicable law are not paramount in corrupt judiciaries, but rather the status of the parties and the benefit judges and court personnel derive from their decisions. A citizen's economic level, political status and social background play a decisive role in the judicial

decision-making process. In corrupt judiciaries, rich and well-connected citizens triumph over ordinary citizens, and governmental entities and business enterprises prevail over citizens.

Conclusion

Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. In the context of judicial corruption, it relates to acts or omissions that constitute the use of public authority for the private benefit of court personnel, and results in the improper and unfair delivery of judicial decisions. Such acts and omissions include bribery, extortion, intimidation, influence peddling and the abuse of court procedures for personal gain. While it would be foolhardy to assert that corruption is non-existent in certain judicial systems, it is fair to say that in some countries corruption is minimal, sporadic and the result of individual, unethical behaviour. In such countries, the system in place supports the professionalism of the judiciary and protects the judge from untoward influence. Procedures make the justice system transparent and hold police, prosecutors and judges accountable. In many other countries Nigeria inclusive, judicial corruption is a systemic problem and addressing ethics alone is not sufficient to tackle the problem. The judicial system may be structured to foster corruption. The external pressures on a judge to act unethically are greater, and the risks of being caught and punished are lower.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following as remedies to corruption in the Nigeria judicial systems thus:

i. Independence of the judiciary should be guaranteed. Guaranteeing the independence of the judiciary would mitigate the incidences of executive and legislative interference into the working of the judiciary.

ii. Establishment of independent judicial appointments body. An objective and transparent process for the appointment of judges that ensures that only the most qualified candidates are selected for appointment should be established. The appointments body whose members have been appointed in an objective and transparent process should act independently of

the executive and the legislature. Representatives from the executive and legislative branches should not form a majority on the appointments body. Selection criteria of members of the body should be clear and well publicised, allowing candidates, selectors and others to have a clear understanding of where the bar for selection lies; candidates should be required to demonstrate a record of competence and integrity. Civil society groups, including professional associations linked to judicial activities should be consulted on the merits of candidates.

iii. Salaries of Judicial staff must be commensurate with their position, experience, performance and professional development for the entirety of their tenure; and fair pensions should be to same provided on retirement. Laws should safeguard judicial salaries and working conditions so that they cannot be manipulated by the executive or by the legislature to safeguard against punishing independent judges and/or rewarding those who rule in favour of government.

iv. An objective criterion that aims to determine the assignment of judges to particular court locations should ensure that independent or non-corrupted judges are not punished by being dispatched to remote jurisdictions. Judges should not be assigned to a court in an area where they have close ties or loyalties with local politicians. Case assignment should be based on clear and objective criteria, administered by judges and regularly assessed to protect against the allocation of cases to pro-government or pro-business judges. For instance, Justice Odili of the Nigeria Supreme Court, wife of a PDP Chieftain in the Supreme Court ruling between APC and PDP in Bayelsa Governorship ruling.

v. Access to information and training: Judges and judicial staff must have easy access to legislation, cases and court procedures, and receive initial training prior to or upon appointment, as well as continuing training throughout their careers. This includes such training in legal analysis, the explanation of decisions, judgement writing and case management; as well as ethical and anti-corruption training.

vi. Security of tenure for judges should be guaranteed for about ten (10) years, not subject to renewal, since judges tend to tailor

their judgements and conduct towards the end of the term in anticipation of renewal. Limited immunity for actions relating to judicial duties allows judges to make decisions free from fear of civil suit; immunity does not apply in corruption or other criminal cases.

vii. Disciplinary rules should be adhered to strictly to ensure that the judiciary carries out initial rigorous investigation of all allegations. An independent body must investigate complaints against judges and give reasons for its decisions. National Judicial Council should be strengthened to effectively carry out its functions. Strict and exacting standards must apply to the removal of a judge. Removal mechanisms for judges must be clear, transparent and fair, and reasons need to be given for decisions. If there is a finding of corruption, a judge is liable to prosecution. All judges and judicial staff should have the right to a fair hearing, legal representation and an appeal in any disciplinary matter.

viii. A code of judicial conduct should provide a guide and measure of judicial conduct, and should be developed and implemented by the Judicial Council. Breaches must be investigated and sanctioned by a judicial body. A confidential and rigorous formal complaints procedure is vital so that lawyers, court users, prosecutors, police, media and civil society can report suspected or actual breaches of the code of conduct, or corruption by judges, court administrators or lawyers. Judges should make periodic asset disclosures, especially where other public officials are required to do so.

ix. The judiciary must publish annual reports of its activities and spending, and provide the public with reliable information about its governance and organisation. This is because the public needs reliable access to information pertaining to laws, proposed changes in legislation, court procedures, judgements, judicial vacancies, recruitment criteria, judicial selection procedures and reasons for judicial appointments.

x. They should be transparent prosecution procedure in the judiciary: The prosecution must conduct judicial proceedings in public (with limited exceptions for children); publish reasons for decisions; and produce publicly accessible prosecution

guidelines to direct and assist decision makers during the conduct of prosecutions. Judicial institutional should widely publicised due process rights to ensure that litigants are legally advised on the nature, scale and scope of their rights and procedures before, during and after court proceedings.

xi. Disclosure of judicial conflicts of interest: Judges must declare conflicts of interest as soon as it becomes apparent they disqualify themselves when they are (or might appear to be) biased or prejudiced towards a party to a case; when they have previously served as lawyers or material witnesses in the case; or if they have an economic interest in the outcome.

xii. They should be civil society engagement in research, monitoring and reporting of judicial activities. Civil society organisations can contribute to understanding the issues related to judicial corruption by monitoring the incidence of corruption in the judiciary, as well as potential indicators of corruption, such as delays and the quality of decisions.

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THE UPSIDES, DOWNSIDES AND ETHICAL CHALLENGES OF ADOPTING ALGORITHMIC JOURNALISM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The use of algorithms to generate news stories or data with minimal errors without human efforts has become a trend among media organizations in advanced countries. Effort in this paper is to analyze the upsides and downsides of adopting algorithmic journalism in Nigeria. The study is situated on the tenets of the technology acceptance model

while secondary data was relied upon for analysis. Available literature indicate that the upsides of adopting algorithmic journalism in Nigeria include increased efficiency and job satisfaction with automation of monotonous and error-prone routine tasks, algorithmic journalism has the capacity to enable journalists and reporters acquire the necessary skills to use the technology, algorithmic journalism has the capacity to enable media users detect fake news stories, report and get them removed, and algorithmic journalism help media organizations to break the news. Despite the upsides of adopting algorithmic journalism, the technology has inherent challenges that would make the journalist redundant. Algorithmic journalism promotes fake news, replaces the human reporters, creates unemployment in Nigeria and cannot embark on investigative reporting. The study concludes that the use of algorithmic journalism as a technological innovation by established media organizations in developed countries has enhanced automated content production in the media industry. The downsides of the technology are stumbling blocks for many third world or developing countries of the world Nigeria inclusive in adopting and implementing the use of algorithmic journalism. Despite the downsides of the technology, the study recommends that media organizations in Nigeria should adopt algorithmic journalism to ease their work and enhance efficiency in the newsgathering process. The study thus recommends that reporters should be used to complement algorithmic journalism particularly where creativity and investigative report is needed, media organizations in Nigeria should equally train their staff members to be conversant with the workings and operations of algorithmic journalism.

Keywords: Algorithmic Journalism, Nigeria, Journalism, Mass Media and Journalists

Introduction

Change is the only constant thing in life. Changes occur daily in the society we live in as well as in every field of human endeavour. This change is not exceptional to journalism practice in Nigeria. One significant change in journalism practice is the use of algorithms otherwise referred to as algorithmic journalism. The concept of algorithmic journalism is concerned with the newsgathering procedures brought about by recent technological changes in the field of journalism. Algorithms are utilized to generate news stories with little or no human effort.

The concept of algorithmic journalism refers to related concepts such as computational journalism, robotic journalism, and automated journalism or artificial intelligence (Anderson, 2012). Scholars like Akman & Aljazai (2016) argue that the media industry relies on algorithms to generate news from structured data with little or no human intervention. For instance, Associated Press utilized an algorithm with Wordsmith, a software tool developed by Automated Insights, to produce news reports. Algorithms are employed in the news media industry largely as a result of the ability of the software to generate news stories on a specific topic with fewer errors compared to human journalists.

The use of algorithms by media organizations to automatically generate news from structured data has shaken up the media industry since Associated Press, one of the world's largest and most well-established news organizations started using the technology to automate the production of its quarterly corporate earnings reports. One of the advantages of using algorithms is that, once the software is developed, algorithms create thousands of news stories for a particular topic fast with minimal errors compared to the human efforts or use journalists and reporters alike.

The use of automation is an indication that technology is prone to taking over human routine tasks. Van Dalen (2012) posited that automated tasks range from more streamlined processes such as collecting basic information and moving into more demanding duties such as completely constructing news stories from the scratch with algorithms, to the point where each step of the news production process can be replicated or done by a machine.

The relatively new phenomenon of the complete automation of the news production process has created a lot of debates among

journalists and researchers alike. The division of labor is seen as a major shift, as algorithms are becoming more and more capable of executing tasks that were once the sole responsibility of human workers. In the words of Graefe (2016), this development has compelled media practitioners to express concerns about the future of newsroom jobs. The concern borders on whether a future where newsroom jobs are entirely automated is a good development for the media industry and practitioners. It is against this backdrop that this study sets out to analyze the up and downsides of adopting algorithmic journalism in Nigeria**.**

Conceptual Clarifications
Algorithmic Journalism

The concept of algorithms refers to a software or algorithm that is designed to solve some problems following sequences of steps. The software enables computers, mobile phones, websites, and other IT artifacts function effectively, with increased speed, accuracy, and saving human energy especially in routine, tasking, and sometimes difficult tasks. These programs are utilized to organize, interpret and present data in human-readable ways. Typically, the process involves the use of an algorithm to scan large amounts of provided data, extracts from an assortment of pre-programmed data structures, order key points, and insert details such as names, places, amounts, rankings, statistics and other figures.

The concept of algorithmic journalism is defined differently by different scholars and researchers alike. Graefe (2016) describes the concept of algorithmic journalism as the process of using software or algorithms to automatically generate news stories with little or no human intervention. Graefe further stated that once the algorithm or software is developed, the software allows for automating the various steps involved in news production process, from the collection and analysis of data to the actual creation and publication of news. Automated journalism also referred to as algorithmic or robot journalism works for fact-based stories for which clean, structured, and reliable data are available for use.

The implication is that algorithmic journalism has to do with the use of algorithms to generate news stories without human intervention. They scan through large amounts of data, select from

an assortment of pre-programmed article structures, order key points, and inserts details such as names, places, amounts, rankings, statistics, and other figures.

Theoretical Framework

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) was propounded by Davis in 1989. The technology acceptance model is one of the most influential models of technology acceptance. This model assumed that two primary factors influence an individual's intention to use new technology. These factors include perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

According to Mulugeta, Kalayou & Binyam (2020), technology acceptance model is concerned with factors that determine the behavioral intention of an individual to use new technologies from the end user's perspective. Technology acceptance model comprises core variables of user motivation such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and attitudes towards new technology.

The perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU) directly or indirectly explains the behavioral intention to use (acceptance) a new technology (Scherer, Siddiq & Tondeur 2019, Abdullah, Ward, Ahmed, 2016). The idea is that an individual's intention to use a new technology is dependent on the individual's perceived benefit of using the technology as well as the perceived ease of using the same technology.

The perceived usefulness (PU) refers to the extent to which an individual believes that applying certain technology would enhance advance job performance. Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) on the other hand is concerned with the extent to which an individual believes that a particular technology would be effortless and easy to use to enhance job performance. The perceived ease of use helps to predict user's acceptance or rejection of new technologies. The relevance of the technology acceptance model to this study is premised on the assumption that the perceived benefits and ease of using algorithms would influence the adoption of algorithmic journalism in Nigeria.

Literature of Related Literature

Automated Content Production

It is important to note that the automation of the news production process is one of the most important aspect of algorithmic technology in the practice of journalism (Montal & Reich,2017; Schapals & Pmontaorlezza, 2020). In the grand scheme of things, this particular field of application is considered a relatively recent development in the field of journalism (Ali & Hassoun, 2019; Graefe, 2016 & Diakopoulos, 2019). This development consists mainly of software and automated software that are capable of creating news stories on their own.

A good example of early applications for automatic content production is that of "Quakebot". The software was created on behalf of the Los Angeles Times in 2014. The reason for creating the software was to closely monitor data from the US Geological Survey in an attempt to identify instances of seismic activities as well as to write and publish simple reports about these activities at the end of the day (Otter, 2017). Following this development, automatic content production has taken major steps forward. At some point, some of the biggest contributors to the media industry such as Forbes and The New York Times relied largely on the algorithm software for the production of their content as it was almost impossible to distinguish such content from human writing (Clerwall, 2014).

Quoting Aboh (2020), Bashir (2020) in a related study on "Algorithm Governance Framework for Media Regulation in Nigerian Media System" pointed out that in Nigeria, the earliest use of algorithm or robot to generate news stories in the public domain is associated with the efforts of Fintel Envoy - a robot developed in the year 2018 by Orodata Science to enhance financial information reporting based on structured data collected by the Nigerian Inter-Bank Settlement System. The organization generated short news stories on payment channels and banking sector credits. The same organization equally developed an algorithm called Arriato to generate hundreds of stories from structured election data in Nigeria. It is worthy to state that another use of algorithm or robot for information in a quasi-journalistic way in Nigeria was done by BudgIT to promote financial accountability in the public domain.

The basis of the innovations in automated content production lies in the "Natural Language Generation" or NLG. Natural language generation has to do with the automatic creation of text from digitally structured data (Caswell & Dörr, 2018). This technology first appeared in the 1950s within the context of machine translation (Reiter, 2010). From the review, it can be deduced that algorithms are useful in content production in the media industry.

Data Mining and Algorithmic Journalism

The information age is characterized by data explosion which refers to the constant increase of widely available data on the internet. Kotenidis & Veglis (2021) in a scholarly research "Algorithmic Journalism: Current Applications and Future Perspectives" opined that within this ever-increasing landscape of available resources, journalists struggle more than ever to separate clutter from useful information.

In the words of Bramer (2007), data mining is concerned with the extraction of useful information from a larger subset of data. There are many applications for this type of technology in journalism, with the most obvious one being the acquisition of specific information from large databases. Quakebot is a very good example of data mining, although it is mostly known to be an instance of automated content production since the program was able to single out and use information/ data from the larger dataset (this was the whole data provided by the US geological survey).

It is important to note that the technology behind data mining can also be employed to achieve various other complex tasks related to journalism. For example, there are instances where datasets are too much for humans to even comprehend, because of their voluminous characteristics like (terabytes–petabytes) or their velocity (being created in real-time). Algorithmic data mining therefore becomes useful to tackle the so called "Big Data" (Kitchin, 2014).

In most instances, journalists find themselves working with these types of data sets as part of their job, and data mining can help them uncover previously unseen connections between variables with high statistical significance. This in turn enables journalists to test complex ideas and hypotheses (Latar, 2015). Furthermore, data

mining can also enable other fields of application found in algorithmic journalism since this can be used to discover new social trends and automatically target specific consumers who might find the content more relevant as well as being used in conjunction with automated content production.

The introduction of Big Data and the appropriate procedures required to analyze them has also impacted the news industry in no small measure particularly in the production department as well as in the skills required to work in this new and rapidly changing environment (Hammond, 2017). To understand the complex information hidden in large datasets, workers in the news industry should strive to utilize modern tools and algorithms to take advantage of Big Data to supplement their reporting and information-gathering procedures (Veglis & Maniou, 2018). This argument is closely related to the considerations that surround automated content production, in the sense that the evolving media landscape is going to require workers to acquire a much more specialized role to stay competitive in this increasingly automated work environment.

In algorithmic data mining, there is a need for big data analysis using software agents that seem to expand the capabilities of the modern journalist, without any risk of replacing actual workers. This is because Big Data and other similar concepts are by their very nature unable to be processed by humans and would otherwise be inaccessible without the help of algorithms (Kitchin, 2014). It can be deduced from the review that data mining deals basically with the extraction of useful information from the available data on the internet.

Content Optimization and Algorithmic Journalism

Developments in algorithmic technology have enabled news providers to target specific audiences on a large scale and deliver customized news content for them, thanks to the internet's ability to provide almost real-time recommendations and information from all over the world in the 21st century (Li et al. 2011). Jokela et al. (2001) in a study "The role of structured content in a personalized news service" argues that these personalized news content services have proved to be very useful because they can save time for the end-

user by drastically reducing the amount of irrelevant information and provide content only for subjects that are of interest or optimal content.

Content optimization for users usually works similarly to search engines, which utilize automated ranking algorithms to return the most relevant results for a user's search. Using a similar structure, personalized news content and online ads are served to specific users with the use of automated algorithms (Agarwal et al, 2008). Scholars like Lokot & Diakopoulos (2016) contend that content optimization with the help of algorithmic technology has also been observed in other parts of the news production process, as some organizations utilize algorithms for tasks such as A/B testing for article headlines to better gauge their effectiveness. The prime use for this technology, however, has been the delivery of personalized news content through customized newsfeeds or automated agents such as chatbots.

Jones and Jones (2019) noted that automated bots in particular have proven to be very effective in engaging with audiences by providing more interactive and personalized instances of news and articles as opposed to the traditional methods of content consumption. The review has established that algorithms journalism or technology provides a user-friendly way of consuming more relevant content.

Algorithmic Journalism and News Value

A renowned scholar of journalism and media studies, Sambe, (2007) in a book titled "Introduction to News Writing" stated that news values refer to what determines news. The criteria that determine the selection and presentation of events as published news range from impact, unexpectedness, prominence, timeliness, conflict, proximity, current and human interest. It is the news values that usually determine newsworthy events.

Today, information arrives in the newsroom minute by minute and it comes from a wide range of sources by way of press releases, interviews, phone calls, social media, field reports, meetings, and investigative reports. The use of artificial intelligence in journalism is one of the up-to-date trends. The emergence of artificial intelligence has reshaped and created more production

methods of journalistic stories. In the process of news gathering, machine learning mines data sets for insights and Natural Language Processing retrieves data points from unstructured data.

After the raw data has been categorized, Natural Language Generation turns data into text and Natural Language Processing thus personalizes the content. Then, text-to-voice artificial intelligence distributes content to the voice-enable device and machine learning will determine publishing strategies. Generally, contents produced by automated journalism are topics that required numerous stories of coverage, or topic with highly qualified and standardized structure, that enable the readability for machines for identifying essential elements to undergo content generation. For example, in the 2014, Los Angeles 4.7 news reported earthquake on the Los Angeles Times website, the "author" of the news was a computer named "Quakebot", and given that the news was produced precisely three minutes after the rumbling caused by the earthquake, it proved the high efficiency of automated news production.

Proponents of this technology are of opinion that algorithms in automated journalism are less likely to construct errors. Also, in aid of its predefined rules, it facilitates their conversion of data into unbiased facts such that generated news would even have enhanced quality, accuracy, and objectivity. However, relying solely on programs assisted by its predefined rules, it is difficult to tell whether the output will be accurate in accomplishing journalistic tasks because not every incident would have the same pattern. For example, an article reporting Netflix's second-quarter earnings published in July 2015 was mistaken due to the failure of the algorithm in identifying the correct information. The published version by the algorithm stated that Netflix had a fallen share price of seventy-one whilst it underwent a seven-to-one split.

The Upsides of Adopting Algorithmic Journalism in Nigeria

News is a perishable commodity that changes every second as the clock continues to tick fast. However, media organizations lack adequate personnel to collate, write, edit and disseminate newsworthy events as they occur as a result of their inability to pay

staff salaries. This scenario is a clear indication that the adoption of algorithmic journalism would bridge the gap.

The adoption of technological innovations by the journalistic profession brought with it several advantages, including a significant increase in productivity thanks to the publishing of stories without any human intervention as well as the ability to allow journalists to redefine their core skillset and provide them with more creative freedom in their work (Ali & Diakopoulos, 2019, Hassoun, 2019),

1. The upsides of adopting algorithmic journalism in Nigeria are increased efficiency and job satisfaction with automation of monotonous and error-prone routine tasks. The adoption of this technology would certainly improve productivity in error-prone assignments in the media industry.

2. With algorithms, content can be produced faster, in multiple languages, in greater numbers, and possibly with accuracy devoid of much biases. The adoption of algorithmic journalism would enable automated content production faster, in different languages with minimal mistakes.

3. With algorithmic journalism, reporters could concentrate on in-depth or investigative reporting, with routine tasks being covered by algorithms in the meantime. The adoption of algorithmic journalism in Nigeria would allow media practitioners to focus on investigative journalism while the algorithm completes other routine tasks.

4. Skills acquisition- The adoption of algorithmic journalism will enable journalists and reporters in Nigeria to acquire the necessary skills to use the technology. Örnebring, (2016) posited that rapid technological changes forced journalists to upgrade their skills

5. With the adoption and utilization of algorithmic journalism in Nigeria, the general public would easily detect fake news stories, reports and such news stories could be removed immediately to prevent misinforming the general public.

6. The adoption of algorithmic journalism will equally save resources- The adoption of algorithmic journalism by media organizations in Nigeria will save time and the cost of transporting reporters to different locations to source

newsworthy stories. For example, media houses in Nigeria without vehicles to transport reporters to their various assignment beats would benefit from the adoption of this technology.
7. Algorithmic journalism will also help media organizations in the country to break the news. Breaking news is an important element in journalism therefore the adoption of this technology would enable media houses to source and report developing stories as breaking news.

The Downsides of Adopting Algorithmic Journalism in Nigeria

Despite the upsides of adopting algorithmic journalism, there is downside angle to the technology which must be taken into consideration before the adoption of the technology in a developing country like Nigeria. This submission is supported by Wokerand & Powell (2018) who postulate that automated journalism cannot act as the fourth estate of the realm.

1. First, algorithmic journalism will make the journalist redundant- The implication is that adopting this technology in Nigeria to enhance automation of news will make journalists redundant in the profession
2. Algorithms are equally inadequate to fulfill the 'watchdog function, which assigns journalists the task to oversee the activities of governments and society.
3. Laggards- Nigeria as a developing nation or 3rd world country belong to the category of laggards who are the last to adopt an innovation.
4. Algorithmic journalism would promote fake news. The adoption of this technology would enable media organizations to promote fake news by posting unverified information for public consumption.
5. Algorithmic journalism will replace the human worker. Journalism is an art that involves collating, writing, editing, and disseminating information for public consumption through the media. This is usually done by reporters working for various media organizations. The automated process might render human workers in the field obsolete (Veglis & Maniou, 2019).

6. The technology would increase the unemployment rate in Nigeria since the work meant to be carried out by human beings will be executed by machines without human efforts.
7. Algorithmic journalism would prevent journalists from practicing investigative reports to unravel issues that are concealed. Algorithmic journalism cannot embark on investigative journalism to unravel issues of public importance as it is usually done by practicing journalists.
8. Adoption of algorithmic journalism will also hinder practicing journalists or reporters alike from the opportunity to improve their writing skills. Writing is a very important skill required of every journalist however, the adoption of algorithmic journalism will rather cause harm to this all-important skill required of practicing journalists in Nigeria.

Ethical Challenges of Algorithmic Journalism

In a study "Ethical challenges of algorithmic journalism" Dörr, Konstantin; Hollnbuchner & Katharina (2017) states that professional journalism is faced with certain challenges like transformation and ethical challenges with the institution of algorithms or software to create content. There are several new ethical challenges and shifts of responsibility in news production for journalism practice and journalism research at the levels of objectivity, authority, transparency, and level of implicit or explicit values.

Transparency- This is being open about how data is mined and utilized as well as eschewing unnecessary data collection. This is very important to ensure reader trust, which would involve making the underlying data available as well as give users access to interact with it.

Data Quality- Data quality is a challenge of algorithmic journalism because using of artificial intelligence in journalism is the quality of the data generated by the technology. The quality of data can lead to misleading results as well as the source and the accuracy of data. Based on this, the European Parliament (EP) has approved a report on Robotics which establishes an Ethical Code of Conduct, which

includes several fundamental principles, notably; protect privacy and data use.

Fairness: Fairness means avoiding harmful biases and stereotypes in people's lives. Thus, artificial intelligence is considered to be the core challenge for journalism, in particular with the use of data as a tool for invading privacy. For example, in October 2018, the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners (ICDPPC) released the Declaration on Ethics and Protection in Artificial Intelligence. The declaration states that "unlawful biases or discriminations that may result from the use of data in artificial intelligence should be reduced and mitigated"

Data Utilization- Data utilization is one of the ethical problems related to artificial intelligence in the field of automated journalism as a result of the lack of ad hoc laws and rules. Wang & Siau (2018) submitted that the security and privacy of data is a risk for all stakeholders like users, developers and the government. In a study on "Automated Journalism and Freedom of Information: Ethical and Juridical Problems Related to Artificial Intelligence in the Press Field" Monti (2019) pointed out that ethical duty is necessary to always use correct, objective, and accurate data in journalism.
      Okiyi & Nsude (2020) in a study "Adopting Artificial Intelligence to Journalistic Practices in Nigeria: Challenges and Way Forward" states that the challenges of automated journalism include:

Availability of data: Machine learning is facilitated by sufficient data to enable it to pick on patterns, learn from them and optimize the system accordingly. Artificial intelligence requires large amounts of data to ascertain the correct response as without the availability of data, the ability of artificial intelligence is limited.

Understanding unstructured data: It is difficult for artificial intelligence to work with unstructured data. Tabulated results of sports games or earning data for instance can be easily translated into articles by using standardized templates, but if artificial intelligence is to become more widespread in the creative economy,

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it will need to harness and synthesize unstructured data, which make up most of the data available today.

Lack of self-awareness: Artificial intelligence cannot explain its output. For instance why it wrote what it did and how it got there.

Verifying authenticity: Artificial intelligence cannot distinguish whether the input it receives is accurate or not. If it receives false input, the output will equally be influenced negatively.

Dinesh G. Harkut and Kashmira Kasat (2019) in a scholarly research "Artificial Intelligence Challenges and Applications" also identified the challenges of artificial intelligence to include the following:

Artificial intelligence in human interface: Being a new technology, there is a huge shortage of manpower with data analytical skills and data science skills which can deputize the technology to get maximum output or results.

Software malfunction: Since the machines and algorithms are been controlled artificial intelligence, decision-making ability is automatically ceded to code-driven black box tools. Based on this, it is difficult to identify the cause of mistakes and malfunctions. Moreover, due largely to the inability of human beings to learn and understand how the tools function or operate with little or no control over the system which is further complicated as automated systems become more complex.

Non-invincible: (Can replace only certain tasks) Like any other technology, artificial intelligence also has its limitations; the technology cannot replace all tasks. However, it will result in emerging new job domains with different quality job profiles.

Data security: Machine learning and decision-making capability of artificial intelligence and artificial intelligence applications are based on voluminous and classified data which is often sensitive and personal. This has made the technology vulnerable to serious issues like data breaches and identity theft particularly companies and

government striving for profits and power explores the artificial intelligence-based tools which are globally networked to make them difficult to regulate or rein in.

Algorithm bias: Artificial intelligence is all about data and algorithms. The accuracy of the decision-making capacity of the technology or software is dependent on how accurately it has been trained by using authentic and unbiased data. Unethical and unfair consequences are inherent in vital decision-making if data used for training is laced with racial, gender, communal, or ethnic biases. Such biases would probably be more accentuated as many artificial intelligence systems will continue to be trained using bad data.
Corroborating this, Tiempo Development (2019) in a research titled "Artificial Intelligence's Biggest Challenges to Overcome" argued that the challenges of artificial intelligence range from bias, computing power, integrating artificial intelligence, collecting and utilizing relevant data, manpower to legal issues.

Bias: Bias is one of the biggest challenges facing artificial intelligence. There is bias especially when you explore the depths to which artificial intelligence could be utilized. Forbes India explains that data bias is an inherent problem with artificial intelligence systems is as good or as bad as the data they are trained on.

Computing Power: The technology industry has experienced computing power challenges in the past. However, the computing power is important to process massive volumes of data to build an artificial intelligence system by utilizing techniques like deep learning unlike any other computing power challenge faced by the industry in the past.

Collecting and Utilizing Relevant Data: For an organization to successfully implement Artificial intelligence strategies and programs, they must have a base set of data and maintain a constant source of relevant data to ensure that AI can be useful in their selected industry. Data can be collected on various applications with a multitude of formats such as text, audio, images, and videos. The wide range of platforms to collect this data adds to the challenges of

artificial intelligence. To be successful, all this data must be integrated in a manner that the AI can understand and transform into useful results.

Implementation Strategies: Artificial intelligence can transform almost every industry, but one of the major challenges of artificial intelligence is lack of implementation strategy. To be successful, a strategic approach must be established at the stage of implementation of artificial intelligence.

Legal Issues: One of the challenges of artificial intelligence is the recent legal concerns being raised that organizations need to be wary of artificial intelligence. If artificial intelligence is collecting sensitive data, it might violate state or federal government laws, even if the information is not harmless by itself but sensitive when collected together.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the study examines the upsides, downsides, and ethical challenges in adopting algorithmic journalism in Nigeria. The study concludes that the use of algorithmic journalism as a technological innovation by established media organizations in developed countries has enhanced automated content production in the media industry. Although the technology is efficient in collating and writing news stories without human intervention, the technology is said to have downsides that have hindered many third-world or developing countries of the world Nigeria inclusive in adopting and implement the use of algorithmic journalism. The downsides range from fears that the technology would make journalists redundant, algorithmic journalism will replace the human workers, algorithmic journalism will create unemployment in Nigeria, algorithmic journalism equally cannot embark on investigative reports to unravel issues that are concealed among others.

Recommendations

1. Media organizations in Nigeria should adopt algorithmic journalism to ease their work and enhance efficiency in the newsgathering process without human efforts
2. Journalists should be used to complement algorithmic journalism particularly where creativity and investigative report is required
3. Despite the benefits of using the technology for journalistic purposes, media organizations should weigh the challenges of using algorithmic journalism before adopting the technology to enhance efficiency in their media organizations.
4. Media organizations in Nigeria should equally train their reporters to become familiar with the workings and operations of algorithmic journalism as this would go a long way to enhance their work.

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EVALUATION OF CONTRACEPTIVE USE AMONG RURAL AND URBAN FAMILIES IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

> *Improper use of contraceptives is assumed to be responsible for the increasing numbers of unintended pregnancies and abortions that threaten the health security of women of*

reproductive ages among rural and urban families. This study therefore, is a comparative cross-sectional assessment of the use of contraceptives among rural and urban families in Benue State, Nigeria. The objective was to investigate the extent to which rural and urban families use contraceptives correctly and consistently. Data for the study was gathered using semi – structured questionnaires (SSQs) and focused group discussion (FGDs) methods of data collection. A total of 800 respondents, 400 each for urban and rural dwellers was drawn using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) finite data sampling estimation equation. The findings reveal a wide gap between knowledge of contraceptives and correct and/or consistent use of contraceptives among the sampled rural and urban families. There was gross misuse and inconsistency in the use of contraceptives, especially the modern ones that if the families had used correctly, were likely to give very high success or efficacy rate (about 97%) in protecting women especially, those of reproductive ages from unintended pregnancies and other sexual transmitted infections (STIs). The incorrect and inconsistent use of contraception was blamed on numerous factors including financial difficulties, misinformation and fear of adverse effects such as cancer, irregular menstruation, poor cooperation from male spouses, myths and beliefs. The study recommended amongst other things, provision of accurate, age-appropriate and comprehensive sexuality education on contraception, awareness creation using the media, provision of financial empowerment schemes, good measure of family support and partnering of faith – based and community – based organizations in training of rural and urban families as remedial measures.

Keywords: Correct, Consistent, Contraceptives, Family, Rural dwellers, urban dwellers, Benue

Introduction

Generally, women's access to family planning technologies especially contraception has increased considerably in Nigeria but

the proportion of women who may use it correctly to achieve the desired goal remains very low when compared with other African countries (Madhumita. 2021; Kazi 2006). A wide gap thus exists between knowledge about the appropriateness and techniques involved in the use of contraceptives among rural and urban women in Nigeria despite the fact that correct use of contraceptives even have potential non-health benefits that encompass expanded education opportunities and empowerment for women, and sustainable population growth and economic development for the country (World Health Organization (WHO), 2020). Various reasons have been advanced as being responsible for this by the World Health Organization. These include; limited access to contraceptives mainly among young people, poor people or unmarried people; fear or experience of having side-effects; cultural or religious opposition; poor quality of available family planning services; gender-based barriers; attitudes and dysfunctional families etc (Olalekan and Olufumilayo, 2012).

Audu et al (2008) reported a number of factors that lead one to expect demographic and socioeconomic differentials in women's knowledge of contraceptives. They noted that a woman's knowledge of contraceptive methods may depend on the stage of her reproductive career as indicated by her age and the family size (number of living children). Younger women just beginning their families may not be interested in delaying or preventing future births and hence may not seek out or recall information on methods of family planning. In populations where information on family planning is provided postpartum, women who are sub-fertile are disadvantaged and therefore have less opportunity to receive information on contraceptive methods. In contrast, older women and those who already have large families may be motivated to find out about contraceptive methods and may better remember any information they receive.

In Benue State, low and inappropriate use of contraceptives is one of the major challenges faced by the reproductive age group who constitutes the largest proportion of the State population (NPC, 2021). Although there may be evidence of a relatively high level of awareness on the methods and benefits of contraceptives thereof among the teenagers and adults living in rural and urban

communities (NDHS, 2013), correct and consistent use of contraceptives still remain inadequate. Ineffective use has been identified as resulting in unintended or unplanned pregnancies especially in teenage mothers where mortalities are eminent and complications of vesico-vaginal/vesico-rectal fistulae abound. These consequences are financially bearing and may eventually limit the mother's educational opportunities thereby exacerbating women poverty.

Generally, high fertility rates and large family size are often associated with poor health indices which includes but not limited to high maternal and infant mortality rates, high teenage pregnancy and unhealthy birth spacing (WHO, 2020). High population growth rates may also make it more difficult for states to provide adequate schooling, nutrition, immunization, and other essential services. Population pressures lead to environmental degradation, food insecurity, and sometimes conflicts.

Identifying the factors affecting the effective use of contraceptive among rural and urban dwellers and proposing possible strategies to be taken to improve the usage , may help in minimizing the challenges associated with unplanned and unintended pregnancies as well as create other potential non-health benefits such as expanding the education opportunities and economic empowerment for women, good population growth and economic development among other benefits in Benue State in particular and that of Nigeria in general.

Literature Review
Conceptual Clarification.
Contraception is a Latin word that is compounded from two different words; '*Contra'* and *'Conception'*. Conception is the process of becoming pregnant and occurs when a man's sperm fertilizes a woman's egg. The Latin word '*Contra*' stands for against, so contraception just means anything that works 'against' conception (Trussell, 2010).

According to World Health Organization (WHO), contraception is the deliberate use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy as a consequence of sexual intercourse (WHO, 2020). Contraception is therefore the use of

various devices, drugs, agents, sexual practices, or surgical procedures to prevent conception or impregnation (pregnancy), which is mostly attained through the use of contraceptives.

Effective use of contraceptive is generally viewed from three perspective; these are:

i. **Use Effectiveness**: dwells on how well a birth control method works in "typical use", taking into consideration human error and other non-ideal factors.

ii. **Theoretical Effectiveness**: dwells on how well a birth control method works when it is used correctly and when all other conditions are ideal "perfect use" (CDC, 2011). In this study, contraceptive effectiveness is the correct and consistent use of contraception.

iii. **Compliance:** Compliance is defined as the extent to which the patient follows a regimen prescribed by a healthcare professional. Except for compliance, terms such as adherence, therapeutic alliance and concordance are used. Adherence may be explained as the ability to follow prescribed treatment. Compliance in this context could also mean correct and consistent usage for effective results.

In a social context, effective contraception allows a couple to enjoy a physical relationship without fear of an unwanted pregnancy and ensures enough freedom to have children when desired. The aim is to achieve this with maximum comfort and privacy, at the same time minimum cost and side effects (Jain and Muralidhal, 2012)

Types and Methods of Contraceptives

According to WHO (2020), contraceptive methods can be classed into different categories: natural family planning (rhythm method, withdrawal), barrier methods (male condom, female condom, diaphragm, spermicide), and hormonal or long-lasting reversible contraceptive (LARC) methods (combined contraceptive pill, progestogen only pill, injection, implant, intrauterine device (IUD), intrauterine system (IUS).

Jain and Muralidhal (2012:628 - 628) maintained that known methods of contraception are classified into traditional and modern methods. The traditional methods include the following:

i. Coitus Interruptus or Withdrawal
This involves the withdrawal of the penis from the vagina just before ejaculation, thus preventing semen from entering the woman's reproductive tract for the purpose of conception. This is perhaps the oldest contraceptive method known to man, but it depends on the cooperation of the male partner. This is not a reliable method and may fail if semen escapes before ejaculation or is smeared on the external genitalia.

ii. Lactational Amenorrhoea Method
This method assumes that breast-feeding or nursing mothers secrete hormones that prevent conception for about 6 months. It prevails if there is no menses and full breast-feeding day and night is maintained. This is more a myth, as breast-feeding is irregular and it is not reliable in instances where baby sleeps through the night, or in case of sore, cracked or inverted nipples and breast abscess.

iii. Rhythm Method
This method requires predicting ovulation, the period when the woman is most fertile, by recording the menstrual pattern, or body temperature, or changes in cervical mucus, or a combination of these (symptom-thermal method). Intercourse is avoided on fertile days. Although many people claim knowledge of this method, only a small proportion can actually identify the fertile period of the month. It cannot be used by women who have irregular periods, or after childbirth, or during menopausal years.

The modern methods on the other hand include:

i. Male Condom
In this, a thin rubber or latex sheath (condom) is rolled on the erect penis before intercourse. It prevents semen (sperms) from entering the woman's reproductive tract for the purpose of conception. The method is effective if used correctly. It can be safely used by all age groups. No prior medical examination is required and is easily available without prescription. It serves as the most effective method in providing twin protection of contraception and STI disease. The major drawback in this method is related to compliance, inconsistency and incorrect use.

ii.   Female Condom

This is a vaginal pouch made of latex sheath, with one ring at each end. The closed end ring is inserted inside the vagina and works as the internal anchor. Outer portion covers and protects the external genitalia. It is reliable, hypo-allergic with high acceptance in test groups although its cost could be a major deterrent to use. It is a female controlled method and protects from both unwanted pregnancy and STIs. Size and hardness of inner ring may be uncomfortable to some users.

iii.   Oral Contraceptive Pills

The combined pill consists of two hormones: estrogen and progesterone. This is to be taken every day orally by the woman. The pill works by preventing the release of the egg, thickening of cervical mucus and by altering tubal motility. This method is easy, convenient and almost totally controlled by the female with no interference with the act of sexual intercourse.

iv.   Injectables

These inhibit ovulation and also increase the viscosity of the cervical secretions to form a barrier to sperms. It is easily administered method, suitable during lactation too. It has non-contraceptive advantages, like recession of ovarian cysts or breast lumps. However, it makes the menstrual cycle becomes irregular, spotting or cease altogether as long as the injectables are used.

v.   Emergency Contraceptive Pill

Here, two doses of the pill, separated by 12 hrs, are taken within 3 days (72 hrs) of unprotected intercourse. Depending on the time of menstruation it is taken, it can prevent ovulation, fertilization or implantation of the fertilized egg. It is available without prescription. Its uses include-prevention of pregnancy after condom tear/slips, when two oral pills are missed in succession, when an intra-uterine device is expelled and there is fear of conception, in case injectables are delayed by more than 2 weeks.

vi.   Surgical Methods
(a). Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)

A small flexible, partly wired plastic device with copper with a long thread is inserted into the uterus (womb) after menstruation, abortion, or 4-6 weeks after delivery. It prevents implantation of the fertilized egg. Copper wired portion have spermicidal activity and the thread may occasionally interfere with sexual intercourse especially if the thread is unnecessarily long but can be removed when pregnancy is desired or at the advent of complications. It may cause heavy bleeding in some women. Pelvic inflammatory diseases in women, especially those predispose to STIs. Sometimes the IUD loosens and detaches and hence should be checked periodically. It may increase the risk of ectopic pregnancy especially when the user is exposed to frequent and untreated pelvic inflammatory diseases. It is therefore unsuitable for women with already existing pelvic inflammatory disease, multiple sexual partners, uterine fibroids, heavy menstruation, or unexplained vaginal bleeding.

(b). Female Sterilization (Tubectomy)
This is a permanent surgical method in which the fallopian tubes are cut and ends tied to prevent the sperms from meeting the eggs. It is a very reliable method requiring only 1 day of hospitalization and can be performed anytime, preferably after completing the family size. Rarely, the tubes may join and fertility may return. Though this is a permanent method, the operation may be reversed with advances in micro-surgery though the results may not always be successful.

(c). Male Sterilization (Vasectomy)
This a permanent surgical method in which, the vasa deferens is ligated preventing the spermatozoa from being released into the semen at the time of ejaculation. It is a simple and reliable method not requiring hospitalization. Contrary to popular belief, it does not affect health or sexual vigor, neither does it interfere with sexual intercourse (Jain and Muralidhal, 2012:628 - 628).

The Effectiveness of the use of contraceptive
Olalekan and Olufumilayo (2012) posits that addressing the ways of promoting the effective use of contraception is complex and complicated as the issues surrounding challenges to use are quite different for individuals based on their personal characteristics,

residency, accessibility and availability, religion, level of education, age, etc. The institutional and personal attributes must be considered when suggesting ways of improving effective contraception. They suggested that providing broad-based messages, information and service on the importance of contraception and the methods available to clients as the most significant approach to improving contraception utilization.

Methodology
Area of Study

The study area of this research is Benue State in central Nigeria. However, two local government areas were randomly selected based on the National Population Commission (NPC, 2013) classification of urban and rural Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD) for Benue State. These are Makurdi Local Government Area and Ushongo Local Government Area as urban and rural, respectively.

Makurdi Local Government Area

It is located on latitude 7° 44' 28" North of the equator and longitude 8° 30' 44" East of the Greenwich Meridian (GMT) and it doubles as the capital of Benue State; it was created in 1970 out of the defunct Tiv Native Authority. The LGA has an area of 16km² radius and is called Greater Makurdi as provided for the Greater Makurdi, Edict of 1984 (BSGN, 1984) with a projected population of 422,000 people for the year (NPC, 2021). It is bordered on the West and North by Lafia, Keana and Doma LGA of Nassarawa State, on the East by Guma LGA and on the south by Gwer and Gwer west LGA. The Local Government Area is divided into two major blocks by River Benue hence the north and south banks and has eleven council wards out of which five of them care classified as rural, whiles six are urban.

The local government is predominantly populated by the Tiv ethnic group. Other minority ethnic groups in the city include the Idoma, Jukun, Hausa and the Igbos among others. The dominant religion in the city is Christianity and the residents are mostly farmers, civil servants and traders. The people of the local

government are known for their hospitality and friendly disposition to visitors. The extended family system is common place in the rural areas where polygyny is the common type of union. However, the most prevalent union among urban dwellers is monogyny where the extended family system is also practiced and it serves as the first level of administration in both locales.

Ushongo Local Government Area

Ushongo Local Government Area is also among the twenty-three LG areas in Benue State. It was created in 1996 by the then military Government headed by General Sanni Abacha and named after Ushogo Hills. It is located between latitude 7^0 5' 0" north of the equator and 8^0 95' 0" east of the Greenwich Meridian (GMT) with a total land area of about 1, 223km². It is bounded in the North by Gboko and Buruku LG areas, on the east side by Katsina-Ala LG and in the west by Konshisha, and in the south-east and south by Kwande and Vadeikya LG areas respectively. The headquarters of Ushongo LGA is Lessel and the population of Ushongo LGA is about 113, 057 persons based on 2021 projections. The local government is made of 19 council wards that has scattered settlement patterns and Tiv is the predominant tribe. The vegetation in Ushongo LGA is mainly Savanna wood land, with tall grasses across the landscape and the inhabitants are predominantly farmers who engage in crop farming, livestock rearing and cloth making for their livelihood. The major commercial cash crops include fruits, grains and tubers. Quarrying of granite stones around the Ushongo Hills brings in revenue for residents around the foot of the hills.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised of all males and females of reproductive age within Ushongo and Makurdi Local Government Areas, which according to the 2021 projections of the National Population Commission, is 535,057 people (NPC, 2021). The criterion for selection is age: females aged 13- 49 while the males aged 15- 60 as used in NHDS (NHDS, 2008, 2013). The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size procedure was used to select 800 respondents to represent the entire population. The primary data were elicited from the respondents using Standard Structured

questionnaire (SSQs) and focused group discussions (FGDs) methods of data collection. The obtained data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Results and Discussions
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section discusses the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the study. In terms of sex, available data indicates that 356 (44.5%) respondents were males while 444 (55.5%) were females. Location specific distributions of gender indicated that 181(50.8%) respondents out of the male population were residing in the rural areas whereas, 175(49.2%) respondents were in the urban areas. In respect of the female gender, 219 (49.3%) and 225 (50.7%) respondents were residing in the rural and urban areas.

In respect of the age distribution, 315 (39.3%) respondents were within the youth category of 14 – 30 years, 383 (47.9%) respondents were aged between 31 and 49 years while 10 (12.8%) respondents were 50 years and above. Out of the youth category, 127 (40.3%) respondents were rural dwellers while 188(59.7%) respondents were urban dwellers. In the adult category whose ages ranged from 31 – 44 years, 155(40.5%) and 228 (59.5%) respondents were rural and urban residents respectively. Furthermore, 45 (44.1%) respondents out of the 102 respondents whose age bracket was 45 and above were ruralists while 57(55.9%) respondents were urbanites.

In terms of educational attainment, 743 (92.9%) respondents were literate and have completed at least, primary level of education while 57 (7.1%) had no formal education. Very specifically, 57 (7.1%) respondents had no formal educational attainment, 165 (20.1%) respondents had primary level, 242 (30.8%) respondents had secondary level whereas, 336 (42.0%) respondents had attained tertiary level of education. Location wise, the literacy level was higher among urban dwellers (99.5%) as compared to rural dwellers (86.2%=) due to easy accessibility and availability of educational opportunities.

The marital status of respondents showed that 472 (59%) were married, 274 (34.3%) were single while 27 (3.4%), 16(2%)

and 10(1.3%) were widowed, divorced, and separated respectively. Further findings into the type of family unions practiced by the respondents revealed that 557 (69.6%) respondents practiced monogyny while 243 (40.4%) practiced polygyny. The practice of polygyny was higher in the urban sites (78.5%) as compared to the rural sites; conversely polygyny was higher in the rural sites (39.2%) than in the urban sites (21.5%).

Furthermore, the occupational distribution of the respondents indicated that 115 (14.3%) respondents had farming as their dominant occupation, 244 (30.5%) respondents were traders, 108(13.5%) respondents were artisans, and 253 (31.6%) respondents were civil servants, 46 (5.8%) were students while 34 (4.2%) respondents were hunters/fishermen.

Statistics on respondents' current income status or purchasing power parity (PPP) has shown that 292 (36.5%) respondents were in the low category living on an income of less than ₦100,000 per annum, 344 (43.0%) respondents lived on the income ranging from ₦101,000 – ₦199,000 per annum and 164 (20.5%) respondents were living on income of ₦200,000 and above per annum. This information is summarized on Table 1 below.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Characteristic	Rural n = 400		Urban n= 400		Total	
	f	(%)	f	(%)	n	(%)
Sex						
Male	181	(50.8)	175	(49.2)	356	(44.5)
Female	219	(49.3)	225	(50.7)	444	(55.5)
Age (years)						
14 – 30	127	(40.3)	188	(59.9)	315	(39.3)
31 – 49	155	(40.5)	228	(59.5)	383	(47.9)
≥ 49	45	(44.1)	57	(55.9)	102	(12.8)
Level of education						
No formal education	55	(96.5)	2	(3.5)	57	(7.1)

Primary	139	(84.2)	26	(15.8)	165	(20.1)
Secondary	135	(55.8)	107	(44.2)	242	(30.8)
Post-secondary	71	(21.1)	265	(78.9)	336	(42.0)

Marital status

Single	131	(47.8)	143	(52.2)	274	(34.3)
Married	233	(49.4)	239	(50.6)	472	(59.0)
Divorce	4	(25.0)	12	(75.0)	16	(2.0)
Widowed	9	(33.3)	18	(66.7)	27	(3.4)
Separated	3	(30.0)	7	(70.0)	10	(1.3)

Occupation

Farming	87	(75.7)	28	(24.3)	115	(14.3)
Trading	72	(32.1)	152	(67.9)	224	(30.5)
Artisans	34	(31.5)	74	(68.5)	108	(13.5)
Civil Servants	65	(25.7)	188	(74.3)	253	(31.6)
Students	13	(28.3)	33	(71.7)	46	(5.8)
Hunting / Fishing	28	(82.4)	6	(17.6)	34	(4.2)

Family Union

Monogyny	243	(60.8)	314	(78.5)	557	(69.6)
Polygyny	157	(39.2)	86	(21.5)	243	(30.4)
Income category					
≤ 100,000	158		134		292	(36.5)
100,000 – 199,000	(39.5)		(33.5)		344	(43.0)
200,000 and Above	169		175		164	(20.5)
	(42.2)		(43.7)		
	17	(18.3)	91	(22.8)	

Source: field survey (2021)   *NB: Percentage across*

Contraceptives in Use among Benue Rural and Urban Families
The results of the survey indicated that all respondents had reported knowledge and use of at least, one method of contraceptive within the last three years from the time of this study. The study further discovered that there existed a strong nexus between knowledge of the contraceptive and its use among beneficiaries. Statistical data available depicted that male condom was the most used contraceptive in both rural and urban sites. Thus, of the 800 respondents surveyed, 350 (43.8%) respondents used the male condom, 131(16.4%) respondents used oral pills, 81(10.1%)

respondents used injectables, 108 (13.5%) respondents used the rhythm method while 35(4.4%) respondents used sterilized method. Other methods used were the withdrawal method with 27 (3.3%) respondents, female condom had 18(2.3%) respondents, 13(1.6%) respondents used gel/foams, 10(1.3%) respondents used implants, 9(1.1%) respondents used IUD, whereas, 7(0.9%) and 11(1.4%) respondents used diaphragm and lactation methods respectively. However, the variation in use of these contraceptives was largely influenced by rural – urban dichotomy and other socio – economic factors associated with the users.

In terms of location specific variation, information on Figure 1 indicated that the use of male and female condoms, and sterilized methods were higher among the urban dwellers as compared to the rural use. However, use of oral pills, injectables, implants, Coitus interruptus (withdrawal method) and rhythm were higher among the rural dwellers than in the urban sites.
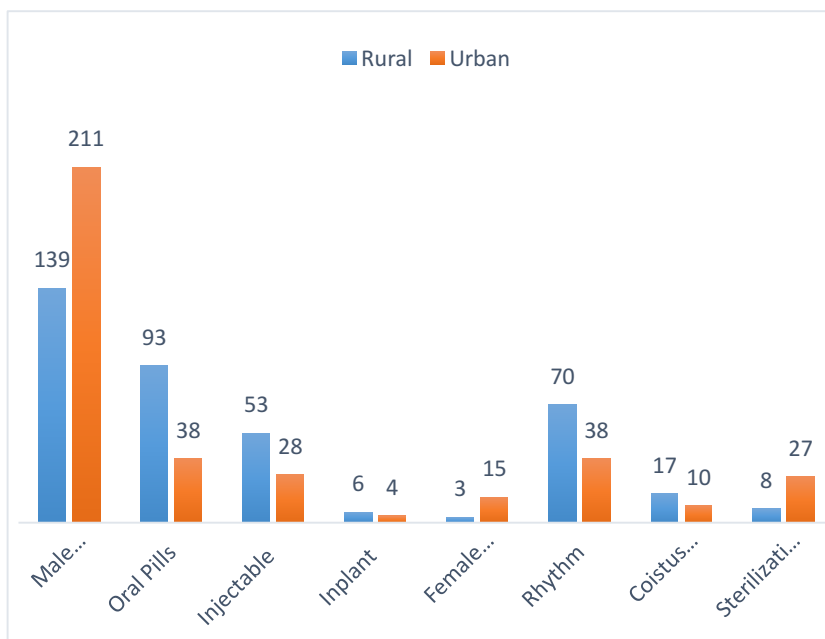

Figure 1: ***Contraceptive use by Location in Benue State***

As indicated in Figure 1 above, the preponderance of male condom over other contraceptives such as pills, injectables, implants and rhythm etc. in both urban and rural families depict its user – friendliness in terms of affordability, availability and accessibility. Although no clinical examinations were carried out to ascertain its side effects on the health of users in this study, analysis of reports from majority of the respondents indicated that male condoms had low or minimal side effects on both users and it is also easy to use hence, its high patronage.

Further findings from the FGDs also confirmed that male condom was the most frequently used contraceptive for both married and single members of their communities because it is cheap and multi – purpose. In the words of a male discussant in Modern Market ward:

> I am currently using condom because apart from serving as contraceptive, it also protects me from sexually transmitted infections. Besides, it is not too expensive as compared to other methods, at least, ₦100 can fetch a packet for me (FGD, 2021).

Similarly, a female discussant from Ge, Ushongo maintained thus:

> My husband is using condom as our method of family planning. I am more comfortable with it because with it, I feel safe. You know, men nowadays cannot be fully trusted of course. Using condom anytime he wants to meet with me gives me double assurance of unintended pregnancy and other unforeseen circumstances that one cannot tell. There is one of the condoms that he used the last time we met that was even very stimulative and in fact, sweet. The use of condom had also been helping to reduce the injuries I used to have whenever he rushes to penetrate me (FGD, 2021).

In light of the foregoing, it could be deduced that choice and use of contraceptives among rural and urban residents were informed by a number of variables, ranging from cost, efficacy, misinformation to

adverse effects that each method of contraceptive portends. Since humans are naturally willing to save cost but still have optimum benefits in their adventures, users of contraceptives in Benue rural and urban areas were also willing to go most for the methods of contraception that were cheap, health friendly and offered the best benefits in terms of protection and low level of adverse risk. It may also be deduced that the use of condoms in some families could increase the bonding between the respective couples and might also be contributory in maintaining a functional family against the odds of STI, trust and even birth control. Table 2 displays the details of contraceptive use among rural and urban families in Benue state.

Table 2: Contraceptives in Use among Rural and Urban Families in Benue State

Type of contraception	Rural		Urban		Total	
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
Barrier						
Male condom	139	(34.8)	211	(52.8)	350	(43.8)
Female diaphragm	0	(0)	7	(1.8)	7	(0.9)
Foam/gels	0	(0)	13	(3.3)	13	(1.6)
Female Condom	3	(0.8)	15	(3.8)	18	(2.3)
Permanent non reversible						
Female sterilizer	5	(1.3)	20	(5.0)	25	(3.1)
Male sterilizer	3	(0.8)	7	(1.8)	10	(1 .3)
Long-lasting effective reversible	93	(23.3)	38	(9.5)	131	(16.4)
Pills	53	(13.3)	28	(7.0)	81	(10.1)
Injectables	6	(1.5)	4	(1.0)	10	(1.3)
Implants	2	(0.5)	7	(1.8)	9	(1.1)
Intrauterine device (IUD)						
Traditional Methods	9	(2.3)	2	(0.5)	11	(1.3)
Lactation amenorrhea	70	(17.5)	38	(9.5)	108	(13.5)
Rhythm (periodic abstinence)	17	(4.3)	10	(2.5)	27	(3.3)
Coitus interruptus (Withdrawal)						

Source: Field Study (2021)   *NB: Percentage downwards.*

Information in Table 2 reported a considerable uptake of both modern and traditional contraceptives among the sampled respondents. Comparatively, urban families were found to be high in the use of modern contraceptives especially, male condoms (52.8%) whereas, the rural families were relatively high in the uptake of pill (23.3%) and traditional contraceptives notably, rhythm (17.5%) which requires periodic abstinence as the case may be. This might be as a result of the rural – urban dichotomy and peculiarities associated with the social structure and culture of each typology. These findings corroborate Olalekan and Olufumilayo (2012) who maintained that the use of contraceptives is complex and complicated as the issues surrounding challenges to use are quite different for individuals based on their personal characteristics, residency, accessibility and availability, religion, level of education, age, etc.

Effective Use of Contraceptives among Rural and Urban Families

Although the findings of this study indicated that many types of contraceptives were reportedly used among rural and urban families, majority of the users did not use them correctly and/or consistently. Very specifically, 35 (4.37%) respondents used various types of contraceptives correctly and consistently while 765 (95.63%) respondents were incorrect and inconsistent in the use of the contraceptives. Comparatively, the correctness and consistency of contraceptive use was higher among urban dwellers (6.0%) as compared to the rural dwellers (2.75%). This information is summarized in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Effective (Consistent and Correct) Use of Contraceptive among Rural and Urban Families

| Nature of Use | Location | | | | Total | | Statistic | |
| | Rural | | Urban | | | | | |
	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	χ^2	p-value
Inconsistent/ Incorrect	389	(97.2)	376	(94.0)	765	95.6		

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							29.45	0.000
Consistent/ Correct	11	(2.8)	24	(6.0)	35	4.4		
Total	**400**	**100.0**	**400**	**100.0**	**800**	**100.0**		

Source: Field Study (2021)
NB: Percentage downward but interprets across.

The high rate of incorrect and inconsistent use of contraceptives among rural (97.2%) and urban (94.0%) families indicate that knowledge of contraceptive does not automatically translate to use. The incorrect and inconsistent use of contraceptives among the sampled urban and rural families was blamed on a lot of socio – cultural and economic factors such as educational attainment, misinformation, perceived health risks, poor cooperation among male partners and financial implications. This trend if not properly tackled would likely expose women of reproductive age to very high risk of maternal and to some extent, infant mortality thereby making the realization of the millennium and social development goal of improving maternal and child health a mirage in the study area. It also has potential of distorting the family dynamics and making families eventually dysfunctional.

Further findings from the FGDs also corroborated the result of the survey. In the FGDs held with both urban and rural families across the study area, fear of unintended health burdens, misinformation that continued contraceptive use could result to infertility, financial challenge and poor cooperation among male partners were the major reasons responsible for incorrect and inconsistent use of contraceptives. For instance, in a FGD held among the urban low-income earners in Wadata, Makurdi, a female spouse disclosed thus:

> My husband used to recycle the condom by washing it each time we finish using it in order to save the money for other basic needs. You know, things are so hard nowadays, 'na only condom person go use money buy'?

We have other needs to cater for apart from family planning please (FGD,   2021).

In another discussion session at Gbe, Ushongo LG, a discussant maintained:

I was told by my Elder Sister who is living in the city that regular use of contraceptives especially, pills used to cause cancer and fibroid which prevent one from getting pregnant when she wishes to do so. For this reason, I used to skip my pills some days in order to minimize its troublesome effects before it will finish me (FGD, 2021).

Furthermore, a male discussant at Asase, North Bank ward had this to say:

When I want to make love with my wife, I really want to enjoy real love and direct, I can't make love with tubes spoiling my enjoyment. Of what use is it again? I always want to have it real, direct and hot. Am i making love with someone else's wife or prostitute? You can't joke with me when I'm serious for sex, even my wife knows it too well (FGD, 2021).

These implies therefore that although use of contraceptives lies at the heart of family planning, correct and consistent use is often shaped by multiple factors that sometimes may go beyond individual decision. For instance, apart from fear of adverse effects such as weight gain, increase menstrual flow, reduction in sexual urge and financial burden, majority (75%) of female respondents blamed incorrect and inconsistent use of contraceptives on poor cooperation from male spouses, myths and beliefs. However, incorrect and inconsistent use of contraceptives in the area with a high total fertility rate (TFR) may result to poor family planning measures, which by extension, would have been responsible for large population growth and high poverty scourge among the families. This agrees therefore, with the findings of Fuyehun (2017) that incorrect use of contraceptives would result to a highly

dependent population with few productive and more dependent people because of the age structure of exponential population growth. Also, health inequities would worsen. More so, the already limited infrastructure would be stretched while rapid urbanization would shrink service provision, leading to further social and economic challenges.

Conclusion/recommendation

This study has comparatively assessed the use of contraception among rural and urban families in Benue State, Nigeria. The study has discovered a wide gap between knowledge of contraceptive and correct and/or consistent use of contraceptives among the sampled rural and urban families. There was gross misuse and inconsistency in the use of contraceptives, especially the modern ones that if used correctly, are likely to give very high success or efficacy rate (about 97%) in protecting women of reproductive age (14 – 49 years) from unintended pregnancies and other sexual related infections (STIs). This trend attaining a public health perspective demands a quick policy action that will institute adequate control measures to check the upsurge in population with its attendant consequences. Multiple factors were however, identified to be responsible for the incorrect and inconsistent use of contraceptives which, among them include: financial difficulties, misinformation, fear of adverse effects such as cancer, irregular menstruation, poor cooperation from male spouses (family support), myths and beliefs.

Based on the foregoing, the study recommends a timely awareness creation program by the media that will ensure that people know more about the most effective contraceptives available, how to access and correct ways of using them; provision of accurate, age-appropriate and comprehensive education on human sexuality in secondary school curriculum will equip the prospective users of contraceptives with the knowledge on its optimal use; and partnering of informal and private sector like faith - based organizations, community – based organizations and other related formations in training of both male and female users of various contraceptives may go a long way in helping users to know how to use contraceptives correctly and will also eliminate misconceptions and myths about contraceptives. Other recommendations include:

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empowering girls at every opportunity to take responsibility for the use of contraceptives by enlightening them with proper and adequate information about their functions, correct usage and side effects; and provision of economic empowerment programs for both urban and rural families to help them meet their reproductive health needs.

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SECURITY AGENCIES AND THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN GWER EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE

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Abstract

One of the key tenets of democracy is periodic elections which must be seen and accepted to be credible, free and fair. However, elections in Nigeria since independence are often characterized by insecurity and violence that tends to scare voters and electoral officials and in some cases contestants. This is even in spite of assurances from security agencies whose duty is to ensure the safety of stakeholders in an election process. In Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State for example, there were reported cases of killings, destruction of electoral materials, intimidation and all forms of electoral infractions in the 2019 elections. To examine the situation, the paper adopted primary and secondary data collection methods and applied structural-functional theory as its framework of analysis. The paper found that, there was gross shortage of security operatives in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State during the 2019 general elections. This created the opportunity for desperate politicians, their thugs and cronies to carry out electoral irregularities with little or no resistance. According to findings the main motive for this level of irregularities was borne out of desperation to deliver polling units to electoral principals or godfathers and indeed various political parties in exchange for political appointments in government. The paper recommended that given the security concerns and realities at polling units in Gwer East Elections in 2019,

enough security operatives be provided on election day and should be well armed to deal with perpetrators of electoral malpractices.

Keywords: Democracy, election, electoral process, security

Introduction

One of the key requirements for a democratic state is the conduct of regular, transparent, free and fair elections. Elections provide opportunities for the people to recruit or select their leaders at the various levels of government. The electorate therefore becomes a critical factor in the selection or choice of political leaders because of their votes. Thus, according to Kunle (2005), the votes empower the electorate politically and their votes become a determinant of the political commerce in the competition for political office attainment among the parties and candidates involved in political contestations.

Since the First Republic, elections in Nigeria have continued to suffer security setbacks occasioned by the activities of political gladiators. The idea of winner takes all and loser losses all including their lives have instituted violence in the electoral process of Nigeria. This is in spite of all assurances from government, the electoral empire and the security agencies for secure electoral process. In other words, at all elections, both government and electoral empire would assure the electorates of their safety before, during and after the elections. The assurances are always a product of severe interrogation by journalist at press conferences. The idea here is always to remove fear in the electorates so as to actively participate in the electoral process. In spite of the assurances however, the security situation at polling units during elections is often far from expectation. The resultant effect of the insecurity at polling unit is poor turnout of electorates to exercise their franchise for fear of the unknown.

Like most parts of the country, Gwer East Local Government since 1999 has witnessed several electoral infractions in all elections due to lack or shortage of security operatives at the polling units. This has led to loss of lives and property and other forms of inhuman treatment that are inflicted on the innocent citizens. The destruction

of electoral materials, vote buying and thuggery are all carried out in the absence or presence of security operatives that lack the capacity to challenge the perpetrators of these acts. These therefore undermine true democratic practices and by extension lead to the recruitment of irresponsive or bad leaders.

This paper therefore examines the role played by security agencies during the 2019 general elections with a view to appraising their performance and proffering recommendations. Put differently, the paper clarified main concepts such as democracy, elections and security; evaluates the performance of security agencies during the 2019 general elections in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State as well as the implication of such outing to democratic sustainability.

Conceptual Clarification:
The Concept of Democracy

The paper adopts various conceptualization of democracy offered by different scholars including Abraham Lincoln. According to him, democracy is government of the people by the people and for the people in which the supreme power belongs to the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected representatives under free electoral system. It is a government that is freely chosen by the people to work for their interest. Democracy habours fundamental human rights to dignity of human person, right to personal liberty, right to fair hearing, right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, press, peaceful assembly and association, movement, political participation to mention but a few (Oddih, 2007). Democracy is also conceived as the control of an organization by its members who take part in the making of decisions that affect them. In essence, democracy entails majority rule and respect for fundamental rights of the minority. It is against this backdrop that, Nwoye (2001) maintains that, democracy signifies a political system dominated by representatives either directly or indirectly chosen by the people. The process of choosing these representatives in a democratic setting should be done based on the decision of the majority and not by other means.

Democracy therefore can be described as a governmental system that involves the widest spectrum of participation either

through elections or through the administration of the accepted policies. It is government founded on principles of the rule of law which is against arbitrariness, highhandedness, dictatorship and also anti-thesis to military rule. The analysis of democracy by Huntington (1991) has hinged more strongly on the procedural approach for the selection of decision makers. In his view, a political system is considered democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision-makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote and be voted.

Michael (1972) argues that democracy exist as a political system where the principal leaders of a political system are elected through very competitive elections. In Africa and Nigeria in particular, there is near absence or adherence to constitutionalism in the free but not fair elections, or both. Also, election may be peacefully conducted, yet may not be free or fair as it may be accompanied by malpractice including rigging, vote buying and intimidation of electorates. All these represent the poor security services at the voting centres. Election therefore is a key ingredient of democracy as without it democracy may be said to be naked.

Election

Election is an integral part of a democratic process that enables the citizenry determines fairly and freely who represents them at every level of government. In a democratic setting, elections are periodic and are conducted in a secured environment. Obakhedo (2011) opine that, election is a major instrument for recruiting political leaders in democratic societies; the key to participation in a democracy, and the way of giving consent to government and allowing the governed to choose and pass judgment on office holders who theoretically represent the governed (Dye, 2001).

Concept of Security

The paper considers various thoughts and attempts to conceptualize security such as those of Hettne, Aliyu and Nwanegbo and Odigbo. Hettne (2010) sees security "as a reasonable level of predictability at different levels of the social system, from local

communities to the global level". The understanding here is that at the global level, there is a presence of an order which is predicated upon the predictability of the behavior of other members within the system. At local level, security thus includes the ability of the state to predict the likely implication of any particular condition on its citizens. The recognition lies squarely not on the state's ability to enforce law and order, though that may be important, but in creating the necessary socio-economic conditions that guarantee fair amount of predictability on the behavior of its citizens.

A similar perspective offered by Aliyu (2012) conceived and present security as a state of reduced or contained threats and tension in which the stability of a state is not in an imminent danger of disruption from within. Stability is here viewed as the order, regularity and pattern, which characterized the state's condition over an extended period. Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013), argued that the concept of security is crosscutting and multi-dimensional. The concept has, over the last century, been the subject of great debate. However, long before that, the history of mankind was interspersed by the frenzied search for the best way of ensuring the security of the people, their properties, territories, states and institutions among others. In all places and countries, security has been considered as a "first order value" worth preserving.

The aforementioned notwithstanding, there is no consensus on the definition of security. This is not surprising because as a social phenomenon, it is often approached from different perspectives. Above all, the concept of security has been seen as a situation where a person or thing is not exposed to any form of danger or risk of physical or moral aggression, accident, theft or deterioration. While some security experts argued that the concept of security has always been associated with the safety and survival of the state and its citizens from harm or destruction or from dangerous threats (Aliyu, 2012). Those conceptions generally hold that the state is the only institution with the primary responsibility and power for the safety of its territory and its people (Zabadi, 2005).

Therefore, the concept of security in this paper is operationalized within the context of a nation hence the concept of "national security issues". Majorly, two contending perspectives tend to provide the basis for the conceptualization of human

security. One is a neo-realist theoretical framework, which is predicated on the primacy and centrality of state in conceptualizing security. It tends to explain security from the standpoint of state primary responsibility. Within this context, Buzan, and Hansen, (2009) argued that the, straitjacket militaristic approach to security that dominated the discourse during the Cold War was" "simple-minded" and subsequently led to the underdevelopment of the concept. For him, human security includes political, economic, social and environmental threats including those that are militaristic.

The people need security to enable them participate in politics particularly during elections which in Nigeria is seen as a "do or die affair". Providing security in this regard is the responsibility of the state through its own institutions such as the police, army, civil defence among such other institutions.

Examining the Role of Security Agencies during the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria

The Military, the Police, Civil Defence, Prison and Immigration officers were drafted to' maintain security at voting centres during the 2019 General Elections. Section 215(3) of the 1999 Nigeria Constitution (as Amended) spells out that, the Nigeria police is saddled with the maintenance of public safety and public order. The police are responsible for the arrest of crime and criminals, and prosecution of criminals. It has the responsibility of protecting lives and property (both private and public). The Nigeria police is also constitutionally empowered to protect harbours, water ways, railways and airfields, (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended) section 214 (2)).

Accordingly, the same 1999 Constitution recognizes the role of Armed Forces in the nation's constitutional democracy. According to section 217 (2), the Armed Forces have the responsibilities of:
i. Defending Nigeria from external aggression.
ii. Maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea and air.
iii. Suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President.
iv. Performing such other functions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly.

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps is a para-military agency of government of the Federal Republic that has been commissioned to provide measures against threat and any form of attack or disaster against the nation and its citizenry in conjunction with the nation's police. The Corps is statutorily empowered by Act No.2 of 2003 and amended as Act 6 on 4th June, 2007. The Corps is charged with the roles and responsibilities of securing the state and the people for peace, justice, freedom, fair play and orderliness. The principal focus of the Corps is in the area of broad-based information networking, monitoring of movement of persons, vandalism of all types; execution of all assignments as may be directed by the parent ministry in the interest of government such as monitoring and supervision of private guard companies. The Corps is charge with the responsibility to focus on complete rescue operation, crisis managements and complimentary security roles with other security outfits such as the SSS, NIA, NPF, Army, Immigrations and the Prison Service (FRN, 2007).

Ajayi (2005) noted that the role of the police and armed forces in the contemporary times especially since the 1950s has transcended the original traditional/constitutional duties within and outside the shores of their countries. He pointed out that, the police and the military have been engaged in international peacekeeping operations. As peacekeepers they perform the military duties of inter-positioning and monitoring cease-fire lines between warring groups. Since the end of cold war in 1989, however, the responsibilities of security agencies have also evolved to include tasks such as human rights monitoring, voter education and democratization programmes (De Coning, 2011). The above is a pointer to the fact that, the police and armed forces can be used to provide and maintain security for voters and electoral officials during elections to enhance a free and conducive environment for the conduct of elections. The rationale for ensuring adequate security during the 2019 general elections was propelled by the general pre-election premonition and apprehension that beclouded the Benue State political environment and Nigeria as a whole.

Security of Elections in Gwer East Local Government Area during the 2019 General Elections

Gwer East Local Government which is the prime focus of this paper is known for electoral violence especially on election day. Towards the build up to the 2019 General Elections, there was an uneasy calm in the local government headquarters at Aliade. This uneasy calm stemmed from the instruction by the two dominant political parties of All Progressive Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to their members to, as a matter of compulsion "deliver" their various wards so as to capture or retain political power. The idea was simple; any individual who wanted to share power must contribute towards the capture of power or must be seen to have earned their various political appointments which were to follow thereafter.

This position did not only heat up the polity in the Local Government, it entrenched a "do-or-die" disposition of party men and women during the election, so that it was clear that the APC was pitched against its major political rival, PDP. Such early warning signs reported to the relevant stakeholders to the election, namely; the police, NSCDC, the DSS, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) among others but to no avail. There were constant and persistent skirmishes between the supporters of the dominant APC and PDP. This pre-election violence was witnessed particularly in Ikpayongo, Taraku and Igbor. As much as the violence was about the political parties, there were prominent political leaders; Sen. George Akume and Governor Samuel Ortom who were opposed to each other. It was the supporters of both leaders that engaged in the violence, the height of which led to Governor Samuel Ortom's exit from the then ruling APC.

Though INEC on its part assured the electorates of adequate security during the election, the reality in Gwer East Local Government was different as security of the election was abysmally handled. This was in spite of the fact that Nigeria Police reported the deployment of three hundred thousand (300,000) of its personnel for the 2019 General Elections. The researchers also observed the indolent and compromises and dispositions of NSCDC, the Military and other Para-military organizations that were drafted to help the Police to handle security infractions during the election.

Based on the total number of polling units in Nigeria where the 2019 General Election were 119,973 (INEC, 2019), it would be

discerned by simple arithmetic and arising from the deployment of 300,000 personnel, each polling unit in Nigeria was to be secured by at least two security personnel. This was however not the situation. Table 1 captures the actual deployment of security in Gwer East Local Government during the 2019 General Elections.

Table 1: Polling Units and Number of Security Personnel in Various Council Wards in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State

S/n	Polling Unit	Council Ward	No. of Registered voters	No. of Security *Personnel*
1.	Anhwange	Gee	700	1
2	Ayar	Mbalom	1200	1
3	Gbeeker	Ikwe	1000	1
4	Gbache	Mbayom	1200	1
5	Ukyari 1&2	Ikyogbajir	2500	1
6	Tsebiaga	Ugee	900	1
7	R.C.M. Ak*pachai*	Ak*pachai*	1000	1
8	New Garage	Aliade/Mbalav	2800	2
9	Nyamagbadu 2	Ikyonov	1150	1
10	R.C.M Mishi	Mbasombo	2000	1
11	L.G.E.A. Taraku	Mbakyaan	1700	1
12	Mmbam	Mbabur	950	1
13	R.C.M. Aduku	Gbemacha	1250	1
14	Tsebo	Ishough	800	1

Source: INEC Office, Aliade, 2019

Apart from the one unarmed police officers that were posted to each polling unit, arm military, Civil Defence and Immigration officers were seen patrolling along the major roads or street across the local government. The presence of the one unarmed police officer at the polling unit was not enough to deter hoodlums from carrying out their nefarious activities during the conduct of the elections.

As stated earlier, politicians especially those that were appointed to various positions in government were charged to deliver their polling unit and council wards or lose their positions while those determined to take over political power were on the other hand to deliver the polling units and council wards with a view

to being rewarded with appointment once government is formed. So, it became a fierce "battle" between the two opposing party supporters.

In asserting such mandates therefore, all sort of electoral infractions became manifest without any reasonable challenge from the unarmed police man or men at the polling unit(s). Very prominent of such electoral irregularities were vote buying, campaigns, and ballot box snatching, compelling people to vote against their choices.

Major Violence/Electoral Irregularities During the 2019 General Elections in Gwer East Local Government Area

Some of the major violence/electoral irregularities that took place during the 2019 General Elections in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State are captured on Table 2:

Table 2: Major Violent/Electoral Irregularities Incidents Witnessed During the 2019 General Elections in Gwer East Local Government Area

Date of Incident	*Description of Violent Incident/ Electoral Irregularities*	*Source*
10th March, 2019	Armed hoodlums razed down RCM Primary School, Ayar-Mbalom containing electoral materials meant for Mbalom Council ward in Gwer East Local Government area of Benue State.	Nation's Newspaper, 2019
10th March, 2019	Hoodlums beat up the wife of the former Deputy Chairman of Gwer East Local Government, Mrs. Mwuese Shaana at Shaana polling unit who sustained various degrees of injuries.	*Victim, 2019*
10th March, 2019	The Information of Officer, Gwer Local Government reported on Radio Benue that three people were feared dead after a clash of thugs believed to be members of the APC and PDP in the area.	*Radio Benue, 10th March, 2019*
10th March, 2019	Armed thugs attacked INEC officials and attempted to snatch the election results from Mbayom and Ikogbajir Council Wards of Gwer	State Intelligence Bureau, 2019

	East Local government. One Danladi Iorliam was Killed in the process.	
10th March, 2019	Armed Military men smashed the wind scream of Camery, 1998 model belonging to one Mr. Shomzua Hwembe along Aliade- Otukpo road.	Victim, 2019

Source: Authors' Compilation

The foregoing table represents some isolated cases of violence and electoral malpractices that affected the overall outcome of the 2019 general elections particularly in Gwer East Local Government Area. Other forms of violence were also perpetrated but victims of some of such incidences were afraid to report or even discuss them for fear of further harassment.

Implication of Inadequate Security at 2019 General Elections in Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State on Future Elections

It is important to point out here that, the elections were a major determinant for the destiny of people of Benue State. But such powers ascribed to the people by democracy were lost to security threats posed by hoodlums and miscreants in the face of poor deployment of security agents across the state and Gwer East Local Government in particular. The presence of one police man in a polling unit without a baton or weapon more or less guaranteed hoodlums the chance to perpetuate all forms of electoral malpractices. The reality of the 21st century elections in Nigeria requires the introduction of arms by the security operatives at polling stations and voting points. Situations whereby hoodlums carry arms to the polling unit without being challenged by security operatives pose a serious implication to the practice of democracy in Nigeria.

The far reaching implication is that, the affected police officers would normally have any choice but to surrender to the hoodlums thus paving way for illegal exercise of power at the polling unit, thereby undermining the exercise of franchise of the electorates. In the end, anti-peoples leaders may emerge with a serious consequence of introducing policies that are unfriendly to the people who never voted them into various public offices. Such leaders only work for their selfish interests, those of their families and cronies. It is needless to say that elections rigging seriously

whittles down the power of the electorate over elected officials as in a democracy, elections remain the only weapon in the hands of the electorate to enforce accountability and effective control of elected representatives. It also represents a contract or mandate between the electorate and the elected. When this arrangement is tempered with the elected representative becomes masters why the electoratse become slaves.

Conclusion

The 2019 General Elections were characterized by malpractice in polling units across Gwer East Local Government Area of Benue State. This was as a result of security deficit experienced across the local government. In almost all the polling units, one police officer was attached to manage security of over a thousand electorates. This number glaringly overwhelmed the security officers that were posted to the local government so that violence and different kinds of electoral malparctices ranging from vote buying, rigging, campaign at polling stations among others electoral infractions were carried out without any challenge. Armed hoodlums took advantage of the void in security to cash in and intimidate the electorate and the security men on duty and even killed some in the course of the elections.

The fact that there was no adequate security personnel to secure electoral materials made it easier for armed hoodlums to take over and thumb print the ballot papers in favour of their principals before the security agents and the electorates who were helpless. All the foregoing infractions worked against the conduct of a free and fair election in the area under study. All elections held under such porous security conditions are most likely to produce leaders that are not accountable to the people but to themselves, their families and cronies.

Government therefore needs to recruit more security personnel so as to cope with the ever increasing voting population at the polling unit. There is also a sense in which security breaches during elections in Nigeria has called for the arming of security agents at polling stations. This will give security agents the opportunity to repel any security threats that may arise during elections.

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NIGERIA'S BORDER CLOSURE AND EFFECT ON FOREIGN POLICY

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Abstract

This paper examines Nigeria's border closure and effect on foreign policy. It sees foreign policy as relations or interactions between one country and another with regards to socio-political and socio-economic interests. The realist theory was used as theoretical underpinning. Nigeria closed her border with her nieghbours Cameroon, Niger, Togo and

Chad Republics in August 2019 to stop the influx of illicit goods into the country. In order to buttress our arguments, it reveals the ECOWAS Treaty and Free Movement Protocols of Persons, Goods, Residence and Establishment. It observes that Nigeria's border closure is contrary to the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol of Persons and Goods as well as not in line with her foreign policy principles of respect to international law and treaties, and that of African cooperation, progress and unity. The border closure has both negative and positive impact on Nigeria. Domestically she is bolstering food production and raising national productivity levels. But on the foreign scene, Nigeria is suffering the closure as Ghanaian authorities have shut down Nigerian owned businesses in Ghana. It concludes that Nigeria's actions raise important concerns about the seriousness and prospects of regional integration in Africa.

Introduction

The closure of Nigeria's land borders in August, 2019 has raised concerns about the validity and essence of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Treaty which permits the free movement of people and goods across West Africa. Since its foundation in 1975 by Nigeria and Togo through their respective Heads of State, General Yakubu Gowon of Nigeria and General Eyadema of Togo, ECOWAS has become a model regional body with several common institutions such as the ECOWAS parliament, ECOWAS court, ECOWAS Passport, Regional Force (ECOMOG) (Rasheed, 2020). The ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol of 1979 has developed into one of the cornerstones upon which the whole regional integration agenda has come to rest. The sub-regional body identified and leveraged on migration as nexus between development, trade and integration deploy various instruments to encourage mobility of persons and goods within the region. It therefore, has encouraged regular migration amongst Community citizens, within and outside the sub-region (Elumelu, 2015:275).

Since every sovereign state exists and operates within a much larger community of States, it has to operate within other sovereign members of that Community. Foreign policy is the primary instrument for the relationship, and its goal is to protect and promote the national interest of the country (Akindele, 1996, 93). Therefore, Mbachu (2011) in Abagen and Tyona (2019:125) notes that in both national and international settings, the concept of national interest has meant different things to Heads of State, Statesmen, the press and the general public. Broadly speaking, national interest express core socio-economic and political ideals, values and aspirations which are well defended at home and pursued or promoted or defended beyond national boundaries. Operationally, national interest expresses manifesting public serving policies which make for, or promote core values held high and proud by the people. The impression therefore is that national interest is not defined by what happens at the domestic setting only, but the sum total of interest pursued or projected, or defended in international setting.

Based on the above therefore, we logically classify national interest into three broad issue areas: (a) primary interest: specifically, primarily interest of any nation State, expresses those policies which make or promote to defend rights to territorial sovereignty and independence, (b) secondary interest: here a nation expresses policies which seek to promote and defend 'national' interest abroad, (c) general interest: A nation's 'general interest' expresses policies which seek among others to promote world peace and security (cited in Abagen and Tyona, 2019).

Foreign policy is a dynamic process of interaction between the changing domestic demands and supports and the changing external circumstances. It consists of two elements: national objectives to be achieved and the means for achieving them. The interaction between national goals and the resources for attaining them is the perennial subject to statecraft. In its ingredients the foreign policy of all nations, great and small, is the same (Aluko, 1981:2). Equally, foreign policy is official policies and reactions of any given country in its relations with other countries or international public organisations (Abagen and Tyona, 2020).

Since foreign policy deals with the actions and interactions of one country to another in regards to political, social, cultural, technological and economic aspects, therefore, Ogunwusi et al (2019) opines that no nation in the world is able to produce

everything her people needs, and that is the reason countries engage in international trade. International transactions are made between countries, international trade and the accompanying financial transactions are generally conducted for the purpose of providing a nation with commodities it lacks in exchange for those that it produces in abundance, such transactions, functioning with other economic policies, tend to improve a nation's standard of living. Much of the modern history of international relations concerns efforts to promote free trade between nations. However, no nation leaves its borders at the mercy of people of other countries so that they can bring in goods without some measure of control. All countries also enact laws to regulate trade between her citizen and citizens of other countries. This is why treaties and agreements are signed among countries.

The long road to regional integration had not been without challenges. The violation and abuse of the ECOWAS Treaty on movement of goods and people, the smuggling of firearms and drugs, human trafficking, trans-border insurgency among several infractions have posed grave threats to the peace, stability and economies of member States. And Nigeria has been more on the receiving end. The closure of Nigeria's borders or partial closure as the case may be was intended to curb these nagging problems. Border closure, however, is a serious decision taken by nations in extraordinary circumstances, especially when going to war, or to protect the country's territorial integrity. But, border closure as a means of fighting smuggling and crime could be a daunting challenge, especially in Africa, where the long porous borders are inhabited by communities of the same ethnic groups, who survive on trans-border commerce and smuggling (Rasheed, 2020).

Trans-border commerce between Nigeria and her neighbours is mutually beneficial. Nigerian traders import grains, tubers, vegetables and livestock from Niger, Benin and Chad Republics to make up for the deficits in Nigeria. The manufactured household products and building materials are exported from Nigeria to these countries. These trade exchanges taken globally are an important part of the economy. The infractions which come with these commercial exchanges need not lead to bringing down the entire system, which the border closure seems to portend. Millions

of Nigerians have been living in peace for generations in several West African and African countries, and some have been fully integrated into the host countries. There are at least two million Nigerians in Cote d' Ivoire, three million in Cameroon and the Nigerian population in Benin and Niger Republics may be as high as 30 percent of the entire population. The ECOWAS Treaty on the free movement of people and goods in West Africa is more in Nigeria's interest. After all, how many of these nationals live in Nigeria? (Rasheed, 2020). Therefore, this paper seeks to examine Nigeria's border closure and effect on foreign policy. In order to equip analysis, the paper further explores the ECOWAS Treaty and Free Movement Protocol, among others.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is ideologies that describe, analyze and explain why things happen or exist in the society. In an attempt to explain socio-political issues that affects the society, especially in academic research without a theoretical support can be quite frustrating (Abagen and Tyona, 2018:189). Therefore, this study is anchored on the realist theory.

As a political theory, realism can trace its intellectual roots to the ancient Greek historian, Thucydidcs and his account of the Peloponnesian wars between Athens and Sparta (431-404, B.C.E), the writings of Kautilya (Minister to the Maurya Emperor of India more than two thousand years ago), and especially, the sixteenth-century political thought of the Italian theorist Niccolo Machiavelli and seventeenth - century English philosopher, Thomas Hobbes. Realism as applied to contemporary world politics views the State, which should answer to no higher political authority, as the most important actor on the world stage. Moreover, conflicts of interests among States are assumed to be inevitable. Realism also emphases the ways in which the anarchical nature of international politics dictate the choices that foreign policy makers, as rational problem solvers who must calculate their interest in terms of power, must make (Kegley, 2007:29).

The realist theory according to Abia (2000) is a paradigm based on the premise that world politics is essentially and unchangeably a struggle among self-interested States for power and position under anarchy, with each competing State pursuing its own national interests. Among the principal prophets of this new world view were E.H. Carr (1939), George F.

Kennan (1951, 1954), Hans J. Morgenthan (1948), Reinhold Niebuhr (1947) and Kenneth W. Thompson (1960). To Kegley (2007:29-30) within the realist paradigm, the purpose of statecraft is national survival in hostile environment. To this end, no means are more important than the acquisition of power, and no principle is more important than self-help. In this conception, State sovereignty, a cornerstone that realist in the seventeenth century wrote into international law, gives Heads of State the freedom and responsibility to do whatever is necessary to advance the State's interests and survival. One of the assumptions of the realist theory is that, the primary obligation of every state is the goal to which all other national objectives should be subordinated, is to promote national interests and to acquire power for this purpose.

In view of the above therefore, the realist theory is relevant to this study based on the premise that an effective foreign policy must be planned and projected to achieve a nation's national interest. It encompasses socio-political and socio-economic development that will be beneficial to its citizenry and at the same time enhance and foster political and economic gains in the international arena.

Nigeria Foreign Policy Objectives, Principles and Features: A Brief Review

The main objectives and principles of Nigeria's foreign policy include: (a) the defense of our sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity (b) the creation of the necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which will facilitate the defense of the independence and territorial integrity of all African countries while at the same time, foster national self-reliance and rapid economic development, (c) the promotion of equality and self-reliance in Africa and respect for human dignity especially the dignity of black men, (d) the defense and promotion of world peace (e) promotion and protection of the national interest, (f) promotion of the total liberation of African colonial rule and support of African unity, (g) promotion of international cooperation for the consolidation of universal peace and mutual respect among all nations and elimination of racial discrimination in all its manifestations, (h) respect for international law and treaty obligations as well as the seeking of settlement of international disputes by negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and adjudication, (i) promotion of a just world order (1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Gubak, 2015).

The ECOWAS Treaty and Free Movement Protocol

The ECOWAS Treaty and Free Movement Protocol in light of the aim of the organization which was to "create the legal basis for strengthening regional economic integration through the movement of goods, services, capital and people and to consolidate peace and security among member States". In 1979, the Commission's Protocol on Free Movement was conceived as an instrument to enable free movement of ECOWAS citizens within the Sub-region. The adopted protocol relates to the Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment. This protocol emphasized the right of the citizens of ECOWAS to enter, reside and establish economic activities in their territory. It gave a clearly defined outline of a three-stage implementation period-visa-free travel, right of residence, and right of establishment which was to last for at least five years. In line With this, Article 27 of the ECOWAS protocol confirmed a long-term objective to establish a community citizenship that could be acquired automatically by all citizens of ECOWAS member States. This support is the introductory statement of the treaty which emphasized the objective of removing obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods and capital in the West African sub-region (Elumelu, 2015:281-282).

Furthermore, the first phase of the protocol on the Free Movement of Persons guaranteed free entry into Member State without visa for ninety days. The right of entry, residence and establishment were to be progressively established within fifteen years from the definitive date of entry into force of the protocol. The implementation of the first phase over the first five years abolished requirements for visas and entry permit. Community citizens in possession of valid travel documents and international health certificate could enter member states without visa for up to ninety days. Member States can refuse admission into their territories commonly named inadmissible immigrants under its laws (Elumelu, 2015:282).

On the other hand, in a situation of expulsion of a citizen, the member States would guarantee the security of the citizen, his property and family. However, developments occurred in the 1980s and early 1990s. The ECOWAS treaty was revised after several decades of its adoption. Following this was the adoption of a revised ECOWAS Treaty in 1993. The revised ECOWAS Treaty affirmed the right of citizens of the Community to entry, residence and settlement

and enjoined member States to recognize these rights in their respective territories. The revised treaty also called the attention of member States to take all necessary steps at the national level to ensure that the provisions are duly implemented. Later, ECOWAS Ministers met on May 12, 2000 and agreed to introduce a new passport in three categories for it's citizens-red for diplomatic, blue for service and green for the ordinary group (ECOWAS, 2000 cited in Elumelu, 2015). Therefore, Elumelu further stressed that the travelling document has helped in facilitating free movement of persons and goods in the West African region.

In the same vein, the implementation of ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and Goods has positively impacted on the sub-region. The Treaty and Revised Treaty, Protocols A/Pl/5/79, A/SP2/7/85, A/SP1/7/86, A/SP1/6/88, A/SP2/5/90, relating to Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment, Protocol A/P.5/5/82 on Interstate Road Transit of Goods; Convention A/P2/5/82 on Interstate Road Transportation between ECOWAS Member States; Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/85 on the Code of Conduct for the Implementation of Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment; and Supplementary Convention A/SP.1/5/90 on a Community Guarantee Mechanism for Interstate Road Transit of Goods (ECOWAS, 1999, Ibeanu, 2007 in Elumelu, 2015).

In addition, the free movement of persons without visa within West Africa region, according to Elumelu (2015:283) has been one of the achievements made by the sub-regional organization. This has been significant in the area of monetary policy, communication, and trade, reflected in the introduction of ECOWAS travelers' cheque and the proposed adoption of a common currency to facilitate cross-border trade transactions. Equally, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has also documented some success in regional integration in Africa. The introduction of ECOWAS passport in respect of free movement of people is included in this catalogue of success, as it has contributed towards eliminating barriers to the cross-border movement of ECOWAS citizens, and the promotion of common identity for these citizens.

Nigeria's Border Closure and Effect on Foreign Policy

On August 20, 2019, President Muhammadu Buhari of Nigeria closed its land borders with Benin, Togo, Niger, Cameroon and Chad citing the irate level of smuggling of goods into the country, especially staple food commodities like rice, cooking (vegetable) oil, poultry, tomato, flour and pasta. The closure of Nigeria's land borders has now been fully consolidated with further restrictions on import and export of goods through land borders (Abia, 2020). The foregoing assertion is contrary to the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol, A/P.5/5/82 on interstate road transit of goods. It does not encourage sub-regional integration with other ECOWAS member States.

Nigeria's 2017 Economic Recovery and Growth plan revealed the aim of deepening investments and increasing the sector's contribution to economic growth from 5 percent in 2017 to 8.4 percent by 2020. The idea is to revive domestic farming and save on food imports which account for over $22 billion a year. It is this national plan that precipitated the border closure in which the Nigerian government wants to protect domestic farmers from cheap importation of foodstuff. While Nigerian rice farmers are happy about their government's actions, there are genuine concerns about whether domestic production can meet with domestic demand. In 2017, the demand for rice in Nigeria reached 6.7 million tons, almost double the 3.7 million tons produced domestically. Consequently, since the border closure, the price of a 50 kilogramme bag of rice has increased from ₦9,000 ($24) to ₦22,000 ($61). So while the move may be welcomed by farmers, consumers will bear the brunt of the cost (The Conversation, 2019; Ogunwusi, et al, 2019).

Since the border closure announcement and its implementation in August, inflation has been on the rise. Abia (2020) notes that the latest Consumer Price Index (CPI) reports released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in November, 2019 proved that the year-on-year food inflation rate increased from 13.2 percent in August 2019 to 13.51 percent in September 2019 and then from 13.51 percent in September 2019 to 14.09 percent in October 2019. This was a 1.33 percent month-on-month increase, with rice, poultry products, frozen fish, cooking oil/fats and bread/cereals recording the highest increase in cost prices nationally. A huge contrast with regards to decelerating food

inflation rates usually recorded during a harvest season. With the food sub index of the CPI recording 18 months high in October 2019, it unsurprisingly contributed to the rise in CPI from 11.24 percent in September 2019 to 11.61 percent in October 2019.

Again, staple food commodities like rice, vegetable (cooking) oil, frozen fish, poultry products and packed beef are among the highest hit on the national spectrum in terms of the inflation in food prices since the enforcement of Nigeria's land border policy. Rice as one of the main national staple food commodity unsurprisingly has claimed its place as a topic for constant national debate. With context to its massive demand, inability of domestic supply to meet demand, cultural reverence and taste preference, it is inevitable to discuss the land closure without talking about rice. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that local demand for rice in Nigeria alone is at 7.3 million metric tons yearly. Currently, local production stands at 4.8million tons yearly. This suggests that the inability of domestic supply to meet local food demand will cost an inflation of food prices when and if food imports are proscribed (Abia, 2020). Therefore, since the well-being and welfare of the citizenry is one of the attributes of Nigeria's foreign policy thrust, the inflation on food prices in Nigeria as a result of government's closure of its borders does not tell well of a robust foreign policy that is beneficial to its citizens. The effect of this inflation of food prices has cost a lot of pain to the ordinary Nigerian who barely eats one square meal per day.

With Benin and Togo posturing themselves as entrepôt States to Nigeria, where Nigeria's manufacturing and agro production distortions are actively exploited, Nigeria's consumption habits over the last three decades has been shaped by its over dependence on imports from the re-exports of these two neighbouring entrepôt States (in particular) into the country. Given the significance of food import via the entrepôt States for meeting the observed supply gap, abrupt closure of the land border cut the supply channel, further entrenching the observed supply gap. This is where the excess demand is now driving up prices (Abia, 2020). Importantly, rice was being brought into Nigeria, where consumers favour imported Asian-grown varieties over the locally growing competitor, from Benin via its port in Cotonou (Bouillon, 2019), This

does not go well for the Nigerian foreign policy objective of promotion and protection of her national interest, when she is over-dependent or rely mostly on food import via the entrepôt States to meet up with her food demands. Therefore, the Nigeria's border closure has negative effects on her foreign policy.

To Abia (2020), for a country with the highest number of extremely poor people in the world, any significant spike in food inflation can cause devastating effects to its already poor population, making social upward mobility more difficult. Hence, policies that further reduce purchasing power predispose the poor to higher vulnerability.

In another related development, speaking on the closure of Nigeria land borders, Frederick Nwokuleme, opines that it has some positive impact, but stated that the negative impact outweighed the positive impact. According to him, the closure has negatively affected businesses that buy their raw materials from Nigeria's neighbours and others that sell their products in the neighbouring countries, adding that many of the businesses have to lay off staff and reduced their operations. These countries that benefit from the open border, since we have closed it, even though we used to export to them before, you don't expect to get the level of cooperation that we are getting before, because they are hit hard by those closed borders (Ogunwusi et al, 2019).

When the Nigerian government closed its borders with her neigbours, equally, the Ghanaians shut down Nigerian-owned businesses and the Ghanaians officials went far as closing almost 70 businesses belonging to Nigerians. Ghanaians claimed that foreign retailers (referring to Nigerians) violated section 27 of the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC) Act 865, which stipulates that "the sale of goods or provision of services in market, petty trading or hawking or selling of goods in a stall at any place" must be reserved only for Ghanaian citizens. However, many believed that the action by the Ghana Union of Traders' Association (GUT A) was a response to the decision by the Nigerian government to close its borders. GUTA stated that the closure of Nigeria's trade border with its neighbours is against the ECOWAS treaties (Ogunwusi, 2019). Therefore, both Nigeria and Ghana acted contrary to the ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols, A/Pl/5/79, A/SP2/7/85, A/SP1/7/86,

A/SP1/6/88, A/SP2/5/90, relating to Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment.

Most critically and fundamentally is the often overlooked need for cooperation in the judicious preservation and exploitation of life-sustaining trans-border natural resources such as rivers, lakes and seas shared by several countries. River Niger, for example, traverses several West African countries from Guinea - Conakry to Nigeria. The local populations in these countries rely on the river for transport, power generation, fishing, farming and animal husbandry. If Guinea, Mali and Niger Republics or any of them should maliciously divert the waters of River Niger upstream for irrigation or dam it, there will be no Kainji Dam in Nigeria, River Niger in Nigeria will be reduced to a stream or rivulet. Lake Chad suffered its present cruel fate because the rivers which flowed into it from Chad and Central Africa were diverted for irrigation upstream. Lake Chad was the sixth largest lake in the world in 1960. It has now shrunk by over 90 percent, leading to the displacement of millions of farmers, fishermen, hunters, and herders. The displacement of over 20 million people, who once lived around the lake, is fuelling or directly responsible for the insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria. Therefore, the essence of these examples is to show that nations depend so much on one another than we can possibly imagine. If retaliatory actions should be taken against Nigeria now or in future based on the present border crises, the consequences may be devastating (Rasheed, 2020).

Furthermore, there is the bigger problem of government-subsidized petroleum being smuggled out of Nigeria and sold in neigbouring countries. World Bank data shows that between 2010 and 2016, the average pump price of petrol was $0.52 per liter in Nigeria, $1.01 in Benin, $ 1.14 in Cameroon and $1.04 in Niger. Current data show that petrol is sold at $0.40 per liter in Nigeria and $ 0.91 and $0.91 and $1.07 in Benin and Cameroon respectively. The price difference creates the incentive to smuggle petrol out of Nigeria (The Conversation, 2019). In addition, sales of gasoline in Nigeria fell by 12.7 percent after the border closure, which indicates that millions of subsidized liters are being taken abroad for resale (Bouillon, 2019).

In another dimension, in early 2019, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) came into force after its ratification by a sufficient number of African countries making a critical milestone in the Pan-African trade journey. The AFCFTA is predicted to boost the combined consumer and business spending and increase intra African trade by at least 53.2 percent. To accomplish this, AFCFTA members are committed to disciplines on trade in goods, including commitment to refrain from quantity restrictions, (reciprocal) Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) status, and various annexes aimed at streamlining border-processes with rules on customs cooperation and mutual administrative assistance, trade facilitation, transit and transit facilitation, and non-tariff barriers trading under the AFCFTA framework is slated to start in July 2020. Yet, recent developments suggest many African countries are worrisomely unprepared to implement their AFCFTA commitments when these go into effect. The World Bank has estimated 80 percent of imports into Benin are destined for Nigeria. In August, just some few months after celebrating the signing of the AFCFTA, Nigeria slammed a ban on the movement of all goods from countries which it shares a land border: Benin, Niger and Cameroon, effectively banning all trade import and export with its neighbours. The closure of the Nigerian border goes against the spirit, which the AFCFTA Reflecting Agenda 2063 aspires to "create a continental market with free movement of persons, capital, goods and services" (Ogunwusi et al, 2019).

In sum, Nigeria acted just a few months after it had signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. With 55 member's countries, a combined GDP of $2.4 trillion and a total population of 1.2billion, the agreement will create the world's largest free trade area. Its aim is to promote intra-African trade, which is abysmally low at 16 percent. To restrict trade flow so shortly after this momentous feat is a major blow to integration efforts (The Conversation, 2019). This act by the Nigerian government is not in line with her foreign policy objectives of promotion of international cooperation, support for African unity and progress as well as respect for international law and treaty obligations.

Finally, to Ogunwusi et al, (2019) it is not just AfCFTA, Nigeria's border closure is also inconsistent with, its 44 years long commitment to ECOWAS, West Africa's Regional Economic

Community which Nigeria spearheaded in 1975 and is one of the eight building blocks of the AfCFTA. Under the ECOWAS Protocol, member States committed to the establishment of a common market, including "the liberalization of trade by abolition, among member Stales, of custom duties levied on imports and exports and the abolition among member States, of non-tariff barriers in order to establish a free area". Specifically, all 15 ECOWAS countries are committed to eliminating customs duties, quotas and quantity restrictions and accord other Most Favoured Nation treatment. And as a member of the World Trade Organization (WHO) since 1995, Nigeria is bound to comply with similar commitments at multilateral level. Its border closure is inconsistent with Nigeria's key multilateral commitments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper takes a bird's eye view on Nigeria's borders closure and effect on foreign policy through a vigorous analysis. Border closure is not new on the African continent. Rwanda briefly closed its border with Democratic Republic of Congo in regards to the Ebola outbreak in early 2019, Sudan closed its border with Libya and the Central African Republic for security reasons as well as Kenya suspended cross border trade with Somalia for security reasons too. Nigeria's border closure, however differs from the above incidents, it has been adopted to respond to trade-related issues, which the Nigerian government claims the policy will help curb smuggling of goods through its land borders, thereby boosting domestic food production and national productivity levels in all sectors.

Nigeria's socio-economic challenges are more than what a mere border closure can address. Open border or market is responsible for the economic woes in Nigeria. A nation which opens its market to all and sundry imported goods is bound to have some serious contending issues with poverty and unemployment. The competition with foreign products and goods has in the past decades forced the closure of many brands and companies in Nigeria, such as, the assembly plant of Peugeot automobile which were used by government officials and the general public, the textile industries in Kaduna and Kano, the Bata shoes, the Michelin and Dunlop tyres

among others have been crippled along with hundreds of thousands of their employees. It is important to note that, developed economies rather open their borders, but closed their markets. China, other Asian Tiger countries and India are examples of such countries.

The closure of Nigeria's borders with her neighbours means defying regional and international treaties which is contrary to ECOWAS free movement protocol of persons and goods as well as her foreign policy objectives of promotion of African cooperation, progress and unity and obligations to international treaties. With the recent global outbreak of the Coronavirus tagged COVID-19, Nigeria's borders closure can be seen as a preventive measure to stop the widespread of the virus from entering into the Nigerian soil. The paper recommends that the Nigerian government should learn to deploy technology in monitoring activities with her land borders within her neighbours, rather than resort to its closure.

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AN ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ON TAX ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focused on an assessment of information and communication technology on effective tax administration in Nigeria. Its specific objectives were to conceptually assess how online tax filing, e-registration and tax identification

can affect tax administration in Nigeria. It was a library type of research and employed secondary sources of information like journal articles, seminar papers, textbooks, theses. It carefully reviewed related extant literatures to evaluate what have been done and identify existing gaps. Following conceptual review of related studies, the study showed that there were divergences in results, but most studies still provide empirical evidence that information and communication technology has been accepted and has improved tax administration in Nigeria. It was also observed that few studies within the context of Nigeria specifically examined information and communication technology from the perspective of online registration, filing, tax identification number and tax remittance in relation to tax administration of government revenue generation. This paper concluded that use of information and communications technology like internet, could enhance effective tax administration in Nigeria and therefore, recommends that tax authorities in Nigeria should give adequate education to tax payers in the area of online tax filing, online tax registration and tax identification number. Consequently, further study should empirically re-examine the study.

Introduction

The issue of tax administration has been in existence and could be traced to ancient civilization in Egypt, Rome, Greek, and Mesopotamia. Tax administration as means of generating revenue for government expenditure on capital projects, recurrent expenses, security and social infrastructure all over the world is undeniable (Adeyeye, 2019). In Nigeria, the government's sources of revenue to perform the functions of the state are derived from both tax and non-tax revenue sources (Omolehinwa & Naiyeju, 2011). However, Ogbonna and Appah (2012) posited that there is the need for a well-

structured tax system for a country to attain the requisite infrastructural development. But the daunting task of boosting the revenue in the modern times necessitates the adoption of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for tax administration (Adeyeye, 2019). The adoption of ICT requires a competitive business, trust and security, interoperability and standardization and adequate financial resources (Uvaneswaran & Mellese, 2016). This requires the implementation of sustainable measures to improve access to the internet and telecommunications infrastructure and increase ICT literacy, as well as development of local internet-based content that will boost tax administration.

Deployment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in tax administration has the following features: capacity to capture taxpayer information to include personal, business, employment and assets data in a single profile, profile taxpayers, assets, businesses and assess taxpayer based on data captured and profiled, send notifications, on line tax registration, provides multiple modes of settlement, online real-time receipt and online Tax Clearance Certificate (TCC) application (Ajala & Adegbie, 2020). Efunboade (2014) indicated that emerging global infrastructures such as Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN), Factual Accurate Complete Timely Project (FACT) and Integrated System of Tax Administration (ITAS) could make it increasingly possible for eligible taxpayers to pay tax online anywhere and anytime.

With the advent of information and communications technology, it became imperative for tax administrators to take advantage of the emerging capabilities created by Information and Communication Technology to enhance tax administration. With the use of the modern information technology, it seems to be a difficult task for tax evaders not to pay tax. Oseni (2016) noted that information technology has brought many innovations to the administration of tax in Nigeria and this has invariably increased the net revenue collected. With the expansion in scope of operations and growth of businesses in the Nigerian economy, the Nigerian tax system embarked on several reforms geared towards enhancing tax administration. Prior to automation of tax administration, there used to be a time when payment of tax was side tracked or converted at the collecting banks, reconciliation of accounts took an inordinate

amount of time due to manual processes and a time when taxpayers had to carry enormous amounts of cash in order to fulfill their tax obligations (Usman, 2013). Presently, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) is the agency primarily charged with the responsibilities of accessing, collecting and accounting for the various taxes to the federal government of Nigeria, while other states Inland Revenue service accounts to respective states. However, tax administration in Nigeria has been plagued with myriads of problems and difficulties such as tax payers registration, tax payers identification and payment of tax, most of which can be attributed to the lack of or inadequate application of information technology otherwise known as digitalisation in tax administration (Adeyeye, 2019; Ajala & Adegbie, 2020). The use of manual computation by tax administrators and agencies in Nigeria created problems resulting to persistent delay in tax assessments, inaccuracies and errors, loss of tax revenue generation due to inadequate tax payers database, non-tax compliance, increasing tax evasion, ineffective tax assessment and returns, high level of professional incompetence and unskilled tax administrators, huge reported unethical sharp practices and corruption cases (Ayodeji, 2016; Ifere & Eko, 2014). These lingering challenges in use of manual computation of tax assessment are quite disturbing due to ineffective and inefficient tax administration resulting in loss of tax revenue generation for expenditure.

Few existing studies on information and communication technology in relation to tax administration in Nigeria were focused specifically on ICT skills, infrastructure, tax accountability, revenue generation, tax productivity and tax implementation (Adeyeye, 2019; Olatunji & Ayodele, 2019; Ajala & Adegbie, 2020). Studies from Nigeria have not adequately addressed how information and communication technology could assist in enhancement of tax administration. It is this gap in knowledge that this study desires to fill. The specific objectives of this study are to conceptually review the effect of online tax filing; online tax registration, online tax payer identification number and online Tax Remittance can affect tax administration in Nigeria which has not been given adequate attention. This is the gap in knowledge this study desires to fill.

Conceptualisation of Literature

Taxation Administration

Tax is a compulsory levy imposed by a public authority on incomes, consumption and production of goods and services. Taxes are levied on personal incomes (consisting of salaries, business profits, interest income, dividends, royalties etc   (Ishola, 2019). Taxation is a process of administering the tax system of a country with respect to revenue generation through the income of individuals and the profits of companies (Okauru, 2011). Taxation is defined as a compulsory exaction of money by a public authority for public purpose and also as a system of raising money for the purpose of government by means of contributions by individual persons or corporate body (Soyode & Kajola, 2006). Tax administration therefore involves all the principles and strategies adopted by any government in order to plan, impose, collect, account, control, and coordinate the process of taxation (Ogbonna, 2010). It also includes the effective use of tax revenue for efficient provision of necessary social amenities and facilities for the tax payers. Tax administration consists of the tax authorities charged with the responsibility of implementing the tax laws in accordance with the set guidelines (Ogbonna, 2010). The Taxes and levies (Approved list for collection) Decree No 21 of 1998 as amended in 2015 define tax authority to mean the Federal Inland Revenue service, state board of internal revenue and the local government revenue committee. Tax administration exists to ensure compliance with the tax laws. This administrative dimension of taxation has long been recognized by tax administrators especially those working on tax policy in developing countries (Alm 1999).

One has to bear in mind that tax policies and tax administration are interrelated spheres (Siehl 2010). Tax administration implementation involves material, personnel, information, laws and procedures to achieve government revenue, tax payer equity and social welfare. This suggests a range of input that government can pursue to increase tax administration output. However, an equally important aspect of tax administration is the desirability of these policies or their impact on equity and welfare. The untrustworthy evidence is that both tax policy and tax administration affect the productivity of the tax system; for instance a tax legislation which provides for several complex exemptions and

deductions and multiple tax rates is difficult to efficiently administer and compliance by tax payer will not be easy, the simplification of the tax system is generally emphasized in tax reform (Ifueko 2012). According to Siehl (2010), tax policy directly affects the cost and the organization of tax administration. The prime aim of tax administration in most nations of the world is essentially to generate revenue for government expenditure on social welfare such as provision of defense, law and order, health services, and education.

Tax Laws and Policies in Nigeria

Tax laws and Policies refer to the embodiment of rules and regulations relating to tax revenue and the various kind of tax in Nigeria made by the legislative arms of government and constantly subjected to amendment (Ogbonna & Appah (2012). The following are some of the prevailing tax laws in Nigeria (Kiabel and Nwokah (2009; Nnamdi, Akinwunmi & Obiagbaoso, 2021: Finance Act 2020): Personal Income Tax Act (PITA) CAP P8 LFN 2004, Company Income Tax Act (CITA) CAP 60. LFN 1990& LFN 2004, Petroleum Profit Tax Act (PPTA) 2004 &2007,Value Added Tax (VAT) Act No 102 LFN 1993&2004, Capital Gain Tax Act CAP 42 LFN 1990, Stamp Duties Act CAP 41 LFN 1990, Education Tax Act No 7 LFN 1993& 2004, Federal Inland Revenue Service Act 2004, Customs, Excise Tariffs, (Consolidation) Act 2004, National Sugar Development Act 2004; and National Automotive Council Act 2004, Information Technology Development Act 2007. Based on the report of the Presidential Committee on National Tax Policy (2008) the National tax policy provides a set of rules, modus operandi and guidance to which all stakeholders in the tax system most subscribe.

The formulation of tax administration policy in the country is vested on the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Customs, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), National Population Commission (NPC), and other agencies but under the guidance of the National Assembly (Presidential committee on National tax policy, 2008). Recent reforms in tax laws in country resulted into the promulgation of Tertiary Education Trust Fund Act 2011, Personal Income Tax Act and Federal Capital Territory Act 2015.

Information and Communication Technology

Information technologies are tools, devices, and resources used to communicate, create, manage, and share information. They include hardware (computers, modems, and mobile phones), software (computer programs, mobile phone applications), networks (wireless communications, Internet) and basically concerned with collecting, processing, storing, and transmitting relevant information to support the management operations in any organizations (Adewoye & Olaoye, 2014).It is a system that provides historical information on current status and projected information, all appropriately summarized for those having an institutions or forms (Adigbole & Olaoye, 2013). Obi (2003) opine that information technology is useful in the area of decision making as it can monitor by itself disturbances in a system, determine course of action and take action to get the system in control. Adewoye and Olaoye (2009) stated that the future planning information technology is built using the following; people, data processing, data communication, information system and retrieval and system planning. However, information and communication technology include internet, television, sms

ICT Intervention in Tax Administration

Electronic taxation system was introduced in Nigeria by Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) in the year 2013 (Olaoye & Atilola, 2018). Meanwhile, Cobham (2010) noted that electronic tax system was introduced globally about 30 years ago. It started in 1986 as a little computer test programme in which only five tax payers from Cincinnati, Raleigh Durham, and Phoenix decided to partake. As at today, it is about 35 years electronic tax system has become a common channel, serving various tax payers across the globe yearly. The tax administration in Nigeria has been automated which also include electronic processes and tailored made projects to address specified areas of the tax system.

Online tax filing

The electronic filing or online filing of tax returns is a general term for electronic filing or electronic lodgment or electronic declaration of tax returns through submission of tax data to a taxing authority in a computer file format through an internet connection

(Ibrahim, 2012). Wasao, (2014) defined online tax filing system as an electronic platform designed for taxpayers in accessing all online services via the internet including registering and obtaining a personal identification number, lodging filed returns, applying for and printing compliance certificates. Mandola (2013), defined electronic filing as an internet based system that enables the taxpayers to register and submit their tax returns over the internet. The platform or system could have inbuilt software that has been pre-approved by the relevant tax authority to assist the taxpayers in calculating and consequently submit the correct amount of tax due (Mandola, 2013). The e-filing incorporates the process of registration, tax preparation, tax filing and tax payment (Lukorito, 2012). The taxpayer requires access to a computer, the tax software, a reliable internet connection and the knowledge to utilize the electronic filing (Hussein, Mohamed, Ahlan, Mahmud & Aditiawarman, 2010).

There are several advantages associated with the online tax filing including convenience as the filing can be done any time (day and night) and within one's own comfort (Geetha & Sekar, 2012). There is also an element of the certainty of delivery and quick confirmation of the delivery as the online tax system confirms successful receipt of the taxpayers' submission. The online tax returns also eliminate data entry errors as the system automatically ensures that the data has been filled in the correct places (Hussein *et al.,* 2010). Finally, document handling and storage is easier (Lukwata, 2011).

Electronic tax filing originated from the United States, where her Internal Revenue Services (IRS) began offering tax return e-filing for tax refunds only (Muita, 2011). This has now grown to the level that currently approximately one out of every five individual taxpayers is now filing electronically. This however, has been as a result of numerous enhancements and features being added to the program over the years. Today, electronic filing has been extended to other developed countries like Australia, Canada, Italy United Kingdom, Chile, Ireland, Germany, France, Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Singapore, Brazil, Mexico, India, China, Thailand, Malaysia and Turkey (Ramayah, Ramoo & Amlus, 2006). Nigeria and other developing countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya have also embraced electronic filing of tax returns

(Muita, 2011).

Online tax registration

According to Deloitte (2013), taxpayer registration is the process, by which the tax authorities collect basic taxpayer identification information such as names, addresses, and legal entity types. This information allows the tax authority to know who its taxpayers are, where they are located, and whether they are active or inactive. Modern tax administrations also collect compliance information such as business activity types or estimated turnover, to plan future compliance activities. During registration, most tax authorities issue a unique Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) and a registration certificate, and provide the new taxpayer with information on his or her filing and payment obligations. Tax collection and administration can be improved through measures such as: shifting towards an electronic tax payer registration system where a uniform Personal Identification Number (PIN) would apply regardless of whether a tax payer is registering for individual tax, corporation tax or VAT (Seelmann *et al.,* 2011). The registration and recording of taxpayer information is one of the fundamental functions of the tax administration and to a great extent, it shows how other core administrative functions operate (Murdoch, 2013). Awitta (2010) noted that online registration of taxpayers led to improved revenue performance, more equitable distribution of the tax burden across the community, more consistency and fairness for business and individuals, greater ability to implement fiscal reforms, reduced compliance costs for taxpayers, an increase in the number of registered taxpayers, a reduction in tax evasion and tax fraud, improved management of tax arrears, improved services to tax payers and, greater transparency and integrity in the administration's operations

Online taxpayer identification

Tax identification number (TIN) is a system, producing special index numbers, issued and assigned to each person registered in its database (Akinleye, Olaoye, & Adeduro, 2019). TIN is an electronic system for taxpayers' registration and it permits easy identification of taxpayers and is available for everybody (Olaoye &

Awe, 2018). The Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) platform enhances taxpayer identification and registration thereby bringing more taxpayers into the tax net; minimizes errors and mistakes associated with manual registration and filling of existing loopholes in the country's tax system((Olaoye & Awe, 2018). Taxpayer identification number (TIN) is concerned with minimizing mistakes and errors associated with registering manually and strengthening existing weaknesses in the tax system of the country (Akinleye, et al., 2019). According to Federal Inland Revenue Services (2015), Tax Identification Number (TIN) is a unique number allocated and issued to identify a person (Individual or Company) as a duly registered taxpayer in Nigeria. Ezugwu and Agbaji (2014) defined Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN) as a 10 (ten) digit number that is exclusive to one taxpayer and taxable companies that earn a stable income.

The introduction of TIN became effective in Nigeria from February 2008. TIN is a 10(ten) digit number, that is given exclusively to only a taxpayer and taxable companies that earn a consistent income (Ezugwu & Agbaji, 2014). TIN in Nigeria is an idea developed by the Joint Tax Board (JTB), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and State Boards of Internal Revenue (SBIR) for the 36 states of Nigeria (Joint Tax Board Handbook, cited in Olaoye & Awe 2018). The introduction of Tax Identification Number (TIN) is expected to engender increase in the tax revenue because of its electronic enhancement of tax administration. Again, TIN electronically captures more enterprises, individuals, and companies thereby reducing the wide gap between individuals and companies registered in Nigeria with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) and those already in the tax net (Omesi & Nzor, 2015). This implies that TIN has an inbuilt mechanism through which individuals and firms are brought to the tax net. According to Ebifuro, Mienye, and Odubo (2016), TIN helped to accelerate the processing of information of taxpayers and also fosters enforcement and awareness of tax administration and increase revenue generation. Jocet (2014) noted that TIN fosters harmonization and coordination of taxpayers' identification system that is based on the computerized system.

Integrated Tax Administration System – (ITAS)

Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) embarked on an Integrated Tax Administration System (ITAS) project in 2013. ITAS is aimed at enhancing tax administration and simplifying the tax compliance process in Nigeria through the use of technology. The FIRS introduced ITAS in 2013 to improve tax administration in Nigeria and transform the tax compliance process away from the current manual system which is tedious and bureaucratic. The role of ITAS is to automate all core processes around registration, payment, assessment, debt and credit management, audit and investigation, case management, and returns filing.

Theoretical review

Theories underpinning this study are as follow:

Ability to pay theory

Ability to pay theory was developed by Alfred Cecil pigou in 1920 (Kendrick, 1939). This theory is suggesting that people should pay tax according to their ability. It is the most common developed principle of equity or justice in taxation. Individuals should pay taxes to the government in line with their ability to pay (Kendrick, 1939). It seems fair and reasonable that taxes should be imposed on an individual, based on his/her taxable ability (Akinleye, et al., 2019). The establishment of TIN to promote the registration of taxpayers and tax administration without a functioning principle of equity and justice in taxation will minimize the efficiency of the reform. This is because citizens earning meager income will find the tax burden uneasy. Therefore, tax avoidance and evasion will be inevitable (Aguolu, 2001). A situation where citizens are taxed on the same level regardless of the difference in the income made, equity or justice in taxation is long gone and the multiplier effect will be non-compliance with tax laws by those who find it very uneasy to pay because of their meager income (Olaoye & Awe, 2018). It seems that if the taxes are levied on this principle as stated above, then the justice can be achieved and tax evasion and avoidance will reduce to the barest minimum.

Technology Acceptance Model

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) propounded by Davis

(1989). TAM is an information systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology. Davis (1989) presented a theoretical model aiming to predict and explain Information and Communication Technology usage behavior, that is, what causes potential adopters to accept or reject the use of information technology. This model however implies that emerging information technology cannot deliver improved organizational effectiveness if it is not accepted and used by potential users. Technology Acceptance Model is one of the most successful measurements for computer usage effectively among practitioners and academics (Kamel 2004).

The model aims at studying how individual perceptions affect the intentions to use information technology as well as the actual usage. TAM suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors determine their decision about how and when they will use it. The attitude toward adoption will decide the adopter's positive or negative behavior in the future concerning new technology. Perceived usefulness which is "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" and perceived ease of use refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (Davis, 1989).Technology Acceptance Model(TAM) is relevant to this study as the theoretical framework considering the fact that successful implementation of Information and Communication Technology depends largely on the adopter's positive or negative behavior concerning new technology. Taxpayers are prone to effectively utilize the tax administration process using ICT if they perceive the system as being easy to use, easy to learn, easy to remember clear and understandable, easy to become skillful and controllable.

The Current State of the Extant Studies

Allahverd, Alagoz and Ortakapoz (2017) examined the effect of e-taxation system on tax revenue and cost in Turkey, the study used secondary data obtained from the Turkish revenue authority, the data were examined in two groups which are pre-electronic tax period of 1993-2004 and post-electronic tax period of 2005-2016. Mann-Whitney U Test was used to analyze the data. The research also provided information on the electronic transformation of the tax

system and the Turkish Tax System. According to the empirical result of the research, the transition to the electronic tax system positively affected the tax revenues and reduced the cost per tax. Ngozi and Obioma (2018) on the effect of TIN on non-oil tax revenue through a comparative analysis of pre and post TIN years of 2000 to 2015 revealed that there has been a significant increase in total non-oil tax revenue with the introduction of TIN. Data were collected from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Statistical Bulletin (2010). The study employed both descriptive and pairwise t-test statistical techniques for analyses with total non-oil tax revenue as the dependent variable while CIT, VAT, and TET were the independent variables. The study concluded that TIN could engender increase in revenue generation. Olaoye, and Atilola (2018) examined the effect of e-tax payment on revenue generation in Nigeria covering period of six (6) years. It employed trend analysis, descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and paired sampled t-test. The result showed that e-tax payment has an insignificant positive effect on value added tax revenue in Nigeria. Similarly, it was discovered that there was a positive insignificant difference between pre and post company income tax revenue. Lastly, the findings revealed that there is a positive insignificant difference between pre and post capital Gain tax revenue generation in Nigeria.

Also, Chijioke, Leonard, Bossco and Henry(2018) investigated the impact of e-taxation on Nigeria's revenue generation and economic growth, using secondary data obtained from Federal Inland Revenue Services and Central Bank of Nigeria for the period of 4 years (2013- 2016). The study found federally collected revenue and tax GDP ratio significantly decreasing after the introduction and implementation of e-taxation. The study also found that tax revenue decreased after the implementation though the mean difference was not statistically significant. Olaoye and Awe (2018) looked closely at the impact of taxpayer identification number on revenue generation in Ekiti State. Data collected were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The study revealed that full adoption of taxpayer identification number exerts a significant impact on internally generated revenue of the state. Akinleye, *et.al,* (2019) examined the effect of tax identification number on revenue generation in south-west, Nigeria. It is an ex-

post facto research design and questionnaire was the main instrument. The analysis used mean and sampled paired t-test to reveal that there was a positive and significant difference between internally generated revenue.

Adeyeye (2019) investigated the impact of technology innovation on tax administration in Nigeria. Primary Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire administered on 219 staffers of Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) to elicit their responses. Descriptive statistics, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Regression Model were used for the data analysis. The R value depicts that the use of information technology accounted for (76.3%) improvement in tax administration in Nigeria. The results strongly support the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in predicting the intention of users to adopt electronic tax-filing systems. The results also demonstrate the significant effect that computer self-efficacy has on behavioural intention through perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and perceived risk of use.

Olatunji and Ayodele (2019) examined the impact of information technology on tax administration in south west, Nigeria. The study employed descriptive research design and questionnaire as main instrument used to gather data while the statistical tool was multiple regression and pearson product moment correlation. The study revealed that information technology (Online Tax Filing-OTF, Online Tax Registration-OTR and Online Tax Remittance-OTRE) affect tax productivity, there is relationship between OTF, OTR and OTRE on Tax Implementation –TAXIMP. Ajala and Adegbie (2020) investigated the effect of information technology on effective tax assessment in Nigeria. It was a field survey research design and questionnaire was the main instrument. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics used for data analysis revealed that information technology had a positive statistical significant effect on effective tax assessment. The study recommended that the government should provide enabling tax laws as well as simplifying the ambiguities and complexities in some of the existing tax laws to facilitate effective tax assessment in Nigeria.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The thrust of this study is to assess the role of information and

communication technology on tax administration in Nigeria. The goal of tax authorities is to collect the full amount of taxes and duties payable in accordance with the laws. Application of strategies and systems by way of information and communication technology is aimed at enhancing tax administration of revenue generation. Technology acceptance model (TAM) indicated that taxpayers will effectively utilise the process of tax administration if the process of technology (tax registration, tax filing, tax payment and accounting) is very friendly, accurate, complete and timely. Empirical review of extant literature indicated that information and communication technology comprising online tax filing, online tax registration, tax remittance and tax identification were geared towards enhancing tax administration of government revenue generation for expenditure.

Also observations from the review of literature showed that studies from Nigeria on information and communication technology specifically dwelled more on problems and prospects, comfort conditions of tax payers and tax authority, skills, accountability and influence on revenue generation. Very few studies from Nigeria specifically examined information and communication technology from the area of online registration, filing, tax identification number and tax remittance in relation to tax administration of government revenue generation. Though there were divergence in results, but most studies still provide empirical evidence that information and communication technology has been accepted and improved tax administration in Nigeria. In conclusion, information and communication technology can enhance tax administration of government revenue generation in Nigeria.

Following theoretical review of this study, it therefore recommends as follow:
1. That tax authorities in Nigeria should ensure that tax payers are in compliance with online tax filing.
2. That all registered businesses and taxable individuals should be encouraged by the tax authorities for on line tax registration.
3. That tax authorities should give prompt attention to issue of tax identification numbers to taxable individuals and organisations.
4. That online tax remittance should be on secured government account or agency charged with the responsibility.

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CAUSES OF POST-HARVEST LOSSES OF IRISH POTATOES AND CHALLENGES FACING FARMERS IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA.

AN ASSESSMENT OF POST-HARVEST LOSSES OF IRISH POTATOES AMONG THE FARMERS IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

> This study focused on the assessment of post-harvest losses of irish potatoes among irish potatoes farmers in Plateau State, Nigeria. A sample size of four hundred (400) respondents and nine (9) key-informants participated in the study. Five Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the Northern and Central geopolitical zones of Plateau state were purposively selected based on their comparative advantage and economies of scale in production over others. Data was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics and percentages. Findings revealed that the causes of losses are biological, environmental, physiological and mechanical factors. The measures employed by the farmers to minimize these problems include the use of agro-chemicals for storage preservation, careful handling and proper management of produce, regulation of the atmospheric temperature within the Diffused Light Structure (DLS), spreading of Irish potatoes on bare floor and timely sorting of decayed tubers. Virtually, all the methods were incorporated in preventing

the losses. The study recommended for effective agro-chemicals and preservation methods from research outcome to all farmers and the provision of agricultural interventions to curtail PHLs, boost output and increase income of farmers.

Introduction

Irish potatoes is an integral part of the worlds' food supply as the most important non-cereal crop, and the fourth largest food crop after wheat, rice, and maize. It is peculiar to the temperate climatic regions of the world, and it is believed to have originated from Bolivia in South America. It was later introduced to other countries including Ireland where it was produced in large scale and became so popular to have earned the name "Irish potato" (Ifenkwe and Nwokocha 1987, in Ambrose et'al 2013). About 1,300 species (spp) of Irish potatoes exist in the world at present, some of which include Diamant, marabel, Connect, among many others (Ayuba and Kitsche, 2014).

The global production of potato was recorded at 376 million Metric Tonnes (MT) in 2013, and rose to about 381,682,000 MT in 2014. Presently, there are about 155 countries that produce the crop and China is topping the list of world producers with about 95,987,500 tons; the second largest producer is India with a total of 45,343,600 tons and Russia emerges as the third country with 30,199,100 MT. The world's average output is 17 Metric Tons per Hectare (MT/Ha) and New Zealand has the highest yield of 60 - 80 MT/Ha while in sub-Saharan Africa, it is between 6-10 metric tons per hectare (Food and Agricultural Organization Statistical Database, 2017).

The production of Irish potato is very essential since it is the most important tuber in the study area and a major provider of income and staple crop for consumption. It occupies an important position in the lives of the people considering its popularity and increased demand all over the country and beyond. As a result, Irish potato is produced by most farmers in the area especially during the wet season. Whereas, those endowed with irrigation farmlands also engage in irrigation farming of the crop in a bid to improve their income in order to make ends meet. Interestingly, efforts were put

in place by the government to essentially increase the productivity and income of the rural populace.

There have been initiatives on subsidizing agricultural inputs like the importation of improved seed potatoes, fertilizers and agro chemicals as well as the provision of other interventions through agricultural programmes. Some of these programmes include the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA), Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES), Fadama Project, the establishment of the Potato Research Center in Vom as well as the Plateau Agricultural Development Programme (PADP) and many others too numerous to mention. The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) Programme was specifically lunched in 2014 with the mandate of increasing the production and value chain addition on Irish potatoes. These programmes have massively increased the number of small scale farmers who produced potatoes and the volume of production in Plateau state, since almost every household produce the crop.

There is no doubt that the above policies were enacted with the intention of improving the living standard of the farmers. However, Irish potato farmers still experience difficulties in accessing the following government interventions which include adequate supply of subsidized inputs like improved quality and disease free seeds potatoes, agro-chemicals and fertilizers, adequate storage facilities, processing industries, the provision of grants, credit and loan facilities, good marketing systems, farmer education and the availability of basic social amenities which reflects why Irish potato production has continued to be below its potential attainment. Besides, all the stake holders and actors involved in the Irish potato industry are not exempted from the effects of PHLs of Irish potatoes. For instance, the late blight and bacterial wilt of Irish potato have affected all players in the sector.

Studies reveal that several works were conducted in the fields of post-harvest losses of some perishable roots and tuber crops such as Grolleaud (2004), Okonkwo et al, (2009), Ojo, (2014), Abimaje (2014), Bulus (2017), Arnolds and Nge (2019). However, most of the research publications were in the areas of agronomic practices of Irish potatoes, history and emerging problems, Irish potato production, storage and preservation, and numerous others,

but not much has been said on the causes and challenges facing farmers who produce the crop. Therefore, this has created a gap of knowledge in the research area. It is against this back-drop that this study seeks to investigate and fill the gap in knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to determine the effects of post-harvest losses of Irish potatoes on the wellbeing of farmers in Plateau State. While the specific objectives are to;

i.   Investigate the causes of post-harvest losses of Irish potatoes in Plateau state.

iii. Examine the methods adopted by Irish potatoes farmers to reduce the rate of post-harvest losses of Irish potatoes.

Methodology

The study adopted the cross sectional survey design. The study was carried out in Plateau State while the target population of study is the Irish potato farmers; it also comprise the officials of Irish potato related organizations like the Plateau Agricultural Development Programme (PADP), the National Root Crop Research Institute (NRCRI) Vom, who are the promoters of Irish potato production and the training of Irish potato farmers. Plateau state has three senatorial zones which are the Northern, the Central and the Southern zones. Irish potato is basically produced within some LGAs in both the Northern and the Central zones. A total of five LGAs in which almost every farmer (over 95%) produce the crop within the two zones were purposively selected. Three LGAs from the Northern zone and two from the Central zone were considered, each with its population. They are Bokkos (205,793), Mangu (343,956), Jos-North (500,411), Jos-South (356,400) and Barkin-Ladi (205,793), with a total population of 1,612,062.

The Taro Yamane (1967), formula was used to determin the sample size of the population.

The formula is: $n = \dfrac{N}{1+N\,(e)2}$

Where: n = sample size?

N = Population size 1,612,353

e = margin of Error (0.05)

1= constant

$$n = \frac{1,612,353}{1 + 1,612,353 \text{ x } 0.05 \text{ x } 0.05}$$

$$n = \frac{1,612,353}{4,03089.25}$$

$$n = 399.9990077$$

$$n = 400.$$

In order to have an effective distribution of the questionnaires in the selected LGAs, proportionate quota sampling was adopted, this is determined by;

$$\frac{population \text{ } per \text{ } LGA}{Total \text{ } population} \times sample \text{ } size$$

The study adopted the multistage sampling method beginning with cluster sampling technique. Plateau state was clustered into three geopolitical zones of Northern, Central and the Southern areas. However, only nine LGA's within the Northern and Central zones are climatologically inclined to producing the crop. Therefore, purposive sampling technique was used to select five of the LGAs. They include Bokkos and Mangu (Central zone), Jos-North, Jos-South and Barkin-Ladi (Northern zone).

Also, the LGA's were clustered into council wards, from which two wards were selected in each of the LGAs using simple random sampling, giving a total number of ten council wards. The selected council wards were further clustered into communities from which the various households were arrived at using simple random sampling procedure to ensure representation of the entire population. The required sample size of 400 respondents was obtained through haphazard sampling technique. The study also stratified the population based on the categories of Irish potato farmers, which includes males and females, young and old, married and singles, etc. to collect data. Data for the study were collected through the use of structured questionnaire and key informant interview methods and subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used

in analyzing statistical results such as, frequency distribution and simple percentage from the respondents.

Results
Socio-Demographic Variables of the Respondents

This section discusses the socio-demographic characteristics of the farmers in the study. The profiles include gender, age, educational status, occupation, marital status, household size, years of farming experience and farm size. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents assisted the researcher in generalizing statements on the behavior of the respondents.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents According to Socio-demographic Profiles

Variables	Frequency(F) N=400	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	218	54.5
Female	182	45.5
Age (in years)		
below30yrs	102	25.5
31-45yrs	196	49.0
46-55yrs	66	16.5
56-65yrs	27	6.8
66yrs and above	9	2.3
Educational Status		
Primary	27	6.8
Secondary	210	52.5
Tertiary	143	35.8
None	20	5.0
Occupation		
primary occupation (farming)	315	78.8
Secondary occupation(Farming)	85	21.3
Marital Status		
Married	316	79.0

Single	60	15.0
Widow	24	6.0
House Hold Size		
below 5	167	41.8
6-10	199	49.8
11-15	28	7.0
16 and above	6	1.5
Years of Farming Experience		
1-10yrs	182	45.5
11-20yrs	131	32.8
21-30yrs	41	10.3
31-40yrs	34	8.5
41yrs and above	12	3.0
Farm Size of Respondents (in ha)		
less than a hectare	307	76.8
1 hectare	80	20.0
2 hectares	7	1.8
3 hectares and above	6	1.5

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents in table 5 shows that there are slightly more male (54.5%) respondents than females (45.5%) in the population. This indicates a fairly dominance of the male farmers over females in the production of Irish potatoes. The age distribution of Irish potato farmers showed that over 70% of the populations are youths who are below the ages of 30 and 45 years, whereas about 26% of the population ranges between 46 years and above. This implies that majority of the farmers involved in producing Irish potatoes are still in their youthful ages.

The investigation as seen from the table (referred below), revealed that 95% of the population had one form of education or another ranging from primary (6.8%), secondary (52.5%) and tertiary (35.8%), while those without any formal education occupy only 5% of the population. Most of the respondents (78.8%) in the study area basically have farming as their primary and sole occupations, while the remaining 21.3% embraces farming as

secondary occupation. Also a greater portion (79%) of the respondents are married, 15% are single while 6% are widows and widowers.

House-hold size of the respondents refers to the number of persons within the family that feeds from the same source. Result from the analysis shows that 41.8% of the house-hold has below 5 members, 49.8% was between 6 to 10 members while 7% were within the range of 11 to 15 members and 1.5 % was from 16 persons and above. The distribution of farmers based on their years of farming experience showed that over 60% of the farmers have been farming for the past 40 years and 45% have stayed in farming for between 1to10years. About 307 out of the 400 sampled respondents within the population represents about 77% of the population who owns less than a hectare of farm land. This is an indication that most of the farmers are small- holder enterprises.

The Causes of Post-Harvest Losses of Irish Potatoes
This session discusses the PHLs of Irish potatoes. Findings from table 7 revealed that PHLs of Irish potatoes are caused by biological factors, physical or environmental factors, physiological and mechanical factors.

Table 2 Shows the Distribution of the Causes of Post-Harvest Losses of Potatoes

Variables	Frequency N=400	Percentage (%)
Biological factors (disease infections, insects pest and animals)	129	32
Physical and Environmental factors (temperature, relative humidity, solar radiation, atmospheric condition)	84	21
Physiological factors (internal condition of the tuber-turgidity, water and weight loss, duration of dormancy)	11	2.8
	37	9.3
Mechanical factors (damages caused by tools and vehicles)	07	1.2
Loss of moisture (water loss)	132	33
All of the above		

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 2 as seen above shows that 32% of the respondents believed biological factors (disease infections, insect pest and animals) are the cause of PHLs of Irish potatoes. Biological factors are organisms that cause havoc on other living organisms within the environment. These microbial organisms cause diseases infections on the crops. They include fungi, bacteria and yeast. They infect the crop and causes damages which leads to decay of the produce. Some major diseases of Irish potatoes are traced to these organisms.

The late blight and dry rot are infections caused by fungi. The late blight is highly prevalent in the wet season due to high moisture; it easily spread causing serious losses on crop yields while the dry

rot disease takes advantage of high temperature and relative humidity to spread. The bacterial wilt (brown rot) and the soft rot diseases are bacterial infections. The bacterial wilt as the name implies infect the crops from the field causing premature wilting. The infected tubers disintegrate in the store house and become a source of infection to other cultivars. The soft rot infection however forms a soft circular depression at the point of infection and eventually becomes decayed. The disease spread faster among wet tubers in a moist environment.

However, macro-organisms consist of insects, nematodes, rodents and other animals like Monkeys which feed on the tubers right from the farms and in the stores creating an entry point for microbial infections which leads to disintegration of the crop. It is obvious that several disease infections affect Irish potatoes causing a faster rate of disintegration and subsequent decay which leads to PHLs of the crop. The above statement gives a clear indication that biological factors play a major role in PHLs of Irish potatoes. The prevalence of these diseases exists within the production environment affecting the farmers. The intensity of losses prevails from lack of strategies by the farmers to secure Irish potatoes against the wastages experienced after harvest. The discovery from this study agrees with the findings of Okonkwo et'al, (2009) who attested that there was an incidence of seed potato degeneration in 1991 within Mangu and Bokkos as a result of insect infestations that emanates into a huge loss of seed potatoes.

Other respondents (21%) attributed that the causes of the losses of Irish potatoes are physical and environmental factors (temperature, relative humidity and solar radiation). These factors are easily observed physically. They are basically the attributes of atmospheric conditions exerted on the environment. They regulate the atmospheric temperature and moisture content within the environment which helps the farmer to determine when and how to store his produce. Newly harvested Irish potatoes have high degree of water content, and since it gives up moisture, it can be stored under a high relative humidity while a dry tuber which absorbs moisture from the atmosphere can be stored in a moist environment. This technique helps the farmer to better preserve and prolong the shelf life of his crop.

About 4% of the population acknowledged physiological factors (internal condition of the tuber, turgidity, water and weight loss and duration of dormancy) as the source of PHLs of Irish potatoes. The degree of water content of the tuber determines it turgidity or flaccidity. A fresh tuber is hard and turgid; it easily loses weight and shrinks as a result of water loss through transpiration, evaporation and breakage of dormancy. Such condition causes PHLs of the crop since it doesn't attract a high market price for the crop. It is therefore important for the farmer to beware of the duration of storage of Irish potatoes and its effects on the crop. The interplay of the internal activities of the tuber within the environment such as respiration also affects the healthy nature of the crop. It is therefore very necessary to spread Irish potato tubers only few centimeters on each other for a short period of time to avoid spoilage.

Again, 9% feels that the PHLs of the crop were due to mechanical factors (damages caused by working tools and vehicles use in conveying the crops). The working implements of the farmers are crude in nature and these implements which consist of hoes and cutlasses inflict injuries on the tubers. Furthermore, most of the farmers (33%) were of the opinion that all the factors of PHLs affected their produce which virtually inflicted loses on the farmers at various degrees. Since the causes of the losses are diverse, the tendency of loses is seemingly very high judging from the result of the findings. Therefore, the need to employ a multidimensional approach to minimize PHLs of Irish potatoes must be uncompromised. An interview with a staff of the PADP on how farmers lose Irish potatoes from PHLs said:

> The issue of PHLs of Irish potatoes has been a long standing problem of bacterial wilt and late blight of the crop. However, this became very pronounced in recent years when farmers started losing more of their produce. Infections from diseases and insects which may be from the farm or during storage can cause deterioration. Farmers lose Irish potato tubers from injuries during harvesting. The wounded tubers become susceptible to microbial infection, and deterioration occurs in no distant time. Also, unfriendly weather condition due to high temperature can cause tubal rot... Rough handling

of the delicate and fragile tubers as well as inappropriate packaging materials after harvesting can affect the tubers, and sometimes the bark peels off... it becomes wet and drains out water which subsequently decomposes. This easily happens when the tuber is not very matured... the condition is worsened most especially during selection and bagging. Again, the negligence of some farmers allow Irish potato tubers come in contact with water or rain... which also quickens the rate of damages... other tubers become affected and dirty, which reduces the quality and quantity of the produce as well as the income of the farmers (60yrs/ Male KII/Jos/13th Dec, 2018).

The report of the interviewee clearly agrees with the finding above which indicates that Irish potato farmers suffer PHLs in various ways. Therefore it is factual that, PHLs of Irish potatoes occur as a result of deterioration through infections, high temperature, mal-handling and other measures. Also, the lack of proper agronomic management practices shows that diseases can infect the tubers right from the farms. Farmers should be cautious of good on-farm practices and allow the tubers to be mature before harvesting in order to avoid wastages. Deterioration of potatoes could either be wet or dry. The wet decay is often messy with an oozing unpleasant odor due to bacterial infections unlike the dry decay which occurs in a dry form without actually emitting much liquid. An interview was also conducted with a 38 year old farmer in Mangu who stated that;

Harvesting is a delicate process that careful handling and treatment of the tubers should be properly applied. This is because we use either the small or big hoes which inflicts injuries on the tubers....therefore extra carefulness is required else most of the tubers will be wasted since it cannot be sold. Though, it is consumed immediately before it deteriorates (38yrs/Male/KII/ Mangu/27th Dec, 2018).

During harvesting, utmost attention is needed in the process in order to minimize excess damages to the produce than necessary. It is therefore very important to select and keenly guide the persons

involved in this process. This is because the rate of care that could be applied to the process by the adults may be non-commensurate to that exhibited by children. Also, the instrument use is another important factor that contributes to the safety and proper harvesting of Irish potatoes since they are crude.

Another key respondents who is a staff of the NRCRI Vom in Jos-South LGA was interviewed concerning the causes of PHLs of Irish potatoes, and he is of the opinion that;

> The causes of potato losses are diverse, ranging from the degree of the environmental temperature or adverse weather conditions due to heat…this affects the crop drastically, which leads to shrinkage of the tuber and hastens the rate of deterioration. The storage methods and the facilities for the storage also matters a lot…when the tubers are heaped on each other and the store house becomes stuffy due to inadequate air circulation, Irish potatoes quickly becomes rotten. The quality of the crop is affected as a result of the crop physiology and initial agronomic management before harvest… this determine the healthy nature of the tubers. Another factor is the mechanical injuries inflicted on the tubers during harvesting since the process is usually carried out manually using crude tools and implements…the injuries are usually points of entry for disease infections which causes disintegration of Irish potatoes. However, other causes of Irish potato losses are from pest and diseases which also transmits infections to the crop…the blight and bacteria wilt (brown rot) are potato diseases which most times are transferred from the field to storage houses. The soft and dry rots are mainly storage diseases of Irish potatoes, while the brown rots infect Irish potatoes from the field and persist into the storage. Microbiological organisms and pest causes losses in quality and weight of the produce as well… which affects the appearances, smell and the taste of the produce…this reduces the quality of the nutrient and

makes it unpalatable for consumption (58yrs/Male/**K**II/Jos-South/21stNov,2018).

The respondent is of the view that PHLs are caused by disease infections and environmental factors which consist mainly of the weather, and improper handling as well as general management of the produce. Another factor is the transfer of infections from the farms to the stores which are equally devastating to the crops. Hence Proper precautions are needed to prevent the situation against the colossal losses associated with Irish potatoes. One of the interviewees who is also a woman leader, politician and a farmer said;

> Most farmers in this locality experience insect pest as one of the causes of the losses to our crops after harvest. We also lack appropriate preservation methods and facilities which adds to our losses. We use pestox, (a powdered sachet of pesticide was brought to the researcher for observation) a pesticides to intoxicate insect pest, which helps in the preservation of our crops. When asked on how effective it is, she attested that; it controls the insects for some time however… for immediate consumption, it portends danger to the health of the farmer and consumer, but it can be consume after the active period of the insecticide…this can be noticed when insects and rodents begins to invade the crop again…usually, after a period of between two to three months. We also lack appropriate storage facilities to store our produce which leads to a high rate of deterioration (65yrs/Female/KII/Bokkos/20th Nov, 2018).

As stated by the key informant above, farmers are also confronted by insects and the lack of effective agro-chemicals to control these insect pests, which helps in the preservation of Irish potatoes. Sometimes, these chemicals are adulterated which renders it ineffective or unaffordable and out of reach of the farmer. When effective and affordable agro-chemicals are available, it assists the

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farmers in protecting their crops against possible losses that could be prevented. They also lack appropriate storage facilities for the preservation of their crops which leads to a high rate of losses.

From the evidences given above, majority of the population (33%) revealed that PHLs of Irish potato is caused by all the factors, since the losses are exhibited by all of the perimeters above. This is in line with Kader 2002; Bartz and Brecht 2002; and Bourne (1983) who also found out that the rate of biological deterioration depends on all the environmental factors, which could be temperature, relative humidity and the like. Bourne (2004) and Atanda et al (2011), shared similar views that PHLs could be caused either by primary or secondary factors. Primary causes affects Irish potatoes directly, they could be biological, physiological, and environmental factors while secondary causes are those conditions that encourages primary causes which can be inadequate harvesting, packaging and handling skills; lack of adequate packaging containers and means of transportation and inadequate storage facilities for crop protection. A keen observation shows there are close relationship among the causes, which are almost linked to one another. Okonkwo et al (2009) also said the blight, bacterial wilt and mealy bugs are major micro and macro sources of PHLs of Irish potatoes which are prevalent in most Irish potato producing areas. It is glaring from the study that, PHLs of Irish potatoes are caused by various factors which are risky to the crop.

Measures Employed by Farmers towards Reducing PHLs of Irish Potatoes

This section explained the measures utilized by Irish potato farmers to curtail the challenges confronting them on the PHLs of the crop. Table 9 presents the strategies employed by the farmers to reduce PHLs of Irish potatoes.

Table 3 Showing Measures Employed by Farmers to Reduce PHLs of Irish Potatoes

Variables	Frequency(400)	Percentage (%)
Use of chemical preservatives	72	18.0

Careful management and handling	86	21.5
	64	16.0
Timely sorting of bad tubers	178	44.5
All of the above		

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 3 presents the strategies employed by the farmers to reduce PHLs of Irish potatoes. The population represented by 18% applied chemical preservatives on their crops to preserve the crop against PHLs, 21.5% of the respondents resorts to careful management and handling of the produce after harvesting and 16% applied timely sorting of decayed tubers from the healthy ones to avoid contamination and rot while 44.5% applied all the preventive and preservative methods to prolong the shelve life of the produce. This shows the proactive zeal employed by the farmers to protect their crops against losses since they applied all the desired methods to keep the crop healthy, where one method fails other methods would be effective. A key informant that works with the PADP was interviewed on the strategies farmers employed to reduce PHLs of Irish potatoes and he argued that;

> The process begins right from the agronomic management which presents good and healthy tubers void of infections…this helps the produce endure some hazards. The harvesting period is very critical…during the digging process there is need in considering the skills and carefulness employed by those involved…this is very essential to avoid injuring the tubers since the tools used are crude and local which can easily damage the tubers. The wounded tubers are usually separated from the good ones and consume immediately or discarded to avoid decay and contamination of the healthy ones, since they can neither be sold …Irish potato tubers are stored on the bear floor… ensure that the facilities are well ventilated to avoid heat which easily caused decay of the tubers. Prior to spreading, insecticides could be applied on the floor

to keep insects and other rodents away from feeding on the tubers which inflict injuries on them…the combination of several strategies is essential which constitute a better option…this help farmer to protect their crops against PHLs and wastage
(60yrs/Male/ **K**II/Jos-North/13th Dec,2018).

The result from table 3 revealed that most of the respondents (46%) employed all the measures to control PHLs of Irish potatoes. In like manner, the 60 year old key informant also suggested that, all the available methods of post-harvest loss reduction strategies should be effectively applied in protecting Irish potatoes from losses. Gogh (2017), advocated the multidimensional approaches otherwise referred to as the multidimensional technology in curbing PHLs of Irish potatoes. This approach also includes proper processing and fortification of Irish potatoes as a system of protecting the nutritive values of the crop. Therefore it is imperative to inculcate all methods available to eliminate PHLs of Irish potatoes. Also, the 59 year old key informant from mandung of Bokkos LGA mentioned that;

A well spirited individual who is a traditional ruler from Bokkos LGA has intervened in curbing the menace of PHLs of Irish potatoes by inviting an international agency from Germany who came and studied the problem within Bokkos and Mangu areas; however…the outcome is still being awaited…but we are putting in personal efforts to reducing the problem through the usual cultural means and the use of insecticides, mainly Pestox to control insects (59yrs /male/**K**II/Bokkos/7th Dec, 2018).

The quotation from the interviewee above showed that minimizing PHLs has become very necessary, since individuals within the producing area sought international assistance in order to eliminate the menace, notwithstanding the usual cultural practices of control. This is an indication that Irish potato is of immense value to the lives of the people. An encounter with one of

the informants who is a female leader of a farmer cooperative society and a trader said:

> We as farmers experience losses very often during the raining periods than in the dry seasons because Irish potatoes contains a lot of water, and easily becomes perishable when infected ... other than the ones produced in the dry season... however, the seriousness of the incidence is presently reducing with the introduction of an agro-chemical known as *'glory'*. Another issue is, when one does not have a good place to store Irish potatoes...it is better to sale immediately after harvest else, most of it becomes decomposed and one's effort is wasted... Irish potatoes can be stored on the bear floor otherwise, sand is spread on the cemented floor... which can also be used... but there should be allowance for proper air circulation in the room and the tubers should be well spread on the ground
>
> (40yrs/Female**/K**II/BarkinLadi/7thDec,2018).

The report from the interviewee confirmed that, farmers who use agro-chemicals and those who try to regulate temperature for the crops take precocious measures against PHLs of Irish potatoes. However, those who do not take any measures to protect their crops often fall victims of frequent losses. Another observation was that, diseases affecting Irish potatoes are highly prevalent during the wet seasons than in the dry seasons therefore; it is wise for farmers to frequently and adequately use measures that protect Irish potatoes. Planning for large storage should be done during the dry season when moisture is less, than in the wet season during which large quantities of post-harvest storage losses are rampant. In such situations, it is better to dispose of the crops immediately by selling it, than allow it to waste.

The sawing of healthy and disease free tubers is very essential. When improved and healthy tubers are planted, the tendency of harvesting good and clean tubers is assured. Extra care must be involved in recruiting harvesters since harvesting is

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manually done and the instruments used in the process are crude and local, which easily inflict injuries on the produce. Therefore, novice harvesters and kids who are unable to handle the implements for this function should be avoided. Curing of Irish potatoes immediately after harvest must not be compromised. This is to ensure that the crop is well ventilated and spread out under the sun to properly get rid of moisture from point of harvest and storage houses before packaging and transportation. Careful handling is also very important to avoid injuries and contact with water which easily causes decay. The recommended insecticides to keep insects away and ultimately, the application of all the strategies should be practice to avoid wastages.

Basic rural infrastructure like road is very essential in cubing PHLs of Irish potatoes. For instance, Atandaet'al said inadequate transportation to move agricultural produce to the market place causes spoilage. In the same vein, Minten et al, (2016), opines that transportation losses are higher in China due to longer distances potatoes are shipped to other places. However, Chukwunta (2014), said between 20 to 30% losses are incurred in Nigeria due to transportation inadequacies of perishable crops. In the same vein, the farmers confirmed that the provision of access roads that can link them closer to Irish potato markets and stores will effectively reduce post-harvest losses of Irish potatoes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the PHLs of Irish potatoes can be drastically reduced when there is good management practices and handling processes by the farmers. Most importantly, the control of pest and microbiological indices which creates over 40% of PHLs in the community should be given more attention. Also, the storage of Irish potatoes is very critical since farmers can loose an entire farm produce during this process. Good farmer education should therefore be intensified to assist farmers utilize the DLS technology and appropriate cultivars suitable for storage of Irish potatoes. Again, timely Government interventions on agricultural imputes inform of subsidies and grants, and the provision of basic social amenities will significantly place the farmer on the part of economic

growth and in turn, boost the income of the farmer and raise his living standard and the society for a better and healthy living.

Recommendations

1. Bacterial wilt and late blight diseases are often very rampant as the most important causative agent of PHLs of Irish potatoes in the producing areas. Therefore, farmers should ensure that modern and traditional technology that reduces PHLs is appropriately applied according to prevailing conditions and cultural factors.

2. Good sanitation practices in all post-harvest operation facilities is a very important factor in eliminating sources of infection and reducing levels of contamination. However, the procurement of appropriate and effective agro-chemicals by the farmers to control the most common and devastating infections of Irish potatoes is very apt. T

3. here's need for the use of recommended preservatives for the prevention of PHLs of Irish potatoes to ensure that the dosages and residues conform to internationally recommend maximum levels of consumption devoid of residual toxicities. However, the efficient and simplicity in the proper management of these technologies is important considering the adoption of the type of equipment selected.

4. Since the post-harvest losses of Irish potatoes also results from inherent physiological activities and pest infestation during pre-harvest causing significant losses under certain conditions. The pre-harvest application of agro-chemicals in the control of PHLs of Irish potatoes is of utmost importance, thus this should be adhered to by all farmers.

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DEMOCRACY AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: DEMYSTIFYING A CONTRADICTION

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Abstract

Over two decades of democratic governance have not made any remarkable impact on the poverty situation in Nigeria. Rather Nigerians have become poorer with Nigeria overtaking India as a country with the highest number of poor people in the world. This is a great contradiction as democracy is expected to ginger development and reduce poverty. This paper interrogates this contradictory scenario; what is the nature and character of democracy in Nigeria; why has it failed to bring about development and reduction in poverty and what are the poor doing to address the problem of poverty with all that liberal democracy has afforded them? The data for this work were generated principally from secondary sources and the Neo-Marxist Theory particularly of the Claude Ake genre was employed as the framework of analysis. This work postulates that first, democracy has not been institutionalized in Nigeria; second, it has been used by the Nigerian ruling class as an instrument of wanton plunder, primitive accumulation and consequent disempowerment of the popular masses. The ruling class is preoccupied with the struggle for the acquisition and exercise of state power by whatever means for the purpose of primitive accumulation. They only make token gestures to development in order to remain in power. Consequently, it is the political, rather than economic conditions that are determinant of development in Africa. The paper recommends the mobilization of the popular masses by a committed vanguard of patriotic intellectuals to ensure the institutionalization of social democracy that can address the poverty situation in the country.

Introduction

Nigeria transited to a 'democratically elected' civilian administration on the 29th May 1999 after several decades of military dictatorship. Since that historic watershed event, Nigeria has gone through several elections which have brought to power four leaders; viz: Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2010) Goodluck Jonathan (2010-2015) and Muhammadu Buhari (2015-date). With the re-introduction of liberal democracy, Nigerians had expected a change in development of the country with the hope that "democracy will empower the ordinary people ...and create the political conditions for the much delayed development project to take off" (Ake 1996, p.20). After twenty-two years of democratic rule under the Fourth Republic, there has indeed been change; unfortunately, it has not been change for good but change for the worse. On all socio-economic indicators, Nigerians are worse off than when the Fourth Republic took off in 1999.

By 1999, when the Obasanjo Administration assumed power more than 70% of Nigerians were living below the poverty line. More than twenty years in the life of the Fourth Republic, and notwithstanding billions of naira spent on poverty reduction programmes, Nigeria has overtaken India and occupied the unenviable positon of the "world's capital of poverty". According to Sahara Reporters (2019: 25} "the World Poverty Clock has revealed that 91,885,874 people in Nigeria now live in extreme poverty".

The paradox of this worrisome scenario is that Nigeria is not a poor country by all economic indicators. She is an oil-producing nation and is greatly endowed with enviable human and material resources. The country has the biggest economy in Africa and operates a democratic polity. Democracy is adjudged globally as the system of government best suited for socio-economic development and ultimate elimination or at least amelioraton of poverty. Consequently, it becomes compelling to critically interrogate this obvious contradiction. As the biggest economy in Africa, why has democracy failed to ginger development and poverty reduction in Nigeria? What nature and character of democracy is Nigeria operating? What cogent explanations can be adduced to demystify this seeming paradox? Also, what is the way out of this maze of

democracy without development for Nigeria? The rest of this paper will be devoted to answering these posers outlined above.

Clarification of Key Variables

Democracy: The conceptual befuddlement and contestations that bedevil the concept of democracy are not going to detain us here. However,the popular liberal conceptualization of democracy as "the government of the people by the people and for the people" which does not give room for the popular participation of the popular masses is at best misleading. The assumption that society is composed of undifferentiated homogenous people; devoid of any social or class classification, domination and exploitation, is rather naive. In reality there exists in almost every society in the world at least two dominant classes: the ruling class and the exploited class. The ruling class which controls the wealth of the society and its political power is invariably a minority class. Consequently, liberal democracy that is practiced in Nigeria translates into minority rule where the majority of the popular masses are not allowed meaningful participation in the political process.

Democracy in the context of this paper is therefore conceived as the "political and economic empowerment of the majority of the ordinary people for effective participation in the decisions that affect their lives, their individual and collective rights and the way in which their society is governed" (Tarnande, 2003, p.307). Thus democracy can only be effective and meaningful if the masses are fully involved in making decisions about the way they are governed. The situation in Nigeria where the ordinary people are recognized only during the formalistic "choosing without electing rituals", characterized as elections but are completely abandoned and forgotten until when the next elections draw near, cannot be meaningfully classified as democracy.

Poverty: Poverty can be conceptualized as an extreme state of economic and social deprivation. Poverty manifests in the inability of an individual to attain and sustain a given standard of living expected of an average human being. Extreme poverty is observed in the inability of the individual to satisfy the basic needs of human

existence which include food, clothing and shelter. Nemedia (2001, p.72) identifies the consequences of poverty to include "severe material deprivation, absence of recreational opportunities, lack of access to economic as well as political power, inferiority complex, isolation and social degradation." To these Emeh (2002,p.18) adds "hunger, malnutrition, low-life expectancy, homelessness (including vagrancy) life of misery and squalor, subservience, dependence, exploitation, alienation, human and political rights abuse, disease, illiteracy, ignorance and superstition".

It is also pertinent to add that poverty breeds despair, hopelessness, pessimism, disillusionment, despondency, uncertainty and all those feelings that negate the resilience of the human spirit.

Theoretical Framework

This works employs as the framework of analysis the Neo-Marxist theory of the Claude Ake genre. Ake contends that several factors may be advanced to explain the failure of development in Africa. These include our colonial legacy, social pluralism, corruption, poor planning and incompetent management, limited inflow of foreign capital, low levels of savings and investment. These factors may be considered serious impediment to development, but Ake argues that the problem is not that development has failed; but that it was never really on the agenda. He maintains that it is the political conditions in Africa (not economic conditions as contended by classical Marxism) that are the greatest impediment to development.

This is the fundamental argument of this work; that liberal democracy in Nigeria as presently constituted was not designed to eliminate poverty and the operators are not making any pretentions to that effect. Rather they are more preoccupied with the acquisition, control and exercise of state power to the utter neglect of the poor masses of Nigeria.

Democracy and Poverty: The Contradiction

The centrality of democracy to development and consequently poverty reduction was succinctly articulated by Ake (1996, p.26) when he maintained that;

Democracy is not merely desirable; it is necessary. It will not solve all the problems of Africa, but none of the major problems can be solved without it. Democracy carries the prospect of the emancipatory struggle that began in colonial times and the possibility of Africa's deliverance from a ruling elite which has dishonoured our past and fashioned a present that promises no future except more pain and shame and ever more precarious existence. Democracy will empower the ordinary people… and create the much delayed development project to take off.

In a similar vein, Abidoye (2019, p.14) contends that "democracy is attractive because of the notion that an environment of the rule of law, political liberty, open government, fair competition and the sovereignty of the enfranchised citizens would improve governance and engender peace and development.

Other scholars who have studied the interface between democracy and development have established that democratic states have the institutional advantages to perform far better than non-democracies. They contend that low income democracies and democratizing countries have outperformed their authoritarian counterparts on a full range of indicators such as life expectancy, literacy, access to clean drinking water, agricultural productivity and infant mortality. These according to them, have been made possible by adherence to the core values and characteristics of representative governance which include shared power, openness and adaptability (Ijere, 2015). Wietzke (2019, p.36) has equally reported "rapid recent decreases in poverty" in countries such as Brazil, China, Russia and the Arab world, due to improved government accountability occasioned by democratic governance.

Paradoxically, more than 20 years of democratic governance have generated unprecedented and sustained impoverishment of Nigeria. The Nigerian socio-economic and political landscape is strewn with extreme poverty, human carnage occasioned by Boko Haram terrorist activities, herdsmen invasion of farming communities, heightened armed robbery and kidnapping, political

brigandage, intra and inter-communal conflict, ethnic militia violence, cultism, human trafficking and the mind-boggling plunder of the public treasury by predator political leaders.

Consequently, a large percentage of states in Nigeria contain populations whose poverty is beyond seventy percent. The table below shows in Nigeria.

Table 1: Poorest States in Nigeria

S/No	State	Percent (%)
1.	Sokoto	81.2%
2.	Katsina	74.5%
3.	Adamawa	74.2%
4.	Gombe	74.2%
5.	Jigawa	74.1%
6.	Plateau	74.1%
7.	Ebonyi	73.6%
8.	Bauchi	73.0%
9.	Kebbi	72.0%
10.	Zamfara	70.8%

Source: National Bureau of Statistics 2019.

The pertinent question that arises from this grim scenario is: why has this contradiction manifested in Nigeria's democratic project? The next section of this paper will attempt an exposition that will help to unravel this enigma.

Demystification of the paradox of increasing poverty in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Scholarly evidence tends to indicate that democracy engenders development and consequent poverty reduction. The fact that twenty-two years of democratic governance in Nigeria have failed to reduce poverty is a paradox that needs to be unraveled. The fundamental issue is to first interrogate the nature and character of the Nigerian state and its democratic governance. By its character, structure and constitution, is the Nigerian post-colonial state capable of operating democratic governance? In other words, has Nigeria actually operated a democratic government in the more than two decades of the Fourth Republic?

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A critical examination reveals that the post-colonial state in Nigeria has its roots in colonial imperialism. The colonial state was constituted to satisfy the colonial objective of subjugation and exploitation of the colonized people. Consequently, it was dominating, oppressive and intimidating. At the advent of political independence of Nigeria in 1960, the colonial state was inherited by the emergent leadership elite that took over the reins of power from the departing British colonial rulers. It was neither radicalized nor transformed. Thus the post-colonial state in Nigeria is simply an instrument of domination, oppression and exploitation. As Ihonvbere (2000, p.16) noted,

> The State in Nigeria has been captured and privatized by a tiny fraction of the elite that use public institutions and resources to terrorize non-bourgeois communities, abuse human rights, loot public funds, and mortgage the future of the citizenry. Perceived as a wicked, aloof, insensitive, corrupt and distance force, Nigerians relate to the state as an enemy. It is seen as an enemy that must, as opportunity permits, be subverted, avoided, cheated, dismantled and destroyed if the interest of the majority of the citizenry is to be protected.

Consequently, the state in Nigeria remains a highly contested arena where the elite of the different ethnic nationalities converge to appropriate resources especially political power.

To compound the ugly scenario, the ruling elite plunder state resources, and like their predecessor colonial rulers, take it to advanced capitalist societies for investment! They invest nothing in Nigeria in terms of development and so have no interest and responsibility to her. This character of the state is not conducive for democratic development; not even in a liberal democracy.

Closely related to the above is the class character of the predator ruling class. The political elite in Nigeria is so unpatriotic that they have completely jettisoned development for a "do or die" struggle for the acquisition, exercise and control of state power for purposes of primitive accumulation. Contest for political power assumes Hobbesian character and all arsenals are deployed by the

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elite to win power. Therefore, elections in Nigeria assume the character of warfare where mindless rigging, ballot box snatching, murder, arson, kidnapping and all manner of heinous crimes are perpetrated in order to win elections. In order to wage the "electoral war" every notable politician has his own militia who carry out his evil machinations. In order to contend with this nature of violence during elections, thousands of police and military officers are deployed to maintain law and order, thus militarizing what should ordinarily be a civil exercise.

The ruling class in Nigeria also demonstrates its un-patriotism through the wanton and mindboggling plunder of the public treasury. Due to this character of looting, Nigeria has been classified among the most corrupt nations of the world. This has greatly compromised Nigeria's democratic project and aggravated poverty. As Enojo (2012, p.115) has pointed out "corruption affects the overall democratization process of the society. It is a leakage to the resources of the state that could have been channeled to the well-being of the citizenry".

Lack of political will on the part of the ruling elite has aggravated the menace of the hydra-headed corruption monster notwithstanding the several agencies set up to combat it. A report on the EFCC issued by major anti-graft agencies, especially the EFCC, their actions are still largely hindered by institutional and political barriers. These hindrances include the presence of a system that rewards corruption; political interference in anti-graft cases and judicial inefficiency and deliberate delays (Ominiyi, 2019).

Another factor that has greatly compromised the democratic project in Nigeria is the impact that several decades of military rule has exerted on the polity. The military culture is observable in the structure of government where the Nigerian federalism is run as a unitary system where almost everything is controlled from Abuja, the capital and centre of power. There is also an overwhelming presence of retired military officers both in the executive and legislative arms of government. Elections are so militarized that they completely loose the character of a civil exercise. All these have made the Nigerian system less than democratic thereby disenabling it to run as a democracy.

The weak development of civil society is the other critical factor that has stymied the development of democracy in Nigeria. As Ake (2003) observed, the post-colonial polity has produced structural dualism in Nigeria which has created a problem for the development of civil society:

> ...the local community with its primordial public inscribes a corporate political identity. It is here that most people direct their loyalty and energy into collective self-realization by joint enterprises. It is to these local communities that most people turn for security, emotional support and social welfare. In effect, they displace the state and preempt its role (Ake 2003, p.167).

On the other hand, is a rudimentary development of the modern public where members are largely strangers to each other; only related by their desire to wrest political power and appropriate the national largesse. Consequently, the state is peopled by two incompatible groups nursing different values and aspirations. Thus none of these groups harbours a sense of ownership of the state. They therefore feel no sense of loss or deprivation when they are robbed of their votes, when their commonwealth is plundered and even when their rights are trampled upon. This scenario is not good for a democracy.

The docility of the poor, notwithstanding the debilitating and dehumanizing degree of   poverty they have been thrown into, can be explained on the fact that their class consciousness has been subverted by primordial values of ethnicity, religion, and regionalism which are effectively mobilized by the ruling class to divide them. As a result of this they find it difficult to come together to fight for their common cause.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Our analysis has clearly indicated that the nexus between Democracy and Poverty in Nigeria has not suffered any contradiction. A contradiction would have occurred if Nigeria were operating a proper democracy. However, for twenty-two years Nigeria has operated a very poor version of liberal democracy, but

more fundamentally inefficient civilian administration; and this accounts for why it has failed to deliver good governance, development and poverty reduction.

Having made a critical observation of all these, Matthew Hassan Kukah, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, returned a very pejorative verdict: that even as its Fourth Republic clocks 20, Nigeria is still far away from the principles of republican democracy; that a real republic is still a dream deferred. He went further to aver that, today, Nigerians "have become more cynical of the concept of Democracy, the system has become even more unruly, the actors seem so totally ill-prepared and the system has thrown up men and women with questionable moral character…" (Kukah 2019, p.4). Kukah's perspective is congruent with the analytic perspective of this paper. Nigeria is a democratic polity yet on hold.

The civilian administration in Nigeria has survived for 22 years not because of commendable performance, but simply due to the fact that there is global preference for representative government and aversion for military dictatorship. Abidoye (2019, p.14) observed that across the world, seizure of power except through the ballot is no longer in fashion or tolerated. In Africa, the regional and sub-regional groups have taken a strong position against coups and on a few instances enforced the restoration of governments unconstitutionally sacked by soldiers.

Accordingly, Nigeria occupies the unenviable positon of a country with the highest number of poor people not because she is poor, but because the political elites have plundered the commonwealth in order to enrich themselves while leaving the masses in penury and disempowerment.

Recommendations

The correlation between democracy and poverty seems rather apparent. Democracy properly constituted and operated can ginger development and poverty reduction. The character of democracy Nigeria has operated for the past 22 years has woefully failed to bring about development to usher in better life for the Nigerian populace. This explains why Nigeria has attained the unenviable status of the capital of world poverty with nearly half the population living in extreme poverty.

In order to emancipate the people and liberate them from the clutches of debilitating poverty, the state must be radicalized and transformed with the involvement of the popular masses of Nigeria in the decision-making process and institutionalization of social democracy that will ensure the promotion and protection of individual and collective rights to ensure equitable dispensation of national resources.

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AN ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ON TAX ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA

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An Assessment of Post-Harvest Losses of Irish Potatoes among the Farmers in Plateau State, Nigeria

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DEMOCRACY AND POVERTY IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC: DEMYSTIFYING A CONTRADICTION

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